

Naming ceremony for Perth Observatory's latest 'baby'

by Penny Walsh

PERTH Observatory workshop staff Arie Verveer and John Pearse had reason to celebrate recently when their 'baby' was officially named and launched.

Arie and John have spent the past four years hatching a robotic prototype telescope in the Observatory workshop.

The specially designed 10-inch telescope is fully computer controlled and will revolutionise asteroid and comet tracking in the southern hemisphere.

It has an extra wide field of view (about two thirds the area of the full Moon), which is ideal for obtaining accurate sky positions, and may assist in the discovery of other phenomena such as stars with variable light output.

The telescope was named after Mike Candy, former Government Astronomer for WA, in recognition of his contribution to the science of Astronomy both here and internationally.

Mike passed away in 1994 while employed by the Observatory and engaged in project work. His family was well represented at the official ceremony (see picture).

Environment Minister



Director of Regional Services Chris Haynes and his wife Liz joined Environment Minister Peter Foss, Technical Manager Arie Verveer and Government Astronomer Jamie Biggs at the commissioning of the Mike Candy telescope.

Photo by Ernie McLintock

Peter Foss congratulated Arie and John on their workmanship on the new instrument. He said that if this prototype telescope performed as well as expected, larger telescopes (with apertures up to a metre wide) could be built using the same fun-

damental design.

While at the Observatory, Mr Foss also admired the new Solar System Walk and landscaping work.

The Solar System walk features a series of plaques that illustrate the relative distance between planets. The landscaping work was

carried out by gardener David Tiggerdine.

As well as enhancing the look of the complex, garden beds absorb some of the damaging heat that can affect the performance of the Perth Observatory's delicate instruments.

