

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Minutes of the 19th Annual General Meeting  
held in the Physics Lecture Theatre at Monash University on 15th May 1985  
at 2 pm

The meeting was chaired by the Vice-President, K.B. Fenton who, in opening the meeting expressed the Society's deep sorrow at the death of the President, Alec Little, earlier in the year. The Vice-President read a letter from Mrs Adele Little acknowledging the expressions of sympathy from members of the Society. A donation had been made to a nominated charity in lieu of flowers at the funeral.

1. Apologies: A.B. Giles, R.X. McGee, J. O'Mara, L. Smith, K. Taylor  
M. Waterworth.
2. Minutes

The minutes of the 18th A.G.M. were accepted unanimously after correction to the spelling of the name Sheridan on the motion of Ross/Carter.

3. Business Arising from Minutes

- (a) The resolution of the 18th A.G.M. concerning observers expenses at National or major facilities had been discussed but not acted upon by Council in view of the broader issue of the severe cuts in the ARGs budget. The President had written to the Prime Minister on this issue urging the Government to give greater support to science in general. There had since been some discussion concerning the "user pays" principle which would, for the two future National facilities (the Ocean research vessel and the A.T.), apply to unusual consumables not running costs. At present funds are provided by ARGs and URG and no particular section is seriously disadvantaged. The problem is perhaps more acute for international activities and the need for an organisation like the SERC was obvious. The new Federation may be the avenue to put pressure on government. The discussion ended with a criticism of Council for not acting on the AGM resolution.
- (b) Council had received 21 replies to the questionnaire sent to all members asking for views on the undergraduate prize in astronomy. Nearly all responses were in favour of setting up such an award, divided equally between either a medal or a cash prize. There were some comments on the naming of the award but only a few hundred dollars was promised in support. Hence Council had reluctantly decided it was not possible to implement the award

at this time. In the discussion which followed it was stated that members would respond more positively to a definite proposal, for example a prize to subsidise student attendance at the A.G.M. Due to the various locations of the A.G.M. this could be very expensive as an addition to the Winter School donation and such a scheme would be very awkward to fund, administer and assess. The prestige could be more important than the cash value, and funds could come from the income of the Society. A quick survey of the meeting indicated that most Universities award one or more prizes at undergraduate level, several of which were for astronomical projects. The discussion concluded with a motion; proposed by McAdam/Mathewson

That Council investigate the setting up of a Bok prize

which was carried by 29 votes to 12 with 2 abstentions.

(c) Winter School 1985

J. Monaghan reported that 23 students had indicated that they would attend the Winter School. Financial support would come from Monash University, the A.N.U., Radiophysics and the A.S.A. It was suggested that the Council recommended fee of \$55 be adhered to if possible but that any surplus be used to assist with travel costs to future Winter Schools. The Chairman thanked Dr. J. Monaghan for the time and effort he had put into organising the Winter School, which played an important part in achieving the aims of the Society.

4. The Chairman reported on the setting up of a Federation of Scientific Societies. He had attended a meeting in April called by the Academies of Science and Technological Science, 68 Societies were represented together with members of various government departments. A decision was made to form the Federation with the objective of lobbying government especially in view of the drastic cuts to all branches of scientific research. Prof. F. Smith would chair the guiding committee and would address this meeting on the next day. Council had debated the matter and recommended a contribution of \$150 to support the initial setting up costs, and now sought approval of the meeting for the proposal to join the Federation. After lengthy discussion in which doubts were raised as to the ability of such an organisation to achieve its aims on behalf of astronomy within a reasonable time scale when what was really needed was a government sponsored body like the SERC, and an invitation from the President to send further comments in writing to the Council, a motion was proposed (Morton/ Tango) that:

The Society donate a sum of about \$150 to support the formation of a Federation of Scientific and Technological Societies and that no further sums be approved until more definite proposals are produced by the Guiding Committee

Carried unanimously

5. Editor's Report

The President referred members to the written Editor's Report which was distributed to members before the meeting. In order to improve the status of the journal it would be necessary to supply an abstract for all papers published in the Proceedings. We now know that Dr. McGee is able to continue as editor after his retirement from CSIRO. Council has suggested that an Assistant Editor should work with Dr. McGee, but it may be necessary to cover additional secretarial costs of between \$600-\$1000. The President also reported that the CSIRO journals had proposed to set up a new journal to be called for example the Southern Hemisphere Journal of Astronomy which would publish the papers presented at our conference. Council had rejected the proposal on the grounds of cost and also that we would lose control over the continuence and editorial policy. It was not thought that the title "The Proceedings" inhibited the recognition of our journal in any way, any problems would be solved by including proper abstracts.

The Editor's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Duldig/Deneby.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report was distributed to members before the meeting. Speaking on the report the Treasurer noted a profit of \$5869 for the last year, despite the high cost of printing and postage. It was essential to maintain this profit level and a fee increase of \$5 was recommended with an increase in the subscription rate to \$55, in order to meet any increase in costs of the journal and our possible participation in the Federation of Scientific Societies. After some discussion questioning the necessity of building up substantial reserves, the following motions were put to the meeting:

(a) That the subscribers' fee be increased to \$55, Milne/Allen

Carried

(b) That the fees for members, junior members and retired members be increased by \$5.

Milne/Harding

In the discussion on the second motion it was pointed out that if a fee increase were delayed then this would mean a larger increase next time, the presently proposed increase is equivalent to the "cost of living" increase since the fees were last adjusted two years ago.

The motion was carried by 22 votes to 13 against

The Treasurer's report was then adopted unanimously

Milne/Allen

7. Election of Auditor

Mr. J. Clark was unanimously elected as Auditor for 1985-1986 on the motion of Milne/Allen.

8. 1986 A.G.M. and Winter School

The 1986 A.G.M. would be held in Hobart from 12 to 16 May 1986. It is likely that a Winter School will also be held in Hobart. Dr. M. Duldig, chairman of the organising committee, indicated that the programme would probably include the opening of the new Radio Telescope.

9. 1987 A.G.M.

The Society has accepted the invitation to hold the 1987 A.G.M. in Canberra.

10. Any Other Business

(a) Possible changes to the Constitution

The President drew members' attention to the letter from Dr. Carter, a copy of which had been sent to all members. Carter explained that the purpose of the letter was to set forth the reasons why he had nominated for Council which were to ensure proper representation of the views of members holding non-tenured or temporary appointments. The proposed changes to the constitution are designed to make it easier for members to be elected without being first nominated by Council. It was also pointed out that at present students are not entitled to vote at Council elections. The President commented that many of the issues which were listed as of concern to non-tenured staff were important matters of general concern to all astronomers and did not require amendments to the constitution to obtain proper consideration by Council. Council has resolved to seek the views of all members as to who the members would like to see acting on Council before compiling the list of Council nominations. In view of the time the President closed the discussion but asked Dr. D. Carter to pursue the question to a satisfactory conclusion.

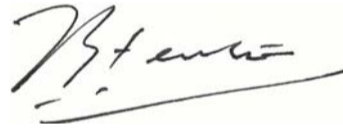
(b) To fill the vacancy of Immediate Past President Council had exercised its option to elect a second Vice-President who would be Dr. D. Morton.

11. Election of 1985-86 Council

Drs. Whiteoak and Coates acted as tellers for the election the result of which was as follows:

Office

President	Dr. K.B. Fenton
Vice-President	Dr. B.J. Robinson
Secretaries	Dr. L.R. Allen Dr. M.L. Duldig
Treasurer	Dr. D.K. Milne
Ordinary Councillors	Dr. J.A. Dawe Dr. R.A. Duncan Dr. D.J. Faulkner Dr. J.E. Ross Prof. J.A. Thomas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Fenton", is written over a light yellow rectangular background. The signature is cursive and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.