

PASA Report to ASA AGM

13 June 2022

Stas Shabala, Editorial Board Chair

1. Executive summary

PASA has maintained an increased volume of submissions compared to pre-COVID levels, with overall quality remaining at a high level. PASA's 2020 Impact Factor of 5.57 is an all-time high. The Impact Factor for 2021 is not yet available, but preliminary calculations suggest that it is likely to increase again. The Editorial Board has been restructured to ensure continuity and development of editorial expertise in the community. A new publishing contract has been signed with Cambridge University Press. A recent Read-and-Publish deal provides open access to PASA articles for authors at almost all Australian institutions. PASA has inaugurated an Outstanding Reviewer award.

2. Editorial board

A new Associate Editor, Dr Dimitris Stamatellos (University of Central Lancashire), started his term in January 2022. He has replaced Daniel Price, whose significant contributions to PASA were acknowledged with a formal thanks from the ASA President.

Other members of the Editorial Board are Ivo Seitzzahl (Deputy Editor-in-Chief, UNSW Canberra), Katie Auchetti (University of Melbourne), Minh Huynh (CSIRO), Hermine Landt (Durham University, UK) and Michele Trenti (University of Melbourne).

3. PASA performance

3.1. Submissions

PASA experienced a significant increase in submissions in 2021, by 34% compared to 2020. This has decreased slightly in 2022, with a 22% increase on the 2020 numbers.

Of 2021 manuscripts with decisions (i.e. the last full calendar year), 60% were rejected at some stage of the reviewing process (36% reject-inappropriate, 11% reject after review, 12% reject-resubmit). This is broadly consistent with previous years: 50% (2020), 60% (2019), 45% (2018); and up from a few years ago (37% in 2017, 35% in 2016), reflecting the increase in the quality of work published by PASA. The increased number of submissions to PASA in 2021 is therefore of papers of broadly comparable quality to recent times.

3.2. Peer review process

I am pleased to report that article turnaround times have been maintained at relatively fast levels – a pleasant surprise during the pandemic, and testament to the work of the Associate Editors. Breakdown in average turnaround times to first decision, split by decision type, is below.

Year	Major revision	Minor revision	Reject	Reject-inappropriate	Reject-resubmit	Average
2018	75.2	71.7	37.5	9.6	42.0	51.9
2019	60.1	64.6	34.9	12.9	64.6	42.4
2020	40.2	40.7	24.6	2.8	30.8	25.8
2021	39.7	38.4	20.1	2.3	35.8	23.6

PASA has recently instituted a new process for dealing with author appeals against editorial decisions, with a very small number of papers having another Associate Editor evaluate the manuscript independently. This process appears to be working well.

3.3. Citations and impact factor

The 2020 Impact Factor, covering papers published over the period 2018-2019 and cited in 2020, is **5.571**. For the first time, PASA's Impact Factor is ahead of MNRAS (5.25).

Given the high-quality submissions attracted to PASA in 2020 and 2021, PASA's Impact Factor is expected to continue performing strongly in the near future.

Pleasingly, PASA's IF is not being driven by a small number of highly-cited papers. Of the 56 papers published in 2020 – the last full year with some time to accumulate citations – 7 papers (i.e. 13%) have already accumulated ≥ 50 citations.

Radio astronomy has largely driven these most recent high citations. Of the 10 highest-cited papers in 2020-2021, 7 are in radio astronomy (2 SKA, 2 ASKAP, 2 Parkes, 1 MeerKAT), 1 in gravitational waves (NEMO concept paper), 1 Dawes Review (Cortese et al., on gas cycle in galaxies), and 1 common envelope simulations paper. In 2018-2019, the MWA collaboration and SkyMapper DR1 and DR2 papers contributed heavily to the IF.

4. New PASA publishing contract

The ASA and Cambridge University Press (CUP) have signed a new 5-year contract (2023-2027). In the new contract, we have agreed an improved 50% surplus share arrangement for the ASA, up from 45%. Over the years, CUP have been an excellent partner, responsive to our community needs and constantly helping to improve the journal. I am pleased to be continuing our partnership.

5. Changes to journal funding model

CUP has recently (January 2022) signed a Read-and-Publish deal with the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL). This deal covers most institutions in Australia and means that authors in these institutions can publish their work as open access for free (note: "free" here means "free for the author" – the costs of open access are covered by the CAUL R&P deal and associated revenue from open access publications in PASA that have made use of this deal will be allocated to the journal account). Around two thirds of PASA's authors are from Australian institutions, so this is an exciting development for the community. The full list of institutions involved in the CAUL deal is here: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/open-access-policies/read-and-publish-agreements/oa-agreement-caul>.

6. Outstanding Reviewer awards

In 2022, PASA has inaugurated the *PASA Outstanding Reviewer* awards, recognising excellence in the peer-review process. The *Outstanding Reviewer* awards are conferred on approximately two percent of PASA reviewers, and only those who, in the view of the PASA Editorial Board, have provided consistently outstanding reviews on multiple manuscripts.

We thank all PASA reviewers for their time and expertise, and remind them that all PASA reviewers are eligible for a 30% discount on Cambridge University Press books.

To highlight the important role of all PASA reviewers, the journal will publish an annual list of peer reviewers on its website. We encourage the community to familiarise themselves with this list, and recognize the contributions made by our colleagues.

7. Editorial continuity and open positions

The ASA Council has approved a change to the ASA By-Laws which govern the appointment of the Editor-in-Chief and their Deputy. The new arrangement follows the ASA Presidency model, whereby under normal circumstances a Deputy Editor-in-Chief succeeds the Editor-in-Chief when the latter's term expires. The former Editor-in-Chief moves to a one-year Immediate Past Editor-in-Chief position, and is expected to assist with the transition to new leadership as needed. This framework provides the Editorial Board with continuity while building up editorial expertise within the Australian astronomy community.

Under this arrangement, I am pleased to say that Dr Ivo Seitzzahl will be succeeding me as Editor-in-Chief from January 2023. Ivo has done a fantastic job as PASA Deputy EiC, and I am delighted that he has agreed to take on this role. I hope that our community affords him the same goodwill as I have been fortunate to have.

Two Editorial Board positions are currently open; details are on the AAS job register. I encourage anyone interested to contact me and/or Ivo Seitzzahl for further information.