

Keeping heritage alive

Albany's strong connection with early Australian history is the reason Dr Ian MacLeod, the WA Museum's head of collections management and conservation, can't stay away.

In town last week to discuss rock art on the Burrup Peninsula and the conservation of shipwrecks, Dr MacLeod also took the time to offer tips to local residents.

He said in addition to collections in the State's museums, art galleries and libraries, there were huge collections in people's homes.

"And that's the best place to keep them because they're the objects of memories of many generations," he said.

"However, with the right guidance, the use of simple techniques can help them live longer."

Dr MacLeod gave advice on how to keep hidden treasures, including family bibles, silverware, washed up wreckage and textiles, in the best shape possible.

"Albany is the place where WA settlement began and I always make sure the people in Perth never

forget it," he said. "People down here seem to have a real sense of sympathy and understanding for the environment and I think that's because the weather is so alive – one minute the sun is shining, the next it's bucketing down with rain and the wind is howling," he said.

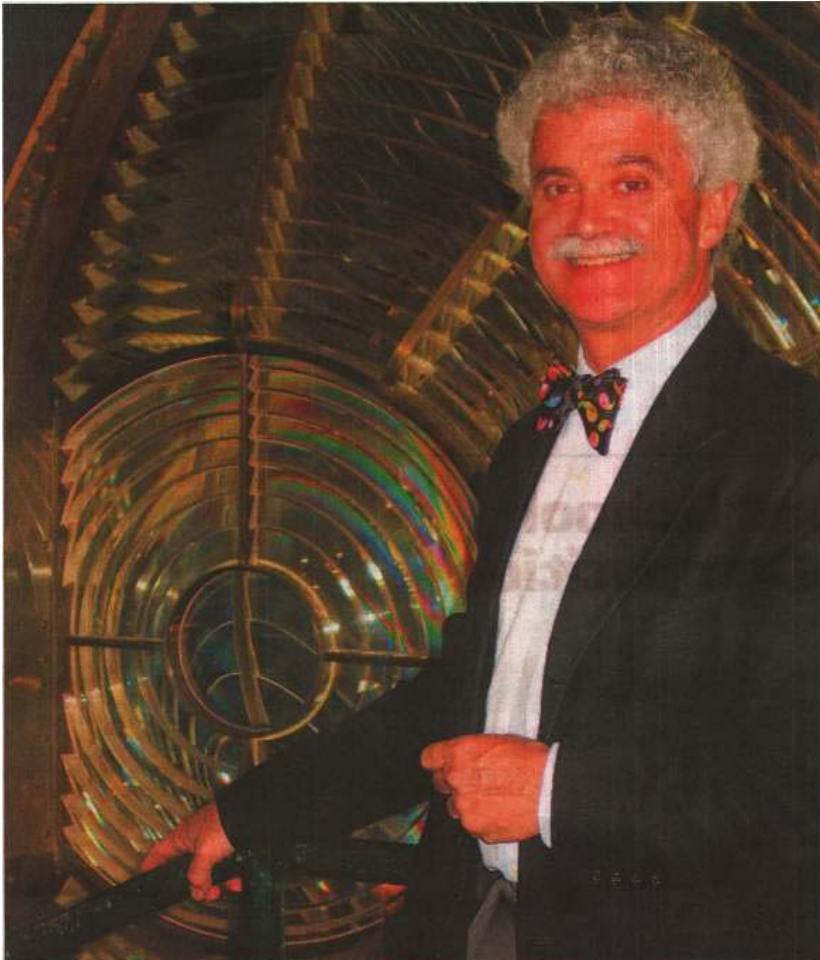
The Eclipse Island lighthouse optic now displayed at the WA Museum Albany was one of the first conservation projects Dr MacLeod worked on.

"It's so lovely to see it all these years later up and running," he said.

"I've got a real soft spot for Albany – I've been coming here for years."

He has extensive experience with the micro-environment of rock art sites and how it determines the fate of paintings and engravings.

Also an expert in the field of corrosion and conservation of materials recovered from historic shipwrecks, Dr MacLeod discovered counterfeit currency among the coins collected from both the Batavia (1628) and the Rapid (1870).



Dr Ian MacLeod, head of collections management and conservation at the WA Museum, on a visit to the museum's Albany branch.