

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Report by the President on behalf of the Council to the 35th Annual General Meeting of the
Astronomical Society of Australia
Erskine House
Lorne, 3 July 2001

This year's AGM and Annual Meeting is being held at Erskine House, Lorne, Victoria and was organised by the Astrophysics and Supercomputing Department of the Swinburne University of Technology. The meeting dates are 1-4 July 2001. The Harley Wood Winter School was also held at Erskine House over the preceding 3 days.

Council Meetings

The ASA Council met three times during the year at the University of Sydney in November 2000 and March 2001, and in Lorne on July 1 2001.

Council Membership

This year three members of council are retiring, Roger Clay, the Immediate Past President, Michelle Buxton, the student representative and Michelle Storey the Editor of PASA. We thank them for their active involvement in the Society and look forward to their continuing interest in other roles. The new student representative is Diana Londish of Sydney University. The new Chair of the PASA Editorial Advisory, Russell Cannon, will become an ex-officio member replacing the PASA editor. Anne Green (University of Sydney) has been nominated as Vice President. Six nominations, including five for current members, have been received for five ordinary councillor positions and a ballot will be held.

We also would like to record our appreciation to Brad Carter for his work as ASA Newsletter Editor. We are seeking someone for this position.

Bok Prize

The winner of the Bok Prize for 2001 is Yeshe Fenner from the RSAA. Her winning thesis was "Solving the Mystery of the Warm Ionised Medium". We thank the adjudicators Sarah Maddison and Mark Wardle for their careful assessments.

David Allen Prize

The inaugural David Allen Prize will be awarded at the Conference dinner this evening. The prize of \$1000 and a plaque, is awarded for the most significant activity of public outreach in the preceding year. The adjudication panel was Michael Burton, David Malin, Peter Pockley, Marc Duldig and Carol Allen.

Charlene Heisler Prize

The Charlene Heisler Prize was not awarded this year. A committee will be formed to reassess the nature of this award.

Death of Michael Large

We were all shocked to learn of the sudden death of Michael Large earlier this year. Michael was a long serving member of the society and of the University of Sydney Physics Department. He is greatly missed. The council meeting on March 9 was adjourned for members to attend the funeral. A message of condolence will be sent to his family from this meeting.

Retirements

John Whiteoak and Raymond Haynes retired from ATNF this year. Both were strong supporters of the Society and John served several times on Council and as assistant PASA editor. John Humble, chair of last year's ASM organising committee, retired at the end of 2000. We wish them all well in their retirements.

Honours for members

John Whiteoak was awarded the Public Service Medal for Exceptional Service associated with the Australia Telescope and in particular for his international work on the preservation of the radio astronomy spectrum.

Brian Schmidt won the inaugural Malcolm McIntosh Prize awarded by the Minister of Industry Science and Resources for Achievement in the Physical Sciences.

Nine out of the 33 ISI Citation Laureates for Australian scientists were astronomers. We congratulate Bruce Peterson, Ken Freeman, Mike Dopita, Jeremy Mould, Dick Manchester, Mike Bessell, Dick Hunstead, Matthew Colless and Warrick Couch. Such a high percentage of astronomers bemused our colleagues in other departments.

Honorary Fellow

This year Council elected Prof. Mike Bessell as an Honorary Fellow of the ASA.

PASA

This year has been a watershed for PASA as it ceases to be a paper journal and becomes largely electronic. This will be reported in detail elsewhere. Letters of appreciation have been sent to the members of the Editorial Board by the President on behalf of the Society and by the Editor. The Board has now been disbanded and will be replaced by an Editorial Advisory Committee. We also would like to congratulate Michelle Storey for her initiative and exceptional hard work to bring about this change and for increasing the standard and impact of PASA. We thank her also for developing the Australian Astronomy Web Portal. We wish her well in her role in CSIRO publishing.

2003 IAU General Assembly

Subcommittees have been established and regular meetings have commenced. The Chair of the National Organising Committee, Harry Hyland, will be informing the AGM of progress.

The NCA Mid-term Review of Astronomy

Many members of the Society worked very hard to produce this document, following several large meetings in Sydney. We thank all these people, especially Matthew Colless, Chris Tinney, Brian Boyle and Brian Schmidt.

MNRF

In addition, a great deal of work was done in a short time to fashion a strong and hopefully successful bid to the MNRF competition for SKA and Gemini. It survived the first cull, although unfortunately the UNSW bid for the Antarctic Douglas Mawson Telescope was not successful. Rachel Webster and Ray Norris and possibly others will appear before the panel in mid July to argue the case.

Obtrusive Lighting

Reg Wilson, the Society's Honorary Lighting Consultant has been appointed to Standards Australia's panel on Obtrusive Lighting. We have also been asked to be members of the panels for Roadway Lighting and Sport's Ground Lighting. I would like us to record our thanks to Reg for his continuing support to members of the ASA and to Amateur Societies.

Education Subcommittee

Council has asked the Education subcommittee to re-examine their role and structure and report to the next meeting of council.

ASA support for student travel

Overseas travel support for students was increased to \$750 from \$500 with an annual limit of \$5250. If a student is unable to make use of the money for an overseas conference then some of the money may be made available, at the discretion of Council, to attend a conference or workshops in Australia. Three students have been supported to date in 2001.

2002 AGM

USQ has regretfully withdrawn their offer to host the 2002 AGM and the RSAA has been asked to consider holding it in Canberra. Other expressions of interest are called for.

MIKE BESSELL