



# ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

*Incorporated in the ACT*

## **Minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday July 9 1997 at the Clancy Conference Centre, University of New South Wales.**

The Meeting was opened at 11:06 am with the President in the Chair and approximately 56 members of all grades in attendance.

### **1. Apologies**

M.S. Bessell, P.L. Cottrell, F.P. Andrews, K.B. Fenton, J.W.V. Storey.

### **2. Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting**

Motion that the minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented.

**L.R. Allen/Couch  
Carried**

### **3. Business arising from the Minutes**

None.

### **4. President's Report**

A written report was distributed to members before the meeting. The President, Elaine Sadler, outlined the contents of that report.

The President opened by noting the success of the Harley Wood School which was held several days earlier at Jenolan Caves. A record 50 students attended with 10 lecturers and the feedback from the School indicated it was a great success. Three Council members were retiring at the Annual General Meeting and the President thanked them for their service to the Society. One of these was Sean Ryan who had also been the Society's representative on the Standards Australia committee for obtrusive lighting. His position, together with the other responsibilities associated with obtrusive lighting, had been taken by Mike Bessell.

The 1997 Bok Prize (for an undergraduate project completed in 1996) was awarded to Jean-Pierre Macquart from the University of Sydney. Jean-Pierre was presented with his prize during the Scientific Meeting and gave a talk on his work. The Ellery Lectureship was awarded to Prof. Ron Ekers and he presented the Ellery Lecture during the Scientific Meeting. Other distinctions awarded by the Society were the Harley Wood Lectureship to Dr David Jauncey and an Honorary Fellowship to Prof. Harry Hyland. Among Prof. Hyland's numerous contributions to astronomy and the ASA, the President mentioned his supervision of the ARC Discipline Research Strategy document "Australian Astronomy: Beyond 2000". The President noted comments by the Minister for Science on the value of this document.

Since the last General Meeting, the Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia (PASA) had entered a new era with the launch of an electronic edition of the journal ("eI-PASA") under the direction of Michelle Storey, the PASA editor. The President noted the continuing efforts of Bob Duncan in preparing the ASA Newsletter and also remarked on the increasing importance of the Society's Web pages and email exploder as media for communication within the Society. Other items mentioned in the report were the President's involvement in the "foresight analysis" of

Australian Antarctic science and the Society's continued membership in the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS).

The President noted with regret the deaths of two members - Bobbie Vaile and long-time member Arthur Watkinson.

Finally the President noted that the role of Public Officer of the Society had been taken on by Mike Bessell.

Motion that the President's report be accepted.

**Milne/McAdam  
Carried**

### **5. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer, Doug Milne, gave a summary of the written report and balance sheet which had been distributed to the meeting. Membership of the Society was listed as 364, 7 higher than at the same time in 1996. This number consisted of 70 Fellows, 217 members, 67 Students, 3 Associates and 7 Corporate members. 56 members were reported as unfinancial at the end March 1997, the 1996/97 financial year. This is considerably more than at the corresponding time in the previous year although most of these were expected to eventually pay. Late payment does result in a temporary shortfall of funds which prompted the Treasurer to ask if current discounts were effective or if a late fee should be introduced. Later discussion centred on this point and credit card payment. The President committed the Council to an investigation of the possibilities of using some form a direct debit system and possibly multi-year payment.

1996-97 resulted in a shortfall listed in the audited statement as almost \$12000. This resulted from a shortfall in on-time fee payments and an \$8000 contribution towards the development of the electronic PASA. CSIRO Publishing was again late in presenting its invoice for publication costs of PASA, continuing a slip of a year in payments which needed to be corrected sometime in the future. Results of the last two years showed an average surplus of approximately \$8000, close to the average of the last six years.

Estimates for the 1997-98 financial year predicted a deficit of \$2150. Given the healthy reserves of the Society, the Treasurer recommended that fees and discounts remain unchanged - 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
Discounts	\$5, with an additional ~10% discount if also a member of the AIP, if paid by 28/2/98.

Discussion of the Treasurer's report centred on the questions of late fees, credit card payments and automatic payment.

Motion that the Fees be maintained at current levels as recommended by the Treasurer.

**Milne/Wright  
Carried**

Motion that the Discounts be maintained at current levels as recommended by the Treasurer.

**Milne/Francis  
Carried**

Motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted.

**Faulkner/Humble  
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 1997-98 at an honorarium of \$300.

**Milne/Miller  
Carried**

## **7. Editor's Report**

The Editor, Michelle Storey, began her report by outlining changes to the Editorial Board. Mike Dopita, John Storey and John Whiteoak were resigning from the Editorial Board and the Editor thanked them for their work. Dick Manchester, Peter McGregor and Craig Smith had all agreed to join the Board, with Don Morton also joining as an overseas member.

The Editor then reported on the recent introduction of an electronic version of PASA (el-PASA) with the help of ATNF. Papers were made available on the el-PASA site after they had been accepted for publication in PASA. Authors were encouraged to make innovative use of colour, graphics, animations etc. On-line discussion groups attached to some workshop papers were also being organised. Beyond el-PASA, all papers more than a year old are scanned in and made available electronically by the Astrophysics Data System (ADS) Abstract Service.

Finally the Editor presented a plot showing the number of authors publishing in PASA as a function of their home institution. This showed a dominant contribution from overseas authors. The Editor encouraged all speakers at the Scientific Meeting to submit their papers for publication in PASA.

Discussion of the Editor's report centred on the need to referee workshop papers, with the Editor arguing that it added credibility to the workshop and dramatically improved the quality of the papers. Also raised was the question of an Asia/Pacific Astronomy Journal based on the European model of *Astronomy and Astrophysics*.

Motion that the Editor's Report be accepted.

**Hyland/L.R. Allen  
Carried**

## **Education sub-Committee Report**

At this point of the meeting Alan Wright was invited to report briefly on progress of the newly reconstituted Education sub-committee. Two long meetings had recently been held to decide on some initiatives to pursue. Discussion was continuing.

## **8. ASM/AGM and Harley Wood School 1998**

It was announced that the 1998 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and Harley Wood School of Astronomy would be hosted in Adelaide by the University of Adelaide. The 1999 meeting was expected to be hosted by the University of Western Sydney in conjunction with an IAU Symposium on Astronomy Education. The possibility of inviting the RASNZ to participate in 1999 was also suggested.

## **9. Any other business**

Prof. Jeremy Mould spoke briefly on the status of discussions by the NCA's Large Telescope Working Party.

## **10. Election of the Council for 1997-98**

As usual, the outgoing Council had made nominations for each position on the Council for 1997-98. Since there were no further nominations from the membership, no ballot was necessary. The newly elected Council consisted of the following members:

President:	Dr R W Clay
Vice President	Dr M S Bessell
Treasurer	Dr D K Milne
Secretaries	Dr M L Duldig Dr J W O'Byrne
Councillors	Dr M G Burton Dr B D Carter Dr J Chapman Dr J C Lattanzio Dr C H Smith

With the change in the Presidency, Dr Elaine Sadler became Immediate Past President. Dr Roy Allen remained as Donovan Trust Representative and Dr Michelle Storey continued as Editor.

The meeting was closed at 12:00 noon by the new President.