

## Presidents Report 2013-2014

It is with great pleasure that I make my annual report this evening.

This year has seen some changes in the society. First and foremost the constitutional changes that have brought us in line with current legislation and the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Constitutional changes are always a monumental effort by a few that affects many and when faced with the changes that were made you can appreciate the many hours work put into before it could be put to the members for discussion and debate. Most of the work was done by our tireless treasurer Lesa Moore in between the many other jobs she does for the members.

The process of changing the constitution is made so much easier if there is a consensus of opinion prior to going to vote. The whole process took over 6 months but was overwhelmingly received by the members with a majority of 97% in favour of the changes.

Our changes to the makeup of the committee of the society, with five nominated positions and five committee positions. It is hope that members will nominate for positions without feeling that they need to be specialists in any such position.

Running of the society is not only the job of the committee, but also the general membership. ASNSW has a great tradition of volunteers jumping in and helping when things need to be done.

This can be seen when things like star parties, open nights even in setting up meetings and offering to do talks and presentations to the society.

Allowing committee members to be responsible for more than one job within the society, as in the case of treasurer being able to be Editor. It also allows for members to take on jobs previously done by an elected member.

The South Pacific Star Party was held in May this year and whilst we expected normal cold weather we instead had balmy days of 20 degrees. The attendance this year was up on last year's numbers and warm weather probably had something to do with that. A large round of applause should go to the team that organized the event this year. To Lesa Moore who worked tirelessly, Neville Lupton with background work, Joe Cauchi who get Wiruna looking very nice with his small band of helpers, Peter Moore with Audio Visual, Greg Priestly taking photographs of the event, Kandos Scouts who not only cook it but save our bacon with the invaluable service and support they give. The members in the registration area who get everyone in and then answer questions all day long. The Volunteers who are on hand when help is require whether that is getting people onto Wiruna or safely into camping areas, cleaning up for and after our guests. The cooking crew who feed the guests. It all goes into making the society look like a very well-oiled machine. As President it makes me very proud to be part of that machine and this all goes into making for a fantastic star party.

As I reported during the year the lease for the Crago Observatory site has had a hold up due to Aboriginal Land Claims which is almost standard practice these days every time a lease of crown land comes up for renewal. Our advice is that it normally fails and it's just a matter of time before we get the answer to the outcome. We are until that time on a monthly tenancy.

The Wiruna site has had some upgrading to our battery and an increase in solar panels during the year. The Kitchen project should be completed before next year's star party. This will double the size of the existing kitchen and offer better cooking, dining and lounging facilities for the monthly astrocamps.

It's with great pleasure that I can report that financially the society had another great year, showing a net gain and an increase in memberships. Changes to the constitution cut the grace period from 6 months to 3 months and only two people were dropped off as they had not renewed anyway. During this year we had 47 new members join our society; I hope each of you received your welcome letters and are enjoying your membership. 4 members cancelled or retired their memberships, one a long time member. These members are normally aging and find they are unable to stay involved in astronomy anymore. I hope these members enjoyed their time in ASNSW.

Financially the society has had another successful year and we find ourselves with very healthy accounts. Our fund raising efforts this year through the South Pacific Star Party were again very rewarding allowing us to again make a donation to the Kandos Scout Group. Our numbers were close to the 300 mark. The speakers were very good this year Penny King bringing her husband and children who stayed all weekend and had a great time. Our other speaker Francis Bennett has been to 6 star parties before as an astronomer, so this year as a guest speaker was different for him. He also had a great time. A great T-Shirt Design by Chris Ross gave us an almost sold out on this item and our sales in society merchandising were again very good. The Saturday Roast served over 200 meals and it was wonderful to have our neighbours join us for dinner. Our friend and neighbor Barry Moore who has been very ill for some time was unable to join us but his wife Kay did come along. Our best wishes go to Barry and Kay at this very hard time. For those wondering who Barry and Kay are, when you turn onto Tara Loop and drive past a house on the left with the magnificent gardens, this is Barry and Kay.

Our school nights were too few this last year although the society did have a good display at the Macquarie University Open Night in April. We had some handouts and lots of enquiries which resulted in a few new members. We also had the usual band of members out in the car park with their telescopes showing the sky to the 1200 plus people in attendance.

Our elections this year have some vacant positions that have no nominations.

For the members who are standing down from office this year, the society owes you a debt of thanks for the work you have done for the membership.

Neville Lupton who has been secretary for the last 3 years and has helped to streamline the position. The largest job here is processing new members and getting membership packs out to them, monitoring mail, answering correspondence, organizing committee meetings and keeping minutes which are then circulated the next day. As well as the work that he does at Wiruna, even on non new moon weekends.

Rozainah Kendrew, who stood in this year as Editor, even with a work schedule that would keep most people flat out. Our Journal has come out every issue and is always full of good content, a job that is never easy, having been a past Editor.

Donna Burton, who has not nominated this year, has done a great job of observations officer the last couple of years. Thank you Donna.

The members who have re-nominated for 2014 -2015 thank you for your continued work and service to the society.

To the Vice President for Crago, Carlos, thank you for the excellent job you have done this last year. The continued work with securing the lease of the land at Bowen Mountain and staying on top of it is something we should all be very thankful for.

To the Vice President for Wiruna, Joe Cauchi, thank you for the work that you continue to do tirelessly every year. The whole of the society is indebted to you. Joe was on the committee in charge of Wiruna when I first joined the committee back in 1994, he is still there and his commitment to what he does has not waned in the least. He goes from morning till night when he is at Wiruna, works throughout the star party and still finds time to take amazing images. Then when not at Wiruna shares those images in some of the most enjoyable talks here in Sydney at meeting for the members.

Lesa Moore who has found a way to fit 36 hours in to a 24 hour day and still be bright and bubbly whenever you talk with her. Her work in running the finances of the society, memberships, organizing star parties, filling in as Editor when needed, website updating, running our I2A course, workshops at the SPSP and always with a smile. Thank you Lesa.

This last year we have had some amazing guest speakers who have given talks to the membership. We have Chris Ross our Technical Officer to thank for that. It never ceases to amaze me where he gets these speakers from and then trumps that with speakers who are just passing through the country. Chris has taken responsibility for the planting of trees at Wiruna as well as all our power needs with the solar power systems we have running there. Recent work on the solar power has the system running very smooth and we will soon have a panel on the old storage shed for charging station.

Karen Whittingham has organized and liaises with Lesa to present our Young Science Writer award again this year in conjunction with Tara School as well as helping run I2A courses. Karen also is instrumental in keeping our website up to date.

Ray Ashton who has stepped in as Librarian and also helped by presenting our Young Writers awards this year.

Many other people work hard to keep the society functioning. Special mention to Paul Hatchman who works behind the scenes on the website and his wife Naomi who produces registration packages for the SPSP. Rita Holland who manages both merchandising of society apparel and organises suppers for meetings. To the members who take our guest speaker out for dinner prior to meetings thank you it shows our society to be very social and hospitable.

Thank you all it has been an honour and a pleasure to have served with each of you this last year.

There are some vacancies for committee for this year and as we face the year ahead with plans to finally do something with the kitchen at Wiruna, Hopefully finalising the Cargo lease another star party to plan and enjoy, talks to organize and enjoy, I encourage you to become involved in the society, it is richly rewarding, especially when you look back at it see what a difference it makes to ASNSW.

Don Whiteman

