



ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Incorporated in the ACT

ABN 37 660 297 848

Minutes of the 38th Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 6 July 2004 Steele Building, University of Queensland

The Meeting was opened at 4:04 pm with the President in the Chair and approximately 47 members of all grades in attendance.

1. Apologies

L.R. Allen, D.Blair, B. Dawson, M. Duldig, J. Lattanzio.

2. Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting

Motion that the minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented.

**Webster/Couch
Carried**

3. Business arising from the Minutes

None.

4. President's Report

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

The President opened her report by noting that it was almost exactly one year since Australia successfully staged the XXVth General Assembly of the IAU in Sydney. She thanked the very large number of ASA Members who had made outstanding contributions to the organisation of the GA, in particular, the National Organising Committee (NOC), the large number of students who helped, the people who organised the public and educational outreach, and the numerous helpers in hidden support roles. Credit was also given to Lee Christopher and the staff at ICMS, the conference organisers.

It was clear that there would be a surplus of approximately \$60,000 after all costs and float monies were repaid. Following a proposal from the NCA, the ASA was establishing an independent Working Group to consult widely within the Australian astronomical community and to make a recommendation to the ASA Council on how to make the most effective, equitable and appropriate use of these funds. The ASA Council proposed Gordon Robertson (Chair), Ron Ekers, Tamara Davis, Paul Francis as the members of the group.

The President noted that the Society membership was 403 members, which had been steady over the past year. The Swinburne Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing had been accepted as a corporate member and they were thanked for their ongoing support. Fewer than 10% of the Membership were Fellows of the Society (not counting Honorary and retired Fellows), but there were many senior and distinguished astronomers in our community who would be eligible. Consequently, the Council planned to invite a number of these astronomers to consider becoming Fellows of the ASA, in recognition of their contribution to the discipline.

The contributions of two distinguished astronomers would be missed, having died during the year - Bob Duncan, who had a long and distinguished career at the Australia Telescope National Facility and Harry Minnett, one of radio astronomy's great pioneers.

It had been a successful year for the PASA journal, with the Impact Factor rising to a very creditable 1.057, as measured by the JCR Journal Citation. This is the highest citation rating ever achieved by PASA. The President thanked Louise Hartley for her achievements as the new Managing Editor and John Lattanzio for his effective leadership as the Chair of the PASA Editorial Advisory Committee.

The astronomical community had been invited to participate in the AIP Congress to be held in Canberra from Jan 31 to Feb 4, 2005. All members were encouraged to attend the Congress, which was being held in the International Year of Physics, marking a 100 years since Einstein's fundamental contributions to physics.

In 2004-2005 the NCA had the responsibility to begin preparation of the Decadal Review, to be published in 2005. This important document sets a blueprint for the future priorities for Australian Astronomy as well as giving a census and

evaluation of our current status and impact. The Working Groups and sub-Committees to undertake the collation of data and drafting of the document were to be established shortly after the ASM. In a similar vein, a presentation had already been made in June, at short notice, to the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Committee (PMSEIC).

The President of the ASA was pleased to accept the invitation to join the Steering Committee of ANITA (Australian National Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics) to help strengthen the role of the theoretical astrophysicists in the astronomical community.

The two major national Facilities appointed new Directors within the previous year - Brian Boyle, as Director of the ATNF and Matthew Colless as Director of the AAO. The President also congratulated Matthew Colless on his election to the Australian Academy of Science.

The ASA awards a number of prizes for work in various aspects of astronomy.

- The 2003 Ellery Lectureship was awarded to Don Melrose and held at the 2004 ASM. The Lectureship was not delivered in 2003 because of the packed schedule for the IAU GA. The title of Don's keynote speech was "Maser Emission in Astrophysical Plasmas".
- The Harley Wood lecturer, Matthew Colless presented a stimulating public lecture entitled "Surveying the Universe."
- The Bok Prize was awarded to Stanislav Shabala of the University of Tasmania, for his thesis entitled "On The Evolution of HII Regions."
- The Page Medal was awarded to Colin Bembrick for his substantial contribution in the field of photometric observations of minor planets. The Medal was presented at the National Australian Convention of Amateur Astronomers in Hobart earlier in the year.

The President and at least five other astronomers attended the FASTS 'Science Meets Parliament' event in Canberra in October 2003. Over 200 scientists attended and were briefed comprehensively before their scheduled appointments with a number of Federal politicians. One of the most exciting events was a breakfast meeting organised between the politicians and a selected group of young scientists.

Finally the President announced that the Annual Science Meeting and Annual General Meeting of the ASA for 2005 would be organised by the University of Sydney. She thanked the organisers of the Brisbane meeting, Michael Drinkwater, Kevin Pimblet and the members of the SOC and LOC for their organisation of the present Meeting. She also thanked Marianne Doyle and her Committee for organising a terrific Harley Wood Winter School in Coolangatta, with the theme "From our Sun to the Milky Way and Beyond".

Motion that the President's report be accepted.

**Colless/Drinkwater
Carried**

5. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the Treasurer, Bruce Dawson, the President outlined his report, presenting a summary of his report for the Society's financial year ending 31 March 2004. Membership of the Society was listed as 403, consisting of 70 Fellows, 227 members, 89 Students, 10 Associate Members, 1 Associate Society and 6 Corporate members. 59 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 IAU 2003 General Assembly. The last had been administered by conference organisers ICMS for the NOC.

The Society accounts showed a very small deficit over the financial year, partly as a result of payments of \$4000 to victims of the Mount Stromlo fire. Assets at 31 March 2004 amounted to just over \$142,000 excluding outstanding membership fees. These assets included a float of \$55,000 provided to the IAU GA account and \$5000 to the Brisbane ASM, but did not yet include any surplus from the IAU GA.

The Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy received 46 donations totalling almost \$26,000, including a single generous donation of \$20,000 to support the Ellery Lectureship, to bring total assets to over \$79,000. Payments were made to staff and student victims of the Mt Stromlo bushfires, based on donations taken for that purpose, and for the award of the David Allen Prize.

The IAU GA account stood at approximately \$98,000 at 31 March, based on a report supplied by the auditors. Final payments on this account were still awaited to allow it to be wound up.

The Treasurer highlighted increased costs of PASA in 2004 leading to a projected ongoing deficit. He proposed an increase of ~12% to the basic fee structure to meet this situation, the first increase in five years apart from the imposition of the GST. As a result, the proposed annual fees were

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Aust. (incl.GST)</u>	<u>Overseas</u>
Honorary Fellows	no cost	no cost
Fellows	\$135	\$120
Full members	\$110	\$100
Student	\$50	\$45
Retired Fellow	\$50	\$45
Retired Member	\$50	\$45
Associate Member	\$50	\$45
Associate Member with PASA	\$90	\$85
Associate Societies	\$100	\$90
Corporate members	\$370	\$335
Discounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5 if paid by 28/2/05 • ~10% discount off the GST-inclusive fee if also a member of the AIP and paid by 28/2/05. • No discount for Corporate members 	

Members asked if the increased PASA costs were on-going. The President replied that ASA financial reserves were the subject of a review by Council and the PASA costs would be reviewed as part of that process.

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

**Tinney/Tango
Carried**

6. Election of Auditor

The Treasurer recommended the appointment of Mr Jim McKenzie of Sothertons Chartered Accountants as Auditor for 2004-2005.

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

**Price/Da Costa
Carried**

7. Editor Advisory Committee Report

The chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC), John Lattanzio, was not present at the meeting and so the Secretary, John O'Byrne, outlined the contents of the written Editorial Advisory Committee report.

Submissions to PASA remained strong, with almost as many submissions at this point of the year as for all of 2003. Time from acceptance to publication remained good, but other journals are also improving in this respect. Overall the rejection rate was 28%, but the quality of unsolicited submissions in particular needed to be raised.

Impact factor had bounced back to a new high in 2004, but there remained much room for improvement – requiring ASA members to submit their better papers to PASA.

CSIRO Publishing (CP) were under increasing pressure to return a profit of ~10% on their journals. This was built into the figures for the current contract, increasing the costs to the ASA to \$28,000 annually. A proposal in the previous year to discontinue the PASA Update Bulletins (PUBs) to help reduce costs was rejected and PUBs continued.

Although the relationship with CP was good, we had been approached by Blackwells in the UK with an interest in publishing PASA. John Lattanzio had opened a dialogue with them to allow further investigation as the end of the current CP contract approached.

The current membership of the EAC was:

- John Lattanzio (Chair)
- Roger Clay
- Warrick Couch
- Michael Dopita
- Lawrence Cram
- Sarah Maddison
- Quentin Parker
- Lister Stavely-Smith

Several of these members were due to retire or be renewed at the end of 2004.

8. NOC report

Dick Manchester reported for the National Organising Committee (NOC) of the IAU General Assembly. A final report was being prepared by John Whiteoak, but was delayed by slow finalising of finances from conference organisers ICMS.

He summarised the status at that time. Income was ~\$2M, largely due to ~2000 registrations, somewhat more than estimated in the conservative budget. However sponsorship was ~\$300k short of original estimates. Expenditure was dominated by over \$500k for the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre (SCEC), with other costs variously above or below budget. He noted that \$150k for tea/coffee breaks had been cut by \$60k in replacing cakes by biscuits! Seed funding had been repaid to all contributors in recent weeks, including \$55k to the ASA. Liabilities remained ~\$66k with a question remaining over ~\$32k related to Travel Grants and subject to exchange rate variations. All Proceedings were expected to be available with a few months.

9. AGM and Harley Wood School for 2005

As noted in the President's report, the Annual Science Meeting, Annual General Meeting of the ASA and the Harley Wood School were to be organised by the University of Sydney in 2005 since they were long overdue. The meetings were expected to be held outside of Sydney.

10. Any other business

Brian Schmidt suggested that the ASA should be looking at secure web-based account facilities for the Treasurer and ASA conferences. This was to be investigated.

Gary Da Costa questioned whether non-financial members of the ASA should be allowed to present at the ASM, although it was suggested that this would discourage attendance at the meeting. The President agreed to discuss this.

Stuart Ryder raised the problem of having the ASA membership list and email addresses publicly available on the web pages. A lookup facility on a database was an option although this required knowing who to look up. Another option suggested was to make the list an image that web-trawling robots could not read to extract email addresses.

11. Election of the Council for 2004-2005

As required under the Constitution, the outgoing Council had made nominations for each position on the Council for 2004-2005. No further nominations were received, so no ballot was necessary.

The Council for 2004-2005 consisted of the following members:

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

Dr Richard Manchester was ex-officio member as Immediate Past President. Dr Roy Allen remained as Donovan Trust and Macquarie Foundation 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 President finally thanked the outgoing Treasurer, Bruce Dawson, for 5 years of service in difficult times covering the introduction of the GST and the running of the IAU General Assembly. Maria Hunt from UNSW had generously volunteered to take over as Treasurer.

The meeting was closed at 5:00 pm by the President.