



P E R T H O B S E R V A T O R Y

**337 WALNUT RD
BICKLEY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6076**

**Phone: +61 8 9293 8255 (int.)
08 9293 8255 (Aust.)
Fax: +61 8 9293 8138 (int.)
08 9293 8138 (Aust.)**

MEDIA ALERT

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Deep Impact at Perth Observatory

On July 4 at around 0550UT (1350WAST, next Monday) a solid copper projectile will slam into Comet Tempel 1.

The aim of this dramatic space mission, named 'Deep Impact', is to find out about the internal constituents of comets.

What will happen during this event? Will the comet break into pieces, generate a great puff of gas, nothing? "Cometary scientists just don't know!" said Dr James Biggs, Government Astronomer and Director of Perth Observatory.

"However", he continued "Perth Observatory astronomers will provide the latest scientific results and information for the public concerning this dramatic event."

Perth Observatory is Western Australia's professional astronomical observatory and its astronomers are University qualified. Perth Observatory astronomers, like many other worldwide, are participating in this project and will be observing the comet intensively around this time.

Unfortunately, there will be no public or media access to the Observatory research telescopes, as we must maximise their operational usefulness at this critical time

"In order to cater for the popular interest during this unique space mission Perth Observatory will conduct Comet Viewing Nights for the general public from the July 4 to 9 @ 7pm", said Dr Biggs. Note - **BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.**

On these nights, visitors will get to view the comet (if it's visible) through our public viewing facility telescopes, as well as getting all the latest news and images in a computer-based presentation.

NOTE: The effects on the comet are totally unpredictable (except that no harm will come to Earth and its inhabitants) - Perth Observatory cannot guarantee that the comet will brighten spectacularly etc.

**For further information:
Dr James Biggs, Ph 9293 8255**