



Science Centre drawcards just about out of this world

By GREG ELLIS

WOLLONGONG Science Centre and Planetarium will soon become a more significant tourist attraction, boasting 3D films of Illawarra's attractions and a new iDome that will take people inside science.

Science Centre members and people attending the Illawarra Innovation Showcase this week received a sneak peak of the new attractions when a stereo-vision projection unit was used during an address in the Illawarra Coal Science Theatre.

When University of Western Australia's Associate Professor of Research Paul Bourke delivered his lecture on science visualisation he said there were few places in Australia where he could do such stereo-vision activities.

"You are very lucky here," he said.

"You have got two dome environments and now you have got a stereo-vision environment that allows me to come and talk to an audience like this and show them the real thing."

During his presentation those gathered in the theatre were able to don 3D glasses to see heavenly and earthly objects.

Science Centre director Glen Moore thanked AusIndustry for its support and revealed Illawarra Coal had sponsored the development of the equipment.

"We are moving in the science centre to many forms of visualisation," he said.

"We are looking to use this in a variety of ways."

The new twin projector stereo-vision unit is accompanied by a special screen.

A 3D film of Illawarra's attractions will soon be available for screening to leisure, inbound and conference visitors. Funding is being sought to develop it as a tourism product.

And for those who cannot quite bring

themselves to jump out of a plane it will include the next best thing - 3D vision of Skydive the Beach adventure seekers.

"Virtual Illawarra will be really important because it will mean that people will get exposed to a lot of other things," Mr Moore said.

The Science Centre also boasts a new iDome following a significant contribution by the ARC Centre for Excellence in Electro Materials.

It will be able to show people examples of the centre's burgeoning study of nanotechnology.



3D: Paul Bourke outlines the new displays at the Science Centre. Picture: ANDY ZAKELI