

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting
held in Wollongong on 13th May, 1981 at 11.15
a.m.

1. Apologies: P.M. McCulloch, D.B. Melrose and R.T. Stewart.
2. Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting.

After correcting the misprint on Page 4, the Minutes of the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting were approved and accepted on the motion of Allen/McGee.

3. Business arising from the Minutes

- (a) Observers' expenses.

Following the recommendation of the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting, the President had prepared a case for the provision of adequate funds for travel and subsistence for observers using National Facilities. This submission had become the basis of a recommendation from the A.A.C. in the July 1980 report which reads as follows:

Recommendation 4.

That an allocation of time at a national astronomical facility be linked to funds to cover travel and accommodation costs, such funds to be included in the operating budget for the facility.

- (b) Remuneration of Post-Graduate Students.

After McAdam and White raised this question at the last AGM, students had received a 10% increase in the Federal Budget. Further representation was made to Council by McAdam and the President had contacted the Council for Australian Post-Graduate Associations. There was considerable concern about the loss of relativity between Commonwealth Post-Graduate Students and Research Assistants. The A.S.A. Council had resolved to assist C.A.P.A. by providing statistics on the contribution made to research by Post-Graduate Students and by strongly supporting their case.

- (c) National Research Funding Authority.

The President referred again to the item in the Minutes concerning the Society's recommendation for the formation of a National Funding Authority. The present mechanism for scientific liaison with Government was not satisfactory and an organisation like the SERC was required. The question had been raised at a meeting of the Academy on 23rd July, and it was proposed to ask the next President of the Society to pursue the matter and write to the Academy.

4. Report of Council.

The President, in opening his report, expressed the Society's thanks to Dr. L. Smith and her colleagues for the magnificent organisation of the AGM.

This year Council had invited a distinguished visitor from overseas, Professor Sidney van den Bergh, to be present at both the AGM and the Winter School. On the question of whether the Society should continue this policy, Wright pointed out that the cost was a significant sum in the Society's finances. Wilson endorsed the suggestion as the Society's funds were healthy. Caswell pointed out that income and expenditure were finely balanced. The President referred to discussion in Council in February where the conclusion was that it was a good idea, especially for the Winter School. An alternative was to invite somebody who was already visiting Australia; in that case the Society would contribute to the cost only of domestic travel and subsistence. There were complications if the Winter School were not held in the same location as the AGM. After much discussion a motion was put (Mathewson/Little):

That expenses up to a limit of \$1,000 may be incurred in inviting a distinguished visitor to the Winter School and/or the AGM.

The motion was approved with no dissensions.

The Report of Council continued with a reference to a letter Council had received from Wilson requesting that greater emphasis be placed on solar research in the Society's proceedings. This matter had received attention in the planning of the programme for the 1981 AGM and the policy would be continued. Wilson agreed with the success of the programme this year, and suggested that the need to relate solar and stellar astronomy be borne in mind when choosing next year's distinguished visitor.

5. Report of the Treasurer and Auditor.

Joan Jones reported on behalf of the Treasurer who was overseas.

The Society's funds showed a surplus of income over expenditure for 1980 of \$1,498.41. It was recommended that the subscription rates remain unchanged, but this question will have to be reviewed in the light of possible increased expenditure on the AGM, Winter School and a possible extra edition of the Proceedings.

In the Report attention was drawn to the large number (87) of overdue subscriptions and the small number (1) of Corporate Members. In reply to a question from Moore, the Secretary said he would find out whether a corporate subscription was tax deductible.

Mr. John Clark had accepted nomination as Auditor.

On the motion of Little/Roberts, the reports of the Treasurer and Auditor were accepted and approved, and the election of J. Clarke as Auditor was confirmed.

6. Report of the Editor.

The Editor (McGee) began his report by reminding members that the dead-line for receipt of manuscripts (1st June, 1981) would be strictly

enforced. In this case it was confidently expected to publish before November 1981.

Referring to the last issue of the Proceedings, the Editor gave a detailed time-table of events which led to the late publication in January 1981. He noted that the last paper to be submitted arrived on 26th August!

Following the direction of the Society to publish additional material other than the AGM papers, it is likely that two long papers will be published in camera-ready form in the near future. The administration of additional issues of the Proceedings needs to be defined.

In proposing that the Society approve and accept the Editor's report, the President also expressed the Society's appreciation of the work of the Subscription Manager, Joan Jones.

The motion was carried by acclamation.

7. General Business.

(a) Winter School, 1982.

The President announced that Council had recommended that the 1982 Winter School be held in Sydney as the AGM was to be held in Noosa, Queensland. In reply to a comment from Wilson that the link with the AGM be maintained, the President drew attention to the cost to students which would reduce the number of participants. There followed some discussion of the timing of the Winter School which, if it began after the AGM, would then over-run the common vacation week. The President closed the discussion in saying that these details would be considered again by Council.

(b) Annual General Meeting, 1982.

The President announced the venue as Noosa Heads in Queensland and invited O'Mara to speak to the meeting.

O'Mara said that Noosa had been chosen as an interesting and attractive venue for the meeting, and when enquiries were made the Society had received very favourable terms for the accommodation. The normal \$130 per day conference facility fee had been waived and we were offered a 20% discount on the cost of accommodation which would be about \$22.50 per day per person (twin share) exclusive of meals. Other cheaper rates could be obtained in hostels and camp sites. It was noted that it would be necessary to make a firm booking soon and on the motion of Wilson/McAdam the meeting authorised Council to pay the necessary reservation fee.

(c) Formation of an Astronomy Advisory Committee by the A.S.A.

The President said that the matter was of very great importance because, after the disbanding of the A.A.C., there was no body which could receive submissions on astronomical matters. It was natural that such a body be formed by astronomers for astronomers. The idea was first proposed by Jauncey and had been discussed by Council. Council had resolved that such a Committee should be formed and had appointed a sub-committee consisting of the President, the immediate past President, the Vice-President and a secretary to investigate and report on the details.

In the discussion which followed, the following points were made:

- The Committee should communicate directly with the Ministry of Science and Technology;
- It should offer advice when needed, not only when asked;
- It must have fair regional representation;
- It could make written submissions at any time;
- Its members should be elected for a limited term, and
- The name of the Committee should be chosen to include the Society, but maintain continuity with the previous A.A.C.

Several members spoke of the urgency of setting up the Committee.

The following motion was then put to the meeting (Jauncey/McAdam).

That a committee be formed consisting of the members of the Council, to act as an interim Astronomy Advisory Committee of the Astronomical Society of Australia.

An amendment to the motion was then moved (Allen/Morton) to add the words "until Council takes other action". The purpose of the amendment was to facilitate the recommendations of the sub-committee as resolved by Council.

The amendment and then the motion were carried unanimously.

The resolution of Council was then put to the meeting for approval (Allen/Morton) in a slightly amended form to clarify the point that the sub-committee should report to Council.

The motion:-

That the A.S.A. form an Astronomy Advisory Committee to act as liaison with Government on matters of astronomical research and funding, and that a sub-committee, consisting of the President, the immediate past President, the Vice-President and a secretary, be formed to investigate the details of setting up such a committee and report to Council,

was carried unanimously.

(d) Publication of Australian research papers in overseas journals.

The President read a submission from Melrose which drew attention to the precarious state of the avenues open for publication of Australian research papers now that page charges can no longer be paid by most institutions. A possible solution was for Australia to contribute directly to an overseas journal, for example the amount required for us to sponsor A & A and hence publish in it without paying page charges, would be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per annum.

After a short exchange of views on the matter, Allen pointed out that the letter from Melrose indicated that he had approached the Academy on the matter and asked him for the views of the A.S.A. It was suggested that members contact Melrose directly to express their opinions.

(e) Berenice Page Medal.

Allen informed the meeting that there had been two nominations received so far. He asked all members who had any contact with amateur astronomy groups to remind them of the existence of the award and that the deadline was 1st June, 1981.

8. Any other business.

Luck announced to the meeting that there would be a meeting of the U.R.S.I. International Committee on Precise Time and Frequency in 1984-85. As this was relevant to astronomy, he would like to enlist the help of the A.S.A. in supporting the meeting sometime nearer the date.

9. Election of 15th Council.

As no additional nominations had been received, the following members, nominated by Council, were declared duly elected:

President	Dr D.C. Morton	Anglo-Australian Observatory
Vice President	Assoc.Prof. A.G. Little	University of Sydney
Secretaries	Dr L.R. Allen Dr M.S. Bessel!	University of Sydney Mount Stromlo Observatory
Treasurer	Mr R.T. Stewart	CSIRO Division of Radiophysics
Councillors	Dr J.L. Caswell Dr P.M. McCulloch Dr B.J. O'Mara Dr A.J.R. Prentice Prof. K.N.R. Taylor	CSIRO Division of Radiophysics University of Tasmania University of Queensland Monash University University of New South Wales

The Editor, Dr R.X. McGee and the immediate Past President, Prof. D.S. Mathewson, are ex-officio members of Council.

The meeting closed at 12.30