

Presidents Report 2014-2015 AGM

28th August 2015

Dear members,

The 2014-2015 year has been another great year for ASNSW.

We had the 60th Anniversary Dinner at the Epping Club at the beginning of the year and it was a sold out night with guest speaker Fred Watson who entertained everyone on his early days in astronomy. It was a great night to catch up with friends old and new. As it was very close to the end of the calendar year we held a Christmas BBQ at Cargo observatory. For many it was their first visit to the observatory. The weather was with us and great afternoon was had by all.

The new year saw the preparations for this year's star party in full swing. A working bee was held in April which was a weekend of not so great weather but the diehards still rolled in to help. A marquee was ordered and this year we experimented with a trailered generator which in hindsight was a wrong move. The two smaller generators from the year before were adequate. We did however learn that the solar power system installed was adequate to deal with 4 days of the star party, where the undoing happened was when we realized that the top up charging from the generator was for a 12v system whilst we normally charge at 24v and we could not accept a charge. This caused a short period of time where the water pump for the septic system was offline. This is now being rectified with the purchase of a 24v charger. What we did learn was that our power system under normal circumstances can handle what we throw at it.

The Star party was again a major success and ran very smoothly with the help of many member who volunteer over the weekend from the people who sit in the registration area answering questions all day long and dealing with merchandising, to those who help people into camping site, judge competitions, collect garbage, clean and help with setting up the hall, good observing weather made for long nights and weary people during the mornings.

Again thanks to the companies that sponsor the star party each year and their generosity, which puts a smile on the faces of the lucky winners. One of the perks of being the MC is seeing those faces when they come to pick a prize. For me a kid winning a telescope is one of the best moments of the star party. Around 300 seems to be a number that is getting comfortable to handle over the weekend without a strain on resources. It earns a small profit for the society, allows us to make a donation to the local Kandos scouts who work tirelessly feeding everyone and have been keen supporters for over 20 years now. It also helps having a plumber on site during the star party.

This has been the year when we finally did something about the shrinking kitchen area at Wiruna with the commencement of the kitchen extension. The site was prepared and the concrete slab was poured and the building was erected. A smaller carport type extension was added to the rear of the Max Gardner Hall and a slab was also poured to support that building. When regulars go to Wiruna at next5 New Moon they will see the new kitchen extension erected. Then will come the debate about the interior layout but that will be another episode. Drainage will be completed when VP Joe Cauchi returns from his trip and the new building will get plenty of use through tout the year, every year.

The society is about to get a new piece of club apparel. The response received about the society logo as used on the SPSP shirt last year prompted the committee to look at the cost of a Tee Shirt based on the Logo white printed on a royal blue shirt. These will be available shortly and will be very reasonable in cost.

Our membership over the past year has stayed at the same level, currently we have just over 400 members to the new members who joined this year, I hope that your first year with us has been an enjoyable experience and that you have learnt something through one of our talks or

been to one of the observing facilities. To the members who dropped out this year we are sad to see you leave but do have that you enjoyed your time in ASNSW.

The society is once again in a very healthy financial position due to hard work by our treasurer Lesa Moore, her financial report later this evening will show that we have invested into infrastructure to benefit members whilst investing to ensure the longevity of our great society. Much thanks should go to Lesa for the work that she puts into the society journal Universe. Without the hard hours she puts in there would be no journal.

This year we had some fantastic presentations by a range of unbelievable speakers, organized once again by Chris Ross who juggles spending half his life on the road and still find speakers to enlighten and entertain those who come to meetings. The numbers attending meetings this year has increased which is a very good thing as there is nothing worse than inviting a great speaker to talk to us and have a poor attendance.

This coming year we are going to have a new register for members to sign at meetings and it will have a record of our speaker and the subject of their talk in it as an archive. Thanks to Alex Comino for the suggestion for this.

Wiruna, the society's dark sky site has again given many nights of good clear skies this last year and a little snow just to keep us on our toes.. Under the continuous hard work by Vice President Joe Cauchi and the number of times that Joe makes a trip up to Wiruna to be on site when a delivery is being made or a builder is coming to quote of build, or for burn offs, and then the magnificent slide presentation that Joe gave earlier in the year of the images he has captured from Wiruna, a big round of applause to Joe for the effort he puts in without question to make this one of the best observing sites for amateur astronomers the world over.

This year there has been no real movement made in regards to the lease extension at Crago although we are in regular correspondence. The latest news is that as we are an ongoing lease holder it does appear to work in our favour. The next 12 months should finally see some resolve to this process.

To outgoing committee member Chris Douglass please show a round of thanks to Chris for his work this year in helping to manage the society of your behalf.

The society Christmas Party will be held on 21st November at Epping Club it will be a buffet style dinner and cost to the members will be \$40-00 per head. Bookings will be via the webpage and will open very soon.

If you came to the 60th Anniversary dinner, you can understand why we have chosen this site for this years Christmas party.

Finally I would like to thank you all for the support I have been shown this year. As I have said in the past, I consider it a privilege to be president of ASNSW. Thanks for that opportunity.

Don Whiteman