

## **The 77th Meeting of the Council of the ASA**

The 77th Meeting of the Council was held in the Science Foundation Council Room of the School of Physics at the University of Sydney on 27 November 1998. The meeting opened by discussing the on-going question of income tax deductibility for the Society. A draft Deed for the establishment of a tax-deductible Foundation was tabled and a decision made to proceed. The Council approved a list of seven new members and discussed the need for a new Treasurer to replace Doug Milne. Bruce Dawson from Adelaide has expressed an interest and discussions were to continue.

The National Organising Committee (NOC) for the IAU General Assembly in 2003 had requested the ASA to act as the legally responsible body for the meeting. The Council decided to agree in principle with the request, but to seek more information on commitments by other institutions and possibilities for reducing the financial risk.

The Treasurer, Doug Milne, reported that the Society's reserves remained healthy, but that *Sky & Space* Magazine would be dropped as a Corporate Member since their membership was several years in arrears.

The Editor reported on the state of submissions for Volume 16 of the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia* (PASA) and commented again on the low level of submissions from the last scientific meeting. Council resolved that the Editor should concentrate her efforts on strongly pressuring invited speakers to submit their manuscripts.

CSIRO Publishing had presented a revised budget for Volume 16 which was compared to a quote from Blackwell Scientific. The latter was slightly more expensive but appeared to offer some advantages. For the present year it was decided to accept the CSIRO budget but express Council's continuing concerns with the contract.

An extensive report was received in person from staff of the University of Western Sydney, Nepean on progress in organising the 1999 ASM/AGM and Harley Wood School. An offer from the University of Tasmania and the Antarctic Division to host the 2000 ASM/AGM was accepted.

A report on the latest meeting of the Education sub-committee included a plan to expand the membership to give broader geographical coverage. Council agreed but expressed the opinion that the sub-committee should not become too large. Council approved a new representative for the Society's on the Standards Australia LG10 committee concerned with obtrusive lighting. The Society's nominee was Reg Wilson, a lighting engineer with strong interests and experience in the area.

There were reports from the ASA representatives to FASTS, the NCA, the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee, the Donovan Trust and the Macquarie Foundation. Concern was expressed through several channels about proposed changes to the ARC mechanisms. The President was delegated to write to the Minister responsible expressing the Council's concerns.

## **The 78th Meeting of the Council of the ASA**

The 78th Meeting of the Council was held in the Science Foundation Council Room of the School of Physics at the University of Sydney on 23 February 1999. There had been considerable discussion on the assessment used for ARC grants and proposed changes to the ARC Grants Scheme itself. Council was acting on members' concerns on these matters and asked Don Melrose, member of one of the ARC panels, to discuss the assessment in a Newsletter item for members.

Business from the Executive included the admission of two new members. Bruce Dawson had agreed to take over from Doug Milne as Treasurer, effective from the upcoming AGM. It was also noted that Brad Carter had taken over as editor of the Newsletter. Honorary Fellowship was offered to Marc Duldig and subsequently accepted.

The National Organising Committee (NOC) for the IAU General Assembly in 2003 had asked the ASA to act as the legally responsible body for the organisation of the General Assembly. Council agreed to this request subject to the following conditions:

- the Society was to be represented on the NOC,
- the meeting was to be insured against losses caused by events beyond the Committee's control,
- the Society was to be involved in monitoring cash flow, and
- the Society should receive 10% of any profit.

The Treasurer presented a brief report outlining the Society finances. He noted that the Centre for Astronomy at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean was now a Corporate Member of the Society. He also outlined problems associated with automatic annual credit card payments and recommended that this scheme be terminated, which was accepted by the Council.

The Editor reported on the progress of Volume 16 which included papers from the 'HI in the Local Universe II' workshop. Papers were also available on the el-PASA web site, and an electronic discussion group was being trialed as an attachment to an el-PASA paper. After some discussion it was resolved to enter negotiations with CSIRO Publishing for a further two year contract.

A final report and balance sheet from the 1998 Scientific Meeting was tabled. It included a substantial surplus which was refunded to the ASA. Plans for the 1999 meeting were discussed with UWS staff. The main issue was the dates of the meeting and how they would affect RASNZ members coming from New Zealand, and overlap with the Education meeting which followed.

Most of the usual reports received from other committees such as FASTS, the NCA and the Donovan Trust were unavailable.

### **The 79th Meeting of the Council of the ASA**

The 79th Meeting of the Council was held at the Nepean Observatory of the University of Western Sydney on 8 July 1999, the day before the opening of the Annual Scientific Meeting at the University. Business arising from the last meeting included the recent submission to the taxation department of the Deed documents to create a tax-deductible Foundation for the Society.

The Council approved 9 new members and formally approved the award of the Bok Prize for 1999 to Michael Murphy from the University of New South Wales. Also approved were applications

from 7 students for \$500 funding to attend overseas conferences, although this exceeded the total budget allocation for the program. The Council decided to tighten the guidelines for future applications by insisting that postgraduate students would not generally be supported in their first year of study and that they should have been members of the Society for at least 6 months before the application deadline.

Council noted with sadness the death of 20 IRAM staff and contractors in a cable car accident and resolved to put a motion to the upcoming AGM to express the Society's condolences. It was also noted that a letter had been sent to the National Organising Committee for the 2003 IAU General Assembly, accepting their request that the Society act as the legally responsible body for the meeting.

The President, Treasurer and Editor all presented their draft AGM reports to the Council for comment. It was noted that no formal policy existed regarding registration fees for invited speakers at the Scientific Meetings. It was resolved that it be made clear that no fees were to be charged to invited speakers.

The Treasurer's report for the 1998-99 financial year showed a deficit of over \$11,000, much greater than the loss projected for the year. Much of this was due to payments for two PASA volumes in the one year, but this was partially balanced by unexpected returns of over \$6500 from two previous Scientific Meetings. A generous surplus was projected for the year 1999-2000, with membership fees remaining unchanged.

The Editor, Michelle Storey, reported on the status of PASA Volume 16. She also reported that a trial of an electronic discussion group based on an el-PASA paper had not been a success. Another trial was to be attempted, but she speculated that this was not a popular use of el-PASA. It was noted that Mike Bessell and Gordon Robertson had accepted invitations to join the Editorial Board. The Editor's own term was to end at the AGM, but Council voted to offer her the position for a further three years.

The Editor also reported on a drop in Subscriptions, possibly because issue 16/1 was late. Quality of some figures in 16/1 was very poor and CSIRO Publishing had given an assurance that this would not recur. Further discussions with Blackwell Scientific regarding publishing of PASA were also reported.

Graeme White and Maria Hunt from UWS reported on plans for the ASM starting the next day. They also reported on the Harley Wood School which had just ended. Some problems with the organisation of the Harley Wood School flowed from not having enough local people who were not also engaged with the ASM or with their theses! A sub-committee was delegated to review the guidelines for the Harley Wood School. Preliminary plans were presented for the 2000 ASM and Harley Wood School in Tasmania.

The minutes of the last Education sub-committee meeting had previously been distributed, but there was no significant report from FASTS, the NCA or concerned with Obtrusive Lighting. It was noted that the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee was developing new strategic plans and astronomy was included as a discipline in these plans for the first time. The Donovan Trust and Macquarie Foundation had no significant activity to report.

## **The 33rd Annual General Meeting of the ASA**

The 33rd Annual General Meeting of the ASA was held during the Society's Annual Scientific Meeting. The Scientific Meeting was held at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean from 8 to 12 July 1999. A total of 145 people registered, of whom 50 were postgraduate students.

The Scientific Meeting featured 43 oral papers and 56 poster papers. The prize for best student talk went to Lisa Kewley from Mount Stromlo Observatory. The 1999 Bok Prize (for an undergraduate project completed in 1998) was awarded to Michael Murphy from the University of New South Wales. The poster describing his work won the prize for best student poster presented at the meeting.

The 1999 Ellery Lectureship was awarded to Professor John Storey of the University of New South Wales. His talk, entitled 'Infrared Astronomy - In the Heat of the Night' was presented during the meeting. The Harley Wood lecture, 'Exploding Stars: An Australian Discovery Story', was delivered one evening during the meeting by the Rev. Robert Evans. The 1999 Harley Wood School was held from 5 to 8 July at Katoomba Mountain Lodge in the Blue Mountains. The theme was 'Astronomy in the Next Millennium' and it was attended by over 40 students.

The international meeting 'Astronomy Education for the Next Millennium' overlapped the end of the Scientific meeting. It featured 28 oral and 21 poster presentations.

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday July 11, during the Scientific Meeting. Copies of the minutes of the previous General Meeting and reports from the President, Treasurer and Editor were circulated to the members. The President, Roger Clay, reported on the Society's activities during the previous year, notably on the Society's role as the legally responsible body for the organisation of the IAU General Assembly in 2003. He also thanked two members who were retiring after providing long service to the Society - Treasurer Doug Milne and Newsletter Editor Bob Duncan. The President closed by noting with regret the death of Olin Eggen, a former President of the Society.

The outgoing Treasurer gave a summary of the Society's finances and reported that the membership had risen to 376, consisting of 72 Fellows, 223 members, 66 Students, 9 Associates and 6 Corporate members. The 1998-99 financial year showed a deficit of over \$11,000, much greater than the loss projected for the year. Much of this was due to payments for two PASA volumes in the one year, but this was partially balanced by unexpected returns of over \$6500 from two previous Scientific Meetings. A generous surplus was projected for the year 1999-2000, with membership fees remaining unchanged.

The Treasurer commented on the special support the Society had received from Betty Siegman in assisting him over the last 12 years. In turn, the President thanked Doug Milne for his many years of service as Treasurer.

The Editor, Michelle Storey, circulated her report summarising the status of PASA and the electronic version of the journal el-PASA. The Editor presented some statistics on the usage of el-PASA, indicating 220 hits per month on the home page, although this did not include links from the Astrophysics Data Service (ADS) which went straight to the paper requested. A sizeable proportion of the members' fees go towards PASA and so the Society needed to be sure PASA was

serving the members requirements. To this end, the Editor had instigated a survey of members to assess those requirements.

Among the other business discussed at the meeting, the President noted that the Society was near to completing the process for establishing the 'Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy'. The Society had just been notified by the tax office that the Foundation had been granted tax exempt status and tax deductibility for donations. This meant that funds could soon be accepted for the David Allen Prize and the Ellery Lecture.

As usual, the outgoing Council had made nominations for each position on the Council for 1999-2000. Since there were no further nominations from the membership, no ballot was necessary. The Council for 1999-2000 consisted of the following members:

President:	Prof. Michael Bessell
Vice President	Dr Richard Manchester
Treasurer	Dr Bruce Dawson
Secretaries	Dr Marc Duldig Dr John O'Byrne
Councillors	Dr Michael Burton Dr Bradley Carter Dr Jessica Chapman Dr John Lattanzio Dr Peter Cottrell

Dr R W Clay was ex-officio member as Immediate Past President. Dr Roy Allen remained as Donovan Trust Representative and Dr Michelle Storey continued as Editor. Michelle Buxton was to be the new student representative on the Council.

Reported by John O'Byrne