

Annual Report 2016 – Vice President Crago

I'm pleased to be able to present the Vice Present Crago report for 2016.

It is the start of an interesting time for the Crago Observatory. Years of uncertainty surrounding the renewal of the ASNSW's lease on the Crago property have restricted what the society can do at the site. While there is still a long way to go to resolving the lease, we have just in the week of the AGM receive a copy of a draft lease from the NSW Department of Lands, which would extend our stay at the mountain for another 20 years.

Last Quarter Observing nights at the Crago continues to be one of the major outreach activity conducted by the Society, supported by a small but dedicated group who open the observatory each month to show both members and public the wonders of the night sky. There have been several quite popular nights this year, catering to groups of 30 or more members of the public. Typically, we will have someone outside giving a naked eye sky tour, while taking groups of 6 – 8 at a time into the dome. Members often help out by sharing their own telescopes with the more curious vistors.

Don has provided much of the detail regarding the renewal of the Bowen Mountain Lease in his report. I would like to thank Don, Richard Jaworski and Les Sara for all of their hard work in dealing with the Department of Lands with the lease renewal.

In the last few months we have begun various repairs and upgrades to the telescope and observatory. The Argonavis and Servocat systems are now back to full working order and a new focuser, secondary and mirror cell are in the process of being ordered. The new mirror cell will house a 16" Mark Suchting mirror.

The observatory itself is in need of some repairs and upgrades. With the strong winds and heavy rain we've experience this year, there has been some weather damage to the dome and interior of the observatory. The conditions imposed by our new lease will also likely require some landscaping and other improvement works to be undertaking on the site.

Please be on the look-out for announcement on Crago working bee's over the coming year as there's going to be lots of work to do and your help will be very much appreciated.

For a site that's an hour drive from most of our member's, Crago offers a great viewing experience with steady seeing and semi-rural skies. There's plenty of space for members to set up their telescopes for viewing or imaging. I'd encourage you all to come and join us for a night of observing.