



LONG CAREER: Professor Colin Keay, who has been honoured with an Australian Institute of Physics Award, at the University of Newcastle yesterday. — Picture by Peter Stoop

Stargazing boffin wins top award

By **JO SIMPSON**

ASSOCIATE Professor Colin Keay has had his head in the stars for 60 years – but he says his family has kept his feet on the ground.

Professor Keay was presented with the Australian Institute of Physics Award, one of only five given in the past 12 years, at the University of Newcastle yesterday.

During his career of more than 40 years, Professor Keay has created the new field of

geophysical electrophonics, measured the sound of meteors, drawn the first high resolution infra-red map of Jupiter and charted the progress of shooting stars.

He started writing for *The Herald* in 1966, documenting advances in his field.

He even has a minor planet named in his honour.

The retired Newcastle University physicist said he felt privileged by the recognition of his contribution to physics and astronomy.

“Scientists, like everybody

else, need encouragement,” he said.

The renowned physicist and astronomer has witnessed many landmark events.

The professor was a close observer of the Apollo 11 launch, reporting for NBN television and *The Herald*.

He even took his family to watch the launch of Apollo 16.

“After the tremendous din . . . I asked my young children what they thought of it, and they said it looked better on TV! That brought me down to earth,” he said.