



ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Incorporated in the ACT

**Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting
held on Wednesday July 8 1998
at the Kerr Grant Lecture Theatre, University of Adelaide.**

The Meeting was opened at 11:20 am with the President in the Chair and approximately 56 members of all grades in attendance.

1. Apologies

K.B. Fenton, E. Sadler, J.W.V. Storey, A. Vaughan.

2. Minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting

Motion that the minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented.

**Couch/Nicholls
Carried**

3. Business arising from the Minutes

None.

4. President's Report

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

The President opened by noting the Society's meetings in the past year, in particular the current Annual Scientific Meeting and the Harley Wood School. He invited comment on operation of both of these, especially from Society's student members. None of the previous Council members had reached the end of their permitted term and all nominated for their positions again. No other nominations were received and so there was no Council ballot. The President noted however, that a replacement was being sought for long-standing Treasurer, Doug Milne.

The 1998 Bok Prize (for an undergraduate project completed in 1997) was awarded to Malcolm Kennett from the University of Sydney. Malcolm was presented with his prize during the Scientific Meeting and gave a talk on his work. The Page Medal for 1998 had previously been awarded to Gordon Garrard for his contributions in the observation of asteroids, comets, novae and supernovae. Other distinctions awarded by the Society were the Harley Wood Lectureship to Dr Brian Boyle and an Honorary Fellowship to Dr Don Faulkner. The President described Dr Faulkner's 12 years on Council, including terms as Secretary, Vice-President, President and Past President.

The President commented on the increasing success of the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia* (PASA), as measured by the significant improvement in its citation ranking in recent years and the development of *el-PASA*, the electronic edition of the journal. The departure of Don Melrose and Peter Fenton from the Editorial Board was noted and they were thanked for their efforts. Alan Wright was similarly thanked for his work as Chair of the Education sub-committee, his place was being taken by Alan Vaughan, with Nick Lomb as deputy Chair. The President noted the continuing efforts of Bob Duncan in preparing the ASA Newsletter and pointed out the importance of the Society's Web pages and email exploder for more rapid communication within the Society.

Other items were briefly mentioned in the report, including the continuing Society support for students attending overseas conferences, which had recently been increased to \$500 per student. The Society's interactions with Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) were briefly described, as was the Society representation on the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee (ASAC) and the Local Organising Committee for the IAU General Assembly in Sydney in 2003. The Society is represented by the President on the National Committee for Astronomy (NCA). The NCA was expected to act as the primary conduit between the Government and astronomical community on matters related to Australian membership of the Gemini consortium. The matter was discussed later in the Annual General meeting and the President noted other opportunities for discussion elsewhere during the Scientific Meeting.

The President announced that the next Annual Scientific Meeting and Annual General Meeting was to be hosted by the University of Western Sydney (Nepean) in a joint meeting with the Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand (RASNZ). It was expected to overlap with an international Education meeting.

Finally, the President noted with regret the deaths of one Society member, Alex Rodgers, and of visiting scientist Gene Shoemaker, who was killed in a car accident whilst in Australia.

There was no comment on the President's report.

Motion that the President's report be accepted.

**Milne/Orchiston
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 371, 7 higher than at the same time in 1997. This number consisted of 74 Fellows, 217 members, 67 Students, 6 Associates and 7 Corporate members. 57 members were reported as unfinancial at the end March 1998, the 1997/98 financial year. This was a similar number to that at the corresponding time in the previous year although most of these were expected to eventually pay. Late payment results in a temporary shortfall of funds which prompted the introduction in 1998 of an option to automatically pay fees each year. 25 members took this option, but all were prompt payers and not the people the plan was designed to attract.

The 1997-98 financial year showed a small profit of almost \$1800, although several payments were carried over into the new financial year. The budget for the new year projected a \$6500 deficit, due in large part to the payments carried forward and the lack of income from publication of workshop papers which was a significant feature of the previous year. To keep the deficit to this level, the Treasurer recommended an increase in fees of ~10% - the first since 1993. The new fee scale was:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
Honorary Fellows	no cost
Fellows	\$110
Full members	\$90
Student, Associate or Retired members	\$40
Associate Societies	\$80
Corporate members	\$300

Discounts \$5, with an additional ~10% discount if also a member of the AIP, if paid by 28/2/99.

Discussion of the Treasurer's report touched on several issues including the long term trends in Society funds and how to manage this, and interest rates on Society investments. The President commented that PASA publication costs were only slightly up in the budget and that the Council was closely reviewing CSIRO costings and had rejected some initial budget values. Council was also planning to look at the number of institutional subscriptions. Mike Bessell commented on the part played in containing costs by workshops which publish their papers in PASA.

The President reported that Bruce Dawson would be working in parallel with Doug Milne as Treasurer in the coming year.

Motion that the Fees be increased as described, with discounts maintained at current levels, as recommended by the Treasurer.

**Clay/Cram
Carried**

Motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted.

**Milne/Clay
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 1998-99 at an honorarium of \$300.

**Milne/Miller
Carried**

7. Editor's Report

The Editor, Michelle Storey, began her report by describing the strong support for workshops which had resulted in larger than typical sizes for Volumes 14 and 15. She then thanked outgoing members of the Editorial Board, Don Melrose and Peter Fenton, and welcomed Lewis Ball and Paul Cally in their place.

The Science Citation Index ranking of PASA had increased significantly between 1992 and 1996 and it was hoped that this would continue to improve, especially with the success of the electronic version of PASA (el-PASA) which provided the final published version of each paper in PDF form. The Astrophysics Data Service (ADS) carried abstracts of all papers and linked to the full text in el-PASA. It scanned the published papers and made them available from the ADS site a year later. The Editor noted that most delays in making a paper available on the el-PASA site were due to problems with papers and figures not being in correct formats.

The Editor presented a plot showing the number of authors publishing in PASA as a function of their home institution. Once again this showed a dominant contribution from overseas authors, but with good support from all across the Australian community. The Editor encouraged all speakers at the Scientific Meeting to submit their papers for publication in PASA and noted that invited speakers were required to do so.

The report was closed by thanking the Special Research Centre for Theoretical Astrophysics (SRCfTA) for their support in funding the Editor's salary for the 2 days per week required to manage PASA and el-PASA.

Discussion of the Editor's report began by discussion of whether the success of el-PASA indicated that the paper copy should be replaced with high quality paper abstracts of fully electronic papers. The

view was again put that PASA should lead the way to electronic publication, but Peter Robertson from CSIRO Publishing claimed that this may jeopardise the 2/3 of costs covered by institutional subscriptions to save a lesser proportion of costs due to the paper copy. The Editor acknowledged the importance of the question of fully electronic publication, but pointed out the need for some paper copies as archival material.

In response to a question about delays caused by all papers going to two referees, the Editor noted that international referees were treating PASA as an international journal and reviewing papers accordingly. This sometimes made acceptance more difficult for papers by students but was resulting in a raised standard for all papers.

Motion that the Editor's Report be accepted.

**Duldig/Smith
Carried**

8. ASM/AGM and Harley Wood School 1999

As noted in the President's report, it was announced that the 1999 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and Harley Wood School of Astronomy would be hosted by the University of Western Sydney (Nepean). The Scientific Meeting would be a joint meeting with the Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand (RASNZ) and was expected to overlap with an international Education meeting.

9. Any other business

Bruce McAdam raised the future of the NSW HSC Distinction Course in Cosmology which had been running for five years and thanked the many ASA members who had supported it. The course was threatened because of a recent review of the HSC, but he thanked the President for writing to the NSW Education Minister in support of the course.

The President then sought advice from the membership on questions he had raised in his report concerned with Australia's involvement in Gemini. The discussion centred on the composition and operation of the Time Assignment Committee and whether refereeing of proposals should go to international referees. The current ATAC model was regarded as successful, but there was a willingness to consider the changes suggested to some aspects of its operation.

10. Election of the Council for 1998-99

As usual, the outgoing Council had made nominations for each position on the Council for 1998-99. Since there were no further nominations from the membership, no ballot was necessary. The Council remained unchanged from the previous year and therefore 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

Dr Roy Allen remained as Donovan Trust Representative and Dr Michelle Storey continued as Editor.

The meeting was closed at 12:20 pm by the President.