

The 71st Meeting of the Council of the ASA

The 71st Meeting of the Council was held in the Science Foundation Council Room of the School of Physics at the University of Sydney on 9 December 1996. The meeting opened by discussing progress with the Standards Australia interim standard AS4282 on control of obtrusive lighting. Sean Ryan, the Society's representative on the relevant Standards Australia committee, was moving overseas and Mike Bessell was nominated as his replacement who would also maintain the Designated Optical Observatory list. Another on-going matter was the attempt to achieve income tax deductibility for the Society. This was refused by the tax office and it was decided to investigate alternate means of administering contributions to the Society.

The Council approved a list of five new members and three applications of \$400 each for student travel to overseas conferences. Other Executive business included a discussion of membership certificates and how the Society should deal with publicity and interactions with media contacts.

The Treasurer's report indicated that the Society's reserves remained around the level of \$100,000. The question of how large the Society's reserves should be was discussed and this level was deemed appropriate, given the large commitment embodied in producing the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia* (PASA).

The new Editor, Michelle Storey, reported on the state of submissions for Volume 14 of PASA and commented on the low level of submissions from the last scientific meeting. A proposal from the Editorial Board was presented to trial an electronic version of PASA. The Council approved the trial, which was to be funded by contributions from the Society and the ATNF. The Editor also reported on the state on negotiations with CSIRO Publishing on a new contract. The Council discussed the related issue of an increase in PASA subscription price by CSIRO which had not been approved by Council.

A report on the 1995 Harley Wood School was presented. Organisation of the School had been carried through very successfully by a committee of students when the initial plans to hold it on the Indian-Pacific train had to be abandoned. Reports were received, as usual, from the Donovan Trust and Macquarie Foundation. Other reports were received on the activities of FASTS and the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee (ASAC).

The 72nd Meeting of the Council of the ASA

The 72nd Meeting of the Council was held in the Science Foundation Council Room of the School of Physics at the University of Sydney on 14 April 1997. The meeting opened with discussion of several topics arising from the previous minutes. Obtaining income tax deductibility for donations to the Society remained an issue. The Council agreed to ask the Macquarie Foundation to accept donations for joint lectures and prizes. A proposal was accepted to hold the 1999 Scientific Meeting at the University of Western Sydney jointly with the RASNZ, close to the time of an IAU meeting in Sydney on astronomy education.

The Council approved several more new members, including one associate and one corporate member. Professor Harry Hyland was offered and accepted election as an Honorary Fellow of the Society. Four applications of \$400 each were approved for student travel to overseas conferences.

The report from the Treasurer included the audited balance sheet as at 31 March 1997. A deficit of almost \$12000 was more than balanced by a substantial surplus in the previous year, an effect which reflected the timing of payments for PASA.

The Editor reported on the status of PASA, including the production of the electronic version of PASA, called *el-PASA*, which had been well received. Council agreed to commit up to a further \$1000 to the maintenance and development of the el-PASA site in 1997. Changes to the Editorial Board were also discussed, including the addition of overseas members. Contract negotiations between the Editor and CSIRO were discussed. The Council expressed significant reservations with the way budget costs were decided and asked the Editor to resolve these issues in the course of the negotiations of the contract.

A final report was received on the 1996 Scientific Meeting in Perth, indicating that the meeting had been a considerable success. The plans for the 1997 meeting organised by the University of New South Wales were presented, along with the Harley Wood School to be held at Jenolan Caves.

Harry Hyland reported on the discussions of the NCA's Large Telescope Working party. The group concluded that, given the government's decision not to proceed with ESO membership, the best option was to continue interactions with ESO, including the possible supply of the *Australis* infrared fibre spectrograph in exchange for observing time.

Other reports were received on the activities of FASTS, the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee (ASAC), the Donovan Trust and the Macquarie Foundation. Other business included discussions of the form and future of the ASA Newsletter and the impact of a new international agreement on ownership of databases. It was also noted that significant funding remained available for international collaborations from the Major National Research Facilities Fund (MNRF).

The 73rd Meeting of the Council of the ASA

The 73rd Meeting of the Council was held in the Physics Common room at the University of New South Wales on 6 July 1996, the day before the beginning of the Annual Scientific Meeting at the University.

Several on-going matters were discussed including membership certificates, income tax deductibility and the future of the ASA Newsletter, all of which remained unresolved. The location of the 1998 Scientific meeting had been decided however, with Adelaide offering to hold the conference. The Council approved seven new members and two applications of \$400 each for travel to overseas conferences. Council decided that it was timely for the student travel program to be reviewed. Opinions on the scheme were to be sought from previous recipients of funds and the student membership in general. Another item of student interest was the approval of the award of the Bok prize to Jean-Pierre Macquart from the University of Sydney

The Treasurer presented his report for the Council and the draft Treasurer's report for the AGM. The 1996-97 financial year showed a loss of almost \$12000 caused by several factors, but the Society's financial position remained strong. After some discussion of the value of discounts, it was decided that the Annual General Meeting should be asked about the possibility of introducing auto-payment of fees.

The Editor reported on the status of PASA for Volumes 14 and 15. The work to set up the electronic PASA (el-PASA) site was completed in April although further work was expected

for the rest of the year, supported by funding approved at the previous meeting. A new initiative proposed in conjunction with an upcoming conference was an on-line discussion site based on submitted papers. Also, three new Editorial Board members had accepted appointment to replace retiring members. New international members had also been approached.

The PASA budget had been revised downward by CSIRO Publishing after critical questioning by the Council at the last meeting. However CSIRO continued to budget for a surplus which they had then retained in all previous years of the contract, although Council clearly found this inappropriate. Nevertheless, in the light of other concessions by CSIRO Publishing, the Editor recommended acceptance of the revised budget subject to further negotiation concerning the surplus. Council directed that negotiations for renewal of the contract should attempt to remove this anomaly. Council also expressed a wish to see certified statements of accounts and rejected CSIRO Publishing's request for an increase in the subscription price for PASA.

Other reports to Council indicated continuing activity by FASTS, the Donovan Trust and the Macquarie Foundation. A report from Alan Wright indicated a renewal of activity by the Education sub-committee, who held a meeting at the same time as the Council meeting. The NCA activity included a talk to the Science Minister after he opened the Scientific meeting the next day. The lack of acceptance of pure science goals in the review of Antarctic activities by the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee (ASAC) was a cause of some concern to the Council.

The 31st Annual General Meeting of the ASA

The 31st Annual General Meeting of the ASA was held during the Society's Annual Scientific Meeting. The Scientific Meeting was held at the University of New South Wales from 7 to 10 July 1997. A total of 143 people attended, of whom 74 were postgraduate students.

The Scientific Meeting featured 61 verbal papers and 56 poster papers. The prize for best student talk went to Tanya Hill from the University of Sydney, while the student poster prize went to Takuya Fujiyoshi from the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). The 1997 Bok Prize (for an undergraduate project completed in 1996) was awarded to Jean-Pierre Macquart from the University of Sydney, who presented a talk on his work during the meeting. Ron Ekers presented the 1997 Ellery Lecture during the Scientific Meeting.

The 1997 Harley Wood lecture, entitled 'The Vision Splendid: Radio Astronomy in Space' was delivered one evening during the meeting by David Jauncey of CSIRO. The 1997 Harley Wood School was held from 3 to 6 July at Jenolan Caves, west of Sydney. The theme was 'Observational Techniques and Technologies in Australia' and it was attended by a record 50 students from all over Australia.

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on July 9, during a scheduled break in the scientific sessions. Copies of reports from the President, Treasurer and Editor were circulated to the members. The President reported on the Society's activities during the previous year, notably the launch of an electronic edition of the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia* (el-PASA). The President also commented on the role of the ASA Newsletter and the increasing importance the Society's Web pages and email exploder as media for communication within the Society. The President also noted with regret the deaths of two members - Bobbie Vaile and long-time member Arthur Watkinson.

The Treasurer reported that the Society membership had risen to 364, consisting of 70 Fellows, 217 Members, 67 Students, 3 Associates and 7 Corporate members. The 1996-97 financial year 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. Averaging results of the last two years showed an annual surplus of approximately \$8000, close to the average of the last six years. Estimates for the 1997-98 financial year predicted a deficit \$2150. Given the healthy reserves of the Society, the Treasurer recommended that fees and discounts remain unchanged.

The Editor reported changes to the Editorial Board. Dick Manchester, Peter McGregor and Craig Smith had all joined the Board as local members, with Don Morton as an overseas member. During the year an electronic version of PASA (*el-PASA*) had been introduced 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 and animations in their contributions to el-PASA.

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

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

Reported by John O'Byrne