



ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Incorporated in the ACT

Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday July 5 1995 at the Mason Theatre, Macquarie University

The Meeting was opened at 11:10 am with the President in the Chair.

1. Apologies

P.L. Cottrell, D.J. Faulkner, K.B. Fenton, R.N. Manchester, B.J. O'Mara, R.L. Webster.

2. Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting

Motion that the minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented.

**Caswell/Humble
Carried**

3. Business arising from the Minutes

None.

4. President's Report

A written report was distributed to members before the meeting. The President presented an overview of the contents of that report. He also noted that the report omitted mention of the Harley Wood School which was scheduled for 6-9 July and would be attended by over 30 students. Also omitted from the report was reference to the Harley Wood Lecture by Professor Malcolm Longair which attracted a large public audience the night before the Annual General Meeting.

The President began by reporting on the Discipline Research Strategy, the preparation of which had involved many members of the Society. It was to be launched in Canberra later in July and all members would receive a copy. The President thanked all who had an input into the report, especially Ron Ekers and Tasso Tzioumis for their survey work and Rodney Marks who put the material into electronic form.

Three astronomical proposals were submitted for funding by the Major National Research Facilities (MNRF) Program. These were the bids to become a member of the European Southern Observatory (ESO), to upgrade the AT for millimetre wave astronomy and to take part in the International Cosmic Ray Observatory. The President noted that all three were from the Discipline Research Strategy priority list and all were interviewed, placing them in the top 16 from over 60 proposals.

A significant constitutional change to be decided by a ballot conducted in the weeks before the meeting was the proposed introduction of two new grades of membership - Fellow and Associate Member. The President outlined the reasons behind these new grades. At the end of his report the President announced the outcome of the ballot. The changes were approved with 69 Yes votes, 10 No votes and 7 Informal.

The 1995 Bok Prize was awarded to Michael Brown from the University of Melbourne. Michael was presented with his prize during the Scientific Meeting and gave a talk on his work. The President also congratulated the 1995 Ellery Lecturer, Richard Hunstead from the University of Sydney, who presented his lecture during the Scientific Meeting. Other distinctions awarded by the

Society were Honorary Life Membership to John Whiteoak and the Harley Wood Lectureship to Professor Malcolm Longair from Cambridge University.

The Society was in the process of instituting a new prize, the David Allen Prize, in honour of the Society's Past President who died shortly after the 1994 meeting. The prize was to be awarded for the best article or series of articles about astronomy in the Australian media, beginning when tax-deductibility questions were been resolved.

The President noted that the Society maintains a World Wide Web page with extensive information about the Society and its activities. One item on the Web pages was a list of proposed dates for the ASA Scientific Meeting until 2002. These were publicised to try and reduce conflicts with other meetings which had arisen in recent years although, in response to a question from the members, the President pointed out that these dates may be altered if necessary.

The President expressed the Society's gratitude to Jenny Nicholls for taking on the job of Editor of PASA and producing a very high quality journal for the Society. The contract with CSIRO for publishing the journal was being re-negotiated to extend beyond the initial two year period and introduce three issues per year.

New initiatives of the Society included funding of postgraduate students to attend overseas conferences. Seven students were funded during the year for this purpose, which was intended to assist students in their career development and raise the overseas profile of Australian astronomy and graduate programs. Another new aspect of Society operation was the introduction of a student member attending Council meetings to represent student interests. This position had been filled initially by David Mar, and later by Julia Bryant, both from Sydney University. The President also noted that another of the Society's newer activities, the education sub-committee was seeking a new Chair.

As the final item from his printed report, the President noted the death of several Society members - Drs David Allen, Mike Candy and Heinz Gollnow. He expressed the Society's condolences to the families.

The President then passed on to a brief description of the meeting of the Australian Astronomy Directors and Heads Committee (AADHC) the previous evening. Discussion had centred on the MNRF bids, the Discipline Research Strategy, a proposal to bid for the 2000 IAU General Assembly and a review of the ARC Large Grants Scheme.

Motion that the President's report be accepted.

**Page/Robertson
Carried**

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer gave a summary of the written report and balance sheet which had been distributed to the meeting. Membership of the Society was listed as 332 at the close of the financial year, although it had risen to 341 by the time of the meeting, 10 more than the corresponding time in the previous year. 56 members were reported as unfinancial, the same number as at the corresponding time in the previous year, although most of these eventually do pay. Unfinancial members do not receive Society publications.

The 1994-95 year represented a normal 12 month financial year, unlike the previous year, and thus the figures were more representative than the 1993-94 figures. 1994-95 resulted in a surplus \$4000, although this was mostly due to a profit from the Annual Scientific Meeting rather than the revenue growth which had been predicted. Estimates for the 1995-96 financial year predicted a modest loss

of ~\$570 since the publication of PASA was moving to three issues per year. As a result, the Treasurer recommended that fees increase, as had been foreshadowed to the membership when PASA publication was contracted to CSIRO. However the introduction of the new membership grades was expected to result in a modest increase in revenue and thus the Treasurer proposed to leave fees and discounts unchanged if the new grades were accepted. The new grades were accepted and the annual fee structure remained unchanged apart from the introduction of the new grades - i.e.:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
Honorary Fellows	no cost
Fellows	\$100
Full members	\$80
Student, Associate or Retired members	\$35
Corporate members	\$300

The Treasurer acknowledged the continuing assistance of Betty Siegman. There was only brief discussion of points in the Treasurer's report.

Motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted including the recommendations that, given the acceptance of new membership grades, fees and discounts remain unchanged for 1995-6.

**Allen/McAdam
Carried**

6. Election of Auditor

The Treasurer recommended that the Auditor, Mr John McCauley, be re-appointed.

Motion that Mr John McCauley being appointed as Auditor for 1995-96 at an honorarium of \$300.

**Allen/Orchiston
Carried**

7. Editor's Report

At the time of the previous General Meeting there was no Editor in place and the question of the future of the *Proceedings* of the Astronomical Society of Australia (PASA) was open. A motion had been passed at that meeting to establish a working party consisting of the Editorial Board to consult widely among the membership and report to Council on the workings and future of the journal. Shortly after that meeting Jenny Nicholls accepted the position as Editor. She reported to the meeting on the progress of the journal during 1994-95.

The outcome of the Editorial Board's consultations was the clear view that the membership wished PASA to continue, preferably in an expanded form, and with the new name of the *Publications* of the Astronomical Society of Australia. These conclusions were reported to the membership in an Editorial in PASA 12(1).

The Editor discussed the move for PASA from two to three issues per year. This was in response to increased submissions, both from workshops and unsolicited papers. The sources of recent papers were detailed in the report. However this expansion had financial implications for the ASA and its membership and these were outlined by the Editor.

The report also gave the status of the next issues of the *Publications*. Issue 12 (1) had been distributed shortly before the meeting and had attracted considerable positive feedback on the professional presentation of the issue. Issue 12 (2) was closed and was expected to appear on time. Issue 13 (1) was very nearly full of papers, largely from a workshop on Antarctic Astronomy, while further contributions were expected to fill about 30% Issue 13 (2).

As ever, the Editor's report generated significant discussion. Ron Ekers pointed out that PASA was largely a local journal (currently) and thus should not be used in counting citations in key international journals. Jenny Nicholls suggested that PASA might seek niche papers, such as those concerning instrumental developments. Alan Wright and Jamie Biggs suggested similar ideas by using PASA for CD-ROM data papers or as a de facto supplement series. Raymond Haynes and Baerbel Koribalski questioned the time delay required for publication. Alan Wright questioned the availability of qualified referees in Australia, but Jenny Nicholls pointed out that PASA already used international referees extensively, in part to raise the journal's international profile and reputation.

Finally the discussion centred on the desirability of being innovative, perhaps moving to electronic publication quite soon, and the place of pre-print servers such as that under development at ATNF. Some members suggested a move to unrefereed electronic papers, aiming at quick publication at low cost, although this was seen as very undesirable by many others. The first international journals were just moving to electronic publication and it remained unclear just how electronic publication would proceed and what cost savings or threats to subscriptions there might be, especially for smaller journals such as PASA.

Motion that the Editor's Report be accepted.

**Milne/Hunstead
Carried**

8. Constitutional Amendments

The result of the ballot for the constitutional amendments was reported by the President at the end of his report. The ballots were counted by Jenny Nicholls and Roy Allen. The changes were approved with 69 Yes votes, 10 No votes and 7 Informal.

9. ASM and School of Astronomy 1996

The 1996 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) was scheduled to be held in Perth from 1 to 5 July, hosted by the Perth Observatory. The Harley Wood School of Astronomy was planned for the Indian-Pacific train on its trip from Sydney to Perth during the days preceding the ASM.

10. Any other business

Arthur Page announced the 5th Trans-Tasman Photoelectric Photometry Conference to be held in Toowoomba after the ASM in 1996.

It was reported the Society's Public Officer, Harry Hyland, had moved his residence from the ACT which necessitated a change of Public Officer. John Norris had accepted the position.

11. Election of the Council for 1995-96

Since there was a nomination from the membership for an elected position on the 1995-96 Council, a postal ballot was conducted with the results counted immediately prior to the General Meeting by Jenny Nicholls and Roy Allen. The newly elected Council consisted of the following members:

President:	Dr E M Sadler
Vice President	Dr R W Clay
Treasurer	Dr D K Milne
Secretaries	Dr M L Duldig Dr J W O'Byrne

Councillors

Dr M A Dopita
Dr R N Manchester
Dr J E Norris
Dr S Ryan
Dr R L Webster

The new President took the chair and expressed thanks to Harry Hyland for his work over the previous two years as President and as chair of the National Committee for Astronomy (NCA).

The meeting was closed at 12:31 pm.