

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

MINUTES OF EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held in the PRIMARY SCHOOL, COONABARABRAN

on 17th MAY 1984 AT 2 PM

1. APOLOGIES: M. Bessel , K.C. Freeman, R.H. Frater, J.M. Luck,
R.X. McGee, B.J. O'Mara
2. MINUTES: On the motion of Duldig/Tango the minutes of the 17th
A.G.M. were confirmed unanimously.
3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Observers' expenses at National Facilities

The Immediate Past President reported that the last meeting recommended that observers' funds be included in the budget of a National Facility. ASTEC has considered and reported on the over-all problem of National Facilities and was initially supporting the idea that users be charged for operating costs. This serious situation has now been replaced by a more reasonable course which is to charge for the extra costs of running a project and not the total cost of operating the facility. This charge would include observers' living expenses. The rationale behind this scheme was to ensure that the Facility was used only for worthwhile projects which were supported from the user's own institution. ASTEC recognised the impediments of this arrangement but were also aware that there were several sources of funds to cover the necessary expenses. This modified scheme could easily be prejudiced by a too forceful objection. Davis had difficulty in accepting that the Society should appear to change its position and referred to the resolution of the last A.G.M. Different institutions have differing policies and it would be much easier if funds were included in the Facilities budget. The Society should make its views known directly to government. Some workers were reluctant to apply for time if support funds were unobtainable and there were ways, other than charges, to establish the worth of a project. Referring to a comment by Professor Wilson that separate applications would have to be made for time and funding, the President noted that the A.T. would be the first National Facility, the A.A.T. was a shared facility and could perhaps be covered by negotiation between ARGS and ATAC referred to by Morton.

After further discussion on the arrangements in other countries, Fenton asked for information on the ASTEC report. The President replied that it was in the form of guidelines for the use of National Facilities and had input from Morton and Mills. In particular it was evident from Morton's enquiries that not all institutions had the same difficulty in providing funds for observers. Humble said it was important to establish how many institutions had

serious difficulty in raising observers funds, he also wondered how the Australian Government's funding of science compared to other Commonwealth countries. After discussion a motion was put to the meeting (McAdam/Milne) that

The Society seeks information on the funding available to members for the use of astronomical facilities in Australia.

The motion was carried by 28 votes to 1 against. A second motion was then put (Davis/Wilson) after discussion and amendment that

The resolution on funding for the use of National Facilities which was carried at the 1983 Annual General Meeting be communicated to ASTEC the Prime Minister's Department the Treasury and the Minister for Science and Technology.

The motion was passed unanimously.

(b) Change in format of the Proceedings

The President reported that a committee looked at the possibility of conversion to camera ready and recommended a modified system to produce the data issues as an experiment. This will be further discussed in the Editor's report.

(c) Winter School 1984

Faulkner reported on behalf of Peterson that 25 students had attended from all parts of Australia. Lectures were held in the Library of the AAT and there were organised visits to observatories. Students preferred short courses of lectures given by resident lecturers. It is convenient if the Winter School is held in a place near the A.G.M.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

At the request of the President the Treasurer's Report was given before the Editor's Report.

Commenting on the report (which was distributed to members before the meeting) the Treasurer noted that the Winter School had received support of three donations of \$500 which left a deficit of about \$66. The Society's general account shows a surplus of some \$8,000 for the year. A projected budget for 1984 was submitted to the meeting which should yield an excess of income over expenditure of \$4,944. It is recommended that there be no increase in fees for 1984-85 which will leave about \$3000 surplus. The Subscription Manager's emolument, which has not been changed for many years, was increased by resolution of the last Council meeting. There was also an increase in the Honorarium given to the Auditor.

In calling for comments the President expressed the Society's gratitude to the people and organisations who assist in the preparation of the Proceedings and the running of the Society.

In response to a question from Duldig the President stated that the A.G.M. should yield a small surplus. The Treasurer said that the increase in profit last year originated in an increased return from the Proceedings, subscriptions and the A.G.M.

On the motion of Allen/Roberts the Treasurer's Report was accepted unanimously after corrections to headings and arithmetic.

5. ELECTION OF AUDITOR

Milne/Allen proposed Mr. John Clarke for the position of the Society's Auditor for 1984 and he was declared elected by acclamation.

6. EDITOR'S REPORT

The President reported on behalf of the Editor that the new method of producing the data issue of the Proceedings involves all the typing being done in house, tables are prepared camera ready but the headings are prepared by the printer. A report distributed to members sets out the cost of this new method, but does not reveal the hidden costs involved. Alternative printers are also being investigated in order to reduce costs and this last data issue was printed in New Zealand.

The President emphasised Council's support for the Editor in his efforts to introduce economies by adopting new production methods and wished to encourage him to maintain the high standard of the publication. Any proposals to adopt a complete camera ready format are likely to lead to the need to appoint a new editor.

There followed some discussion on the production of camera ready copy using computers and the complication of the need to referee the material at some stage.

A motion was put to the meeting (McAdam/Gascoigne) that

The Society expresses confidence in the Editor's procedures to date and encourages him to continue to use the methods he adopts until the approval of new technology.

The motion was carried unanimously. The President again expressed the Society's gratitude to the Division of Radiophysics for the back-up support in producing the Proceedings and Gascoigne stressed the increasing value of the Publication as a record of Astronomy in Australia.

7. PRESIDENT 'S REPORT

The President 's report was distributed to members before the meeting. Twomeetings of Council were held since the last A.G.M. Membership now stood at 287 including two corporate members. The financial state of the Society is healthy and as already described some changes have been made to the Proceedings to cut costs.

The Page medal was awarded to Byron Soulsby and presented by Dr. Nikoloff at the Amateur Astronomers Convention in Perth. It was intended to invite recipients to become members of the Society.

The Solar Physics Association of Australia has approached the Society for affiliation; how this request can best be satisfied is still under consideration.

Professor Wilson commented on the SPAA which was a group of workers with an interest in Solar Physics which met about once per month.

The President announced that Dr. K. Sheridan has been appointed by Council to represent the Society's interests as Secretary of the Donovan Trust Committee.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WINTER SCHOOL 1985

The 1985 A.G.M. and Winter School will be held in Melbourne. J.A. Thomas is the Chairman of the Organising Committee. In 1986 the A.G.M. will be in Hobart.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Council had received a proposal for the establishment of an under- graduate prize in astronomy to be sponsored by the Society and named in honour of Bart and Priscilla Bok. The President indicated that Council had discussed the idea with enthusiasm but the question of funding an adequate prize has still to be resolved. In the discussion which followed members supported the idea but had comments concerning the weighting of honours projects at different institutions, the importance of a monetary prize compared to the prestige of a medal and the frequency of the award in view of the likely funds which could be raised. After lengthy debate on the value of the award in comparison to other Australian and overseas prizes and the feasibility of asking for contributions to the fund from other organisations it was agreed to seek views from the whole membership on the type of award and the amount they would contribute. A motion was put to the meeting (McAdam/Tango) that

- Council investigate the setting up of a fund to establish a Bok prize and canvass the members as to the nature and amount of funding of the award.

The motion was passed unanimously.

10. ELECTION OF COUNCIL

The result of the election for the 1984-85 was declared as follows:

President	Associate Professor A.G. Little
Vice President	Or. K.B. Fenton
Secretaries	Or. L.R. Allen Dr. M.L. Duldig
Treasurer	Dr. D.K. Milne
Councillors	Dr. J.A. Dawe Dr. R.A. Duncan Dr. A.J. Faulkner Dr. J.E. Ross Prof. J.A. Thomas

The Editor, Dr. R.X. McGee and the Immediate Past President Dr. D.C. Morton are ex-officio members of Council.

The meeting closed at 15.32.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. A. Thomas', with a horizontal line underneath it.