

# ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held in  
the

Conference Room of Noosa Resort on 12 May 1982, 10.45am

## 1. Apologies

R.X. McGee, J.L. Caswell, P.M. McCulloch and A.J.R. Prentice

## 2. Minutes

Minutes of the Fifteenth AGM were accepted and approved  
(Fenton/Ross).

## 3. Business arising out of Minutes

### (a) Post-graduate Scholarships

The Society had collected data on the contribution of post-graduate students to research and would continue to offer support to CAPA in their efforts to improve student remuneration. Wilson commented that the AVCC was not making progress on this question.

### (b) National Research Funding Authority

As there was no clear indication of the Society's intention the President invited further discussion on the general issues. Fenton said the Academy should pursue this issue. Greenhill added that a body such as the SERC was a method of achieving flexibility in funding which the ARGs could not manage. Other members thought that a strong campaign, especially through the Academy, could be disruptive and counter-productive. The President concluded that the Academy should be involved but further deliberation was required, possibly by a special sub-committee.

### (c) Formation of an Astronomy Advisory Committee

After discussion at the last AGM a sub-committee was set up which recommended the formation of the Advisory Committee and gave guidelines as published in the Newsletter. The Committee was to act as a channel of communication with government, but priority judgments should be limited to avoid divisions within the Society.

### (d) Winter School 1982

The President raised the question of funding for future Winter Schools and invited comments on the extent of the Society's contribution which was 17% of total income last year. Storey said this was a proper function of the Society to encourage future astronomers. A student member emphasized the importance of the opportunity to meet other post-graduate astronomers. Despite criticism, considerable efforts have been made to select lecture programs to follow students' preferences and to involve students in the planning.

## 4. President's Report

(a) The President had attended an Academy meeting of Society Presidents. There was a feeling that Astronomy did very well for funds and must justify this expenditure.

- (b) The Newsletter was started this year; it is intended to publish 3 to 4 issues per year. "Correspondents" have been appointed to cover all centres.
- (c) Travel funding for National Facilities had caused concern for some years. A special problem has arisen over financial support to use the AAT. Davis commented that ARGs applications are made well in advance of ATAC time allocations, but some observers have not been funded for the allocated time. This applies particularly to State University staff. Attempts are being made to establish a special funding scheme through ARGs. On the broader issue of National Facilities and the government's "user pays" attitude: ASTEC takes the view that non-profit organizations should pay for consumables. Council believes that the issue should be resolved. Mathewson stated that the Starlab budget included substantial funds for observers' travel. Savage would regret the acceptance of a charge for observing time applied to all facilities. Wilson thought that the meeting should endorse Council efforts to resolve the issue, but advised care so as not to force a hasty conclusion. Melrose requested clarification of ASTEC's attitude. The President concluded that Council should ask ASTEC for further explanation of its attitude before taking any strong action. Davis added that it was important to establish the principle that an allocation of time would guarantee appropriate user and observer funds.
- (d) Astronomical Society Advisory Committee -

Four issues have been considered:

- (1) The closure of the Radioheliograph at Culgoora.  
ASAC suggest trying for outside financial support. If this fails then continuance may depend upon the approval of the AT project which will use the same site.
- (2) ASTEC requested the ASAC to rank Starlab and the AT. It was decided that it was not appropriate for a Society meeting to allocate priorities and a strong case was made for the support of both projects.
- (3) The Committee requested the Department of Science and Technology to give immediate support for the visit of the Kuiper Airborne Observatory in June 1983.
- (4) The Senate Science Sub-Committee has recommended the continuation of an Australian Balloon Launching Facility and the ASAC will add its support at the appropriate time.

In reply to comments by Davis that if the Society supports every project it loses credibility, but if it decided against something then it is divisive, the President explained that ASAC had, up until now, mainly responded to requests from government. ASAC support was seen to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for government support. Little agreed that the ASAC serves the present purpose, but future major decisions may have to involve a wider forum.

## 5. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Treasurer's and Auditor's reports were distributed to members before the meeting. The realistic figure for the surplus is about \$1,500. Hence the Society is only just ahead financially but is committed to increased expenditure in the coming year. Council therefore recommended

an increase in the subscription rate to \$35 (members) and \$12 (students). A general airing of views on the increase in fees and its effect on membership led to a motion (Mathewson/Freeman) to keep the student rate at \$10. The motion was passed unanimously. The motion to increase members' fees to \$35 (subscribers to \$20) was then put (Stewart/Fourikis) and passed with one dissention. In response to a question the President said it was the intention to try to forecast the budget for 1983.

#### 6. Editor's Report

The Editor's report was distributed to members before the meeting. Speaking on the report J. Jones explained that the late publication of volume 4 No. 2 was not due to any delay by the Editor. In future an attempt to speed up the printing would be made by supplying mathematics and tables in camera-ready form.

On the motion of Little/Page both the Treasurer's Report and the Editor's Report were approved and accepted.

A note of thanks to the Editor was proposed by Jones/Mathewson and approved by acclamation.

#### 7. Election of Auditor

On the motion of Stewart/Little, Mr J. Clarke was elected as Auditor by acclamation.

#### 8. General Business

Winter School and AGM 1983:

Taylor gave a brief outline of plans to hold the 1983 AGM at the University of NSW and the Winter School in a Camp Hostel perhaps by the sea. It was proposed to divide the subject matter for the school into sections defined by regions of the observing spectrum. The President indicated that students should give their suggestions for topics directly to Professor Taylor.

#### 9. Other business

- (a) Council has resolved that the President of the Society will be the Society's representative on the Australian Academy of Science National Committee for Astronomy.
- (b) Council has appointed Professor K.N.R. Taylor as the Society's representative on ATAC. Dr B.J. O'Mara will be the alternative representative.
- (c) It is proposed to hold the 1984 AGM at Coonabarabran. The Winter School may also be held at the same or a nearby venue. When a member raised the question of holding a Winter School in Melbourne the President said that Council would be pleased to consider a specific invitation. The President emphasized the intention of involving students in the planning.
- (d) Mr A.A. Page reported on the presentation of the Berenice Page medal to William Bradfield at the 10th National Convention of Amateur Astronomers in Brisbane during April. Mr Page commented on the rising standard of amateur astronomy in Australia. The National Convention had resolved

to request the ASA or one of its constituent institutions to coordinate the activities of amateur groups when planning such events as the Amateur Astronomy Day or other national schemes to publicise astronomy. The Bicentennial celebration in 1988 was one such occasion when astronomy in Australia would be publicised by special postage stamps, etc. On the motion of Page/Fourikis, the meeting gave its approval for the formation of a sub-committee to consider plans for the bicentennial anniversary.

#### 10. Election of 1983 Council

As no other nominations had been received the nominations of Council were declared elected as follows:-

President	Dr D.C. Morton	Anglo-Australian Observatory
Vice President	Assoc.Prof. A.G. Little	University of Sydney
Secretaries	Dr L.R. Allen	University of Sydney
	Dr M.S. Bessel	Mount Stromlo Observatory
Treasurer	Mr R.T. Stewart	CSIRO Division of Radiophysics
Councillors	Dr J.L. Caswell	CSIRO Division of Radiophysics
	Dr P.A. Hamilton	University of Tasmania
	Dr J.E. Ross	University of Queensland
	Prof. J.A. Thomas	University of Melbourne
	Prof. K.N.R. Taylor	University of New South Wales

In addition the ASA council includes:

Past President	Prof. D.S. Mathewson	Mount Stromlo Observatory
Proceedings Editor	Dr R.X. McGee	CSIRO Division of Radiophysics

The meeting closed at 12.35pm