



ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Incorporated in the ACT
ABN 37 660 297 848

Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting held on Monday 21 July 2003 in the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre during IAU General Assembly XXV

The Meeting was opened at 11:10 am with the President in the Chair and approximately 22 members of all grades in attendance.

1. Apologies

L.R. Allen, M. Burton, M. Duldig, J. Lattanzio, W. Orchiston and A. Page.

2. Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting

Motion that the minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented.

**Hunstead/Cally
Carried**

3. Business arising from the Minutes

None.

4. President's Report

A written report was distributed to members at the meeting. The President, Dick Manchester, outlined the contents of that report.

The Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and Harley Wood School were displaced this year by the two weeks of the IAU General Assembly, held in the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour from 13 to 26 July.

The President noted that the activities of the Society in the past 12 months have been dominated by the planning and organisation of the General Assembly of the IAU. The Society had financial responsibility for the \$2.4M budget, a responsibility that weighed heavily on the Council and its office bearers. Fortunately, the SARS epidemic and the war in Iraq did not deter over 2000 participants from attending. This more than balanced the budget, which will allow repayment of the float money to the various institutions, plus a profit of size yet to be determined.



Many members of the Society contributed to the planning and organisation of the General Assembly. The President noted the contributions of student volunteers, members organising exhibits, members of the National Organising Committee and several individuals - John O'Byrne who oversaw the budget on behalf of the ASA; Shaun Amy and Vince McIntyre who provided superb internet facilities; Aaron Chippendale and Connell Wagner for organizing the Industry Day; and especially Harry Hyland, John Whiteoak, Ron Ekers, Rachel Webster and the President himself who were members of the NOC Executive. He also noted the work of the conference organisers, ICMS Australasia Pty Ltd, and in particular the tireless efforts of the Conference Manager, Lee Christopher.

Another major event of the year was the destruction of much of Mount Stromlo Observatory by bushfires in January. The ASA contributed in a small way to overcoming these losses, writing a letter to the Prime Minister in support of rebuilding the facilities and organising a fund to provide direct support to members and students who suffered losses.

The Society remained healthy in terms of number of members and financially, with just over 400 members, up from 382 the year before. John O'Byrne was made an Honorary Fellow, recognising service to the Society, including nine years (so far) as one of two Honorary Secretaries. The Council had also voted to give Frank Bateson complementary membership of the Society for life. Frank was a Foundation Member of the ASA and led the Variable Star Section of the Royal Astronomical Society of NZ for more than 75 years.

The President noted the contribution of Michelle Storey who had resigned in March after more than seven years as Managing Editor. In collaboration with the staff of CSIRO Publishing, she oversaw the difficult transition to fully electronic publication. The Society was fortunate to attract Louise Hartley to take over the job of managing Editor starting full-time in October. John Lattanzio, Chair of the PASA Editorial Advisory Committee, had stepped in to bridge the gap between Michelle's departure and Louise's arrival.

The Australian Astronomy website was launched during the year after considerable planning and development. Maintenance and development of this site was formerly part of the PASA Managing Editor's job, but the task had been split off and passed to Sarah Maddison. Sarah was thanked for her sterling efforts in upgrading the site before production of the CD image of the site distributed to General Assembly participants. It was planned that this website would take over the functions of the ASA Newsletter. Sarah and Brad Gibson were thanked for producing what was probably the final issue of the Newsletter.

This year the General Assembly subsumed the 2003 Annual Scientific Meeting. However, the 2004 ASM will be held on the St Lucia campus of the University of Queensland in the week July 5 – 9. As usual, the Harley Wood School will be held in close association with the ASM.

The ASA awards a number of prizes for work in various aspects of astronomy. The Bok Prize for 2003, rewarding excellence at the undergraduate level, was awarded to Darren Croton of RSAA. The David Allen Prize, recognising excellence in communication of astronomy to the general public, was presented to Fred Watson, Astronomer-in-Charge at Siding Spring Observatory. Fred is an expert communicator with two regular radio programs, giver of numerous interviews, writer of librettos, and other activities publicising astronomy. The President also congratulated Dr A G (Geoff) Fenton who received an AM in the Queen's Birthday Honours for almost 60 years contribution to Cosmic Ray astronomy research.

Unfortunately the Ellery Prize Lecture could not be held in at its usual place in the ASM this year and was deferred to another suitable occasion. However, the President acknowledged a generous donation to the Foundation for Advancement of Astronomy by Ben Gascoigne which put the Ellery Prize on a sound financial footing and allowed the Society to increase the value of the Prize. He expressed the hope that others would also donate to the Foundation to allow us to continue to reward excellence in various aspects of astronomy.

Finally, the President thanked the retiring members of Council, Mike Bessell (the Immediate Past-President), Matthew Bailes, Jamie Biggs, Brian Schmidt, John Storey and our student representative, Diana Londish, for valued contributions to the Society.

Several points of the President's report were briefly discussed, notably the level of sponsorship for the General Assembly. Although this had proved very difficult, the President noted that close to \$0.5M was finally contributed in cash and in-kind.

Motion that the President's report be accepted.

**Webster/Colless
Carried**

5. Treasurer's Report

Bruce Dawson presented a summary of his report for the Society's financial year ending 31 March 2003. Membership of the Society was listed as 400, consisting of 70 Fellows, 225 members, 87 Students, 11 Associate Members, 1 Associate Society and 6 Corporate members. 57 members were unfinancial at the time of the meeting.

The Treasurer reported on three sets of accounts – the Society, the Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy (FAA) and the IAU2003 General Assembly. The last is administered by conference organisers ICMS for the NOC.

The Society accounts showed an increase of over \$4000 over the financial year, continuing a trend of small surpluses in recent years. These assets included a float of \$55,000 provided to the IAU2003 account.

The Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy received 115 donations totalling almost \$8000, to bring total assets to almost \$60,000. This included donations made in support of an appeal to help staff and student victims of the Mt Stromlo bushfires. No payments were made from Foundation funds during the financial year, but in April payments totalling \$11,600 were made to 6 students and 2 staff affected by the bushfires. \$7600 came from the Foundation and \$4000 from Society reserves. Since the end of the financial year a further \$20,000 donation had been received to support the Ellery Prize.

The IAU 2003 General Assembly account stood at just over \$246,000 at 31 March. Of course this represented an interim state in the midst of large incomes and outflows in the run up to the general Assembly. Another full audit will follow when the General Assembly accounts are wound up.

The Treasurer proposed that there be no change to the basic fee structure. As a result, the annual fees were

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Aust. (incl.GST)</u>	<u>Overseas</u>
Honorary Fellows	no cost	no cost
Fellows	\$121	\$110
Full members	\$99	\$90
Student	\$44	\$40
Retired Fellow	\$44	\$40
Retired Member	\$44	\$40
Associate Member	\$44	\$40
Associate Member with PASA	\$82.50	\$75
Associate Societies	\$88	\$80
Corporate members	\$330	\$300
Discounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$5 if paid by 29/2/04• ~10% discount off the GST-inclusive fee if also a member of the AIP and paid by 29/2/04.• No discount for Corporate members	

The Treasurer presented a budget for 2003-2004, predicting a small surplus.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, with Fees and discounts maintained at previous levels.

**Cally/Storey
Carried**

6. Election of Auditor

The Treasurer recommended the appointment of Mr Jim McKenzie of Sothertons Chartered Accountant as Auditor for 2003-2004.

Motion that Mr Jim McKenzie be appointed as Auditor for 2003-2004.

**Dawson/da Costa
Carried**

7. Editor Advisory Committee Report

The chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC), John Lattanzio, and the new Managing Editor, Louise Hartley, were not present so the President summarised the contents of the Editorial Advisory Committee report.

Submissions to PASA were strong, averaging one or two papers per week with rapid acceptance times one of PASA's strong points. Impact factor had dipped slightly in 2002, in part because of a 12 month delay in ADS getting the link to the new PASA web site correct.

The Journal made a small profit of just over \$4000 in 2003, largely because of the break between Michelle Storey's retirement as Managing Editor and Louise Hartley taking up the post. Louise took over on July 1 working 1.5 days per week. To further help the budget, it was proposed to discontinue the PASA Update Bulletins (PUBs). The President asked for feedback on this move.

The current membership of the EAC was outlined, noting that a replacement was sought for Russell Cannon.

In association with the General Assembly, a CD had been prepared containing papers from Volume 20 of PASA and a snapshot of the Australian Astronomy web site. The main purpose of the CD was to publicise PASA.

Finally, the President described plans for the coming year, including a possible International Advisory panel and a new template for submission and electronic publication.

Discussion of the EAC report briefly centred on publication of conference papers, which was generally regarded as a good thing, and the place of Solar and Terrestrial Space Physics which was seen to be at the edge of the normal range of PASA content.

Motion to accept the Editorial Advisory Committee Report.

**Colless/Biggs
Carried**

8. Any other business

Rachel Webster raised the question about what to do with any profit from the General Assembly. She had talked to various people beforehand and wished to flag a proposal with the community. The proposal was to give the money to the ASA, to be placed in a separate account with a designated use such as funding student travel. This was a change from the original proposal, dating back to the raising of the float money, which foreshadowed returning money to those organisations contributing to the float in proportion to their contribution. However the formal acceptance of this proposal was of uncertain.

Rachel Webster was seeking a consensus on the issue and proposed a motion to make the recommendation of the meeting clear.

Motion that the Society will accept any profit arising from the General Assembly once all outstanding invoices are paid and all contributors to the float have been repaid. A separate account will be established to hold the funds and the Council will make an explicit proposal on how the money should be spent. This proposal for spending will be placed before the members for approval.

Webster/Green

Carried with 1 abstention

9. Election of the Council for 2003-2004

As required under the Constitution, the outgoing Council had made nominations for each position on the Council for 2003-2004. No further nominations were received, so no ballot was necessary.

The Council for 2003-2004 consisted of the following members:

President:	Dr Anne Green
Vice President	Dr Gary da Costa
Treasurer	Dr Bruce Dawson
Secretaries	Dr Marc Duldig Dr John O'Byrne
Councillors	Dr Paul Cally Prof. Matthew Colless Dr Michael Drinkwater Dr Maria Hunt Prof. Brad Gibson

Dr Richard Manchester was ex-officio member as Immediate Past President. Dr Roy Allen remained as Donovan Trust Representative. Dr John Lattanzio was ex-officio member of Council as the chair of the PASA Editorial Advisory Committee. Ms Vicky Safouris was named as the new student representative on the Council.

The meeting was then handed over to the incoming President, Dr Anne Green, who offered her thanks to outgoing President, Dick Manchester, the Secretaries and the Treasurer.

The meeting was closed at 12:15 pm by the new President.