

The 80th Meeting of the Council of the ASA

The 80th Meeting of the Council was held in the Science Foundation Council Room of the School of Physics at the University of Sydney on 22 November 1999. The meeting opened by once again discussing the question of income tax deductibility for donations to the Society, which had finally been achieved with tax deductible status being granted to the Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy. A proposal was received to support the establishment of the Charlene Heisler Prize. It was agreed that donations to the Charlene Heisler Prize could be handled by the Foundation, along with donations to the David Allen Prize. A sub-committee was established to direct the promotion and operation of the latter prize.

The contract between the ASA and the conference organisers for the IAU General Assembly in 2003 (ICMS Australasia) was discussed in detail. It was agreed that the Society needed to seek legal advice and possibly liability insurance for the ASA and its officers. The Vice-President was added to the National Organising Committee (NOC) to ensure greater Council representation on the NOC.

The Treasurer, Bruce Dawson, reported that the Society's reserves remained healthy, however the investment of funds was to be altered to increase the interest earned. On the Treasurer's advice, the Council agreed that the ASA should register for the GST. Agreement was also given to a proposal to enter a contract with Bruce Patten and Associates who were to try and secure an Export Market Development Grant. This would help meet the costs of overseas promotion of the IAU General Assembly.

The Editor reported on the state of submissions for Volumes 16 and 17 of the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia* (PASA). Papers from the AstroEd conference held in association with the Annual Scientific Meeting were planned for volume 17/1 but were deferred to 17/2. The Editor also noted further problems in the relationship with CSIRO Publishing, however a draft of possible agreement with Blackwell Scientific also presented some problems.

There was a discussion of the need to fund the Editor's position since support from Special Research Centre for Theoretical Astrophysics at the University of Sydney had ended. The President was to write to astronomical institutions requesting financial support.

A report was received on the Harley Wood Winter School. The Council felt that the students needed some guidance beyond the written guidelines and a Council member was delegated to liaise with the organisers on behalf of the Council.

A report from the Education sub-committee included a recommendation for new members. There were no reports at this meeting from the ASA representatives to FASTS and the NCA. Reg Wilson, the ASA's representative on the Standards Australia LG10 committee, presented a short report noting a new lighting standard incorporating consideration of upward waste lighting. There were also reports from the ASA representative on the Donovan Trust and the Macquarie Foundation.

The 81st Meeting of the Council of the ASA

The 81st Meeting of the Council was held in the Science Foundation Council Room of the School of Physics at the University of Sydney on 3 March 2000. The meeting opened by dealing with the normal range of business of the Executive discussing, for example, nominations for new Council members, approving new memberships and approving the assessment committee's nomination of Andrew Pearce for the 2000 Page Medal. Consideration was also given to using a web page designer to revamp the Society's web pages. It was decided to defer any action until plans were further advanced for an astronomy web portal based around PASA.

The Treasurer, Bruce Dawson, was overseas and circulated his report by email on his return. Roger Clay reported for the Treasurer on the status of donations to the Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy.

The Editor reported on the progress of Volumes 17 and 18. No conference had requested publication of its papers in Volume 18 and it appeared that there might be a shortfall of papers as a result. She also pointed out that several members of the Editorial Board were due to complete their terms and the Council discussed possible replacements.

The President reported that financial support had been promised by the ATNF, AAO, RSAA and the astronomy-related groups at UNSW, the University of Sydney and Swinburne University to help fund the Editor's position. In view of this support, the Society was committed to consulting with these organisations on the future of PASA.

The Editor reported that a new two-year contract had been signed with CSIRO Publishing and a new budget has been received from them. The budget was much better than in previous years, although Council queried several items and required that several changes be considered before it was accepted. Council also approved an investigation with CSIRO of the possibility of establishing an Australian Astronomy web portal that would include electronic PASA.

The establishment of the Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy finally allowed progress with the David Allen Prize. The Prize sub-committee was asked to investigate a major fundraising effort and the possibility of making the first award at the AGM in July from Society funds.

As agreed at the previous Council meeting, legal advice had been sought regarding the contact between the ASA and ICMS Australasia for the IAU General Assembly in 2003. The contract had been reworded accordingly and was to be taken to ICMS for their consideration. It was also noted that the contract with Bruce Patten and Associates had been signed. In other matters related to IAU2003, quotes were to be sought for liability insurance for the ASA and its officers and Michael Burton was added to the National Organising Committee (NOC) with the intention to serve on the NOC Finance sub-committee.

A final report and balance sheet from the 1999 Scientific Meeting was tabled, reporting a small surplus which was refunded to the ASA. Plans for the 2000 meeting were discussed. A conference organiser had been retained and planning was well underway.

A report from the Education sub-committee was tabled reporting on a number of initiatives underway or being considered. These included information sheets placed on the ASA web site for public use, as well as web pages on astronomy courses and teacher workshops.

Some comments were made about the activities of FASTS, the NCA and the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee. A report on obtrusive lighting matters noted that the Society had been asked to nominate a representative to sit on another standards committee. Finally, brief reports were received on the activities of the Donovan Trust and the Macquarie Foundation.

The 82nd Meeting of the Council of the ASA

The 82nd Meeting of the Council was held in the Physics building at the University of Tasmania on 3 July 2000, the day before the opening of the Annual Scientific Meeting at the University. Business of the Executive included Council approval of new and upgrading members and formal approval of the award of the Bok Prize for 2000 to Josephine Brown from the Swinburne University. The Council also agreed to support member participation in the FASTS 'Science meets Parliament' meeting. As usual at the pre-ASM meeting, Councillors were appointed to select the best student talk and poster of the upcoming meeting. Also, because a ballot was underway for Council positions, independent tellers to count the ballot papers were appointed.

The President, Treasurer and Editor all presented their draft AGM reports to the Council for comment.

The Treasurer gave a summary of the Society's finances and reported on membership numbers. The 1999-2000 financial year showed a surplus of \$9,706, largely resulting from the lack of a PASA payment for the year. Several important changes to the Society's financial affairs were described. The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) required the Society to obtain an Australian Business Number (ABN) and register for the GST. The Treasurer proposed that the 10% GST be added to an unchanged basic fee structure for members resident in Australia.

The Treasurer also discussed the Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy (FAA). The FAA began accepting tax-deductible donations late in 1999 and, at the time of the meeting, \$34,945 had been received.

The Editor reported on the status of Volumes 17 and 18, noting the current healthy rate of submissions. She also discussed a new publicity brochure and changes to the Editorial Board. The main point of discussion was the future of PASA. The institutions supporting the Editor's position in 2000 had requested this be considered and an email survey of the membership had been used to seek the opinions of the membership. The Editor outlined a range of options. The combination of PASA with an Australian web portal was the preferred plan. Just a few days before, CSIRO Publishing had presented a viable funding option in which they fully funded the production of an electronic-only version of PASA, together with an astronomy web portal. A sub-committee was appointed to further consider the web portal idea.

Progress with the contract between the ASA and ICMS Australasia was reported. The final status of the contract was approved and it was ready to sign. Liability insurance for the ASA and its officers was also in place.

A report was received on plans for the ASM starting the next day. Matthew Bailes also attended to discuss the preliminary plans for the 2001 ASM to be hosted by Swinburne University. The availability of speakers for the Harley Wood School was raised, since it had been a problem for the current School. It was proposed that an earlier start was necessary, with closer consultation with

Council and the AGM organiser on the theme and list of speakers. It was also noted that the AAO was organising a workshop in 2001 aimed at telescope users. Initial ideas of linking this with the Harley Wood School had been abandoned as impractical.

The sub-committee considering the David Allen Prize had decided not to make an award as part of the ASM since there had simply not been enough time. On the other hand, the Charlene Heisler Prize was to be awarded at the ASM.

There was nothing significant to report from FASTS, although it had clearly been active in recent times. Brief comments were also made about the activity of the NCA and the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee. No report was received from the Donovan Trust and Macquarie Foundation.

The 34th Annual General Meeting of the ASA

The Society's Annual Scientific Meeting was held at the Physics Department of the University of Tasmania from 3 to 7 July 1999. A total of 120 people registered, of whom 54 were students.

The Scientific Meeting featured 9 invited speakers, 47 other oral papers and 50 poster papers. One session was devoted to the Society's Annual General Meeting. The prize for best student talk went to Martin Meyer from the University of Melbourne. The prize for best student poster went to Catherine Drake from Mount Stromlo Observatory. The 2000 Bok Prize (for an undergraduate project completed in 1999) was awarded to Josephine Brown from the Swinburne University. The judges also commented on the very high standard of the other entries from Martin Meyer, Emma Ryan, Tara Murphy and Lachlan Campbell.

The Harley Wood lecture, 'Silhouettes and Shadows: Eclipses – fascinating and informative', was delivered one evening during the meeting by Martin George, Director of Launceston Planetarium. The 2000 Harley Wood School was held from 30 June to 3 July at the Kermadie Lodge near Geeveston. The topic was 'The Galactic Landscape - Snapshots from Space' and it was attended by 44 students.

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 6 July, 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, Mike Bessell, reported on the Society's activities during the previous year, notably the society's part in facilitating the creation of a new prize, named in memory of Charlene Heisler, who died late in 1999. The inaugural recipient of the Charlene Heisler Prize was Ewan Campbell from the ANU. Donations for the prize were handled through the ASA's new Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy (FAA). The President noted the important place of the Foundation in allowing the ASA to accept tax deductible donations for purposes such as the Charlene Heisler Prize and the David Allen Prize.

Another major item in the report described the preparations for the IAU2003 General Assembly in Sydney. The National Organising Committee (NOC) had asked the Society to act as the legally responsible body for the event. The ASA agreed and had three representatives on the NOC to help provide financial and managerial oversight. The NOC has appointed a professional conference organiser (ICMS Australasia) and, after a lengthy process of scrutiny and legal advice, the contract was to be signed between ICMS and the ASA a few days after the meeting. Associated with this

process, personal liability insurance had been secured to cover the members of the ASA Council, the NOC, and their sub-committees.

The new Treasurer, Bruce Dawson, gave a summary of the Society's finances and reported that the membership was 369, consisting of 74 Fellows, 218 members, 59 Students, 11 Associate Members, 1 Associate Society and 6 Corporate members. The 1999-2000 financial year showed a surplus of \$9,706, largely resulting from the lack of a PASA payment for the year. The Treasurer proposed that there be no change to the basic fee structure, but the 10% GST was added for members resident in Australia, resulting in a modest projected surplus for the year 2000-2001.

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) required the Society to obtain an Australian Business Number (ABN) and register for the GST. The latter step was necessary because of the turnover expected with the IAU General Assembly in 2003 and it allowed the ASA to claim credit for GST paid, rather than meeting that cost from membership fees.

Another new activity was the creation of the Foundation for the Advancement of Astronomy (FAA). The FAA accepted its first tax-deductible donations late in 1999 and membership renewal notices in 2000 offered the option of making a donation. At the end of the Society's financial year in March, \$19,005 had been received. At the time of the meeting, this had increased to \$34,945.

Michelle Storey presented the Editor's report, concentrating primarily on the future of PASA and the Editor's position. As a result of the loss of funding to the Special Research Centre for Theoretical Astrophysics at the University of Sydney, they were unable to continue their support of the Editor's position. Funding for 2000 was provided instead by the ASA, with significant assistance from special grants made to the ASA by the ATNF, AAO, RSAA and the astronomy-related groups at UNSW, the University of Sydney and Swinburne University. They requested that the future of PASA be seriously considered. An email survey of the membership had been used to seek opinion on how best to use the substantial resources that the ASA invested in PASA. The survey indicated strong support for retaining PASA.

The Editor presented a summary of the situation and outlined a range of options. The combination of PASA with an Australian web portal was the preferred plan. The favoured funding option involved CSIRO Publishing fully funding the production of an electronic-only version of PASA, together with an astronomy web portal. Institutions would pay to gain full access to the combined web portal/electronic journal.

The proposals generated considerable discussion, resulting in broad support for the outline plan. The meeting requested that the plan be further explored by the Editor and Editorial Board and they present an implementation plan to the ASA Council.

Among the other business reported was the work of the IAU2003 NOC, notably the plans for promoting the Sydney General Assembly at the upcoming Manchester General Assembly. The Society was also informed of the death of Rodney Marks whilst in Antarctica. Rodney had been a student at UNSW and had moved on to a postdoctoral position in the US.

As usual, the outgoing Council had made nominations for each position on the Council for 2000-2001. Further nominations were received, so a postal ballot was necessary. The Council for 2000-2001 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	Prof. Matthew Bailes Dr James Biggs Dr Peter Cottrell Dr Brian Schmidt Prof. John Storey

Dr Roger 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 the new student representative on the Council.