

# President's Report 2011

Paul Hatchman  
President ASNSW

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Dear Members and Guests,

It is my pleasure to present the president's report for 2011.

Firstly I would like to thank all of the committee members for the job they have done this year and all the time they have put in to ensure the smooth running of the society.

As John will confirm in his Treasurer's report, the society continues to be in a strong financial position and once again making a significant surplus.

Ian will give his report on Crago, which again has proved popular with locals, visitors and school groups. Unfortunately the weather has not been kind to us this year, but we have still had some outstanding nights and shown many people their first view of the night sky through a telescope. The society has applied for a new 40 year lease on the land at Crago as the existing one expires in 2013.

Joe will speak in more detail on Wiruna, which has continued to enjoy good use throughout the year. We are still in discussion about plans for extending the bush kitchen area and will concentrate on this project throughout the coming year. Upgrades to the solar power system are underway to cope with the increased power demands being placed on the main hall.

Judging by the feedback from this year's star party, it was another success for the society. For many members it is the only time they get to enjoy the skies at Wiruna and the Friday night offered plenty of viewing opportunities. With our event hire supplier going out of business and the discovery that our water tanks had leaked their water, it was a chaotic start, but we now have a very capable team of volunteers in place to assist with running the SPSP which allowed us to quickly overcome these little setbacks. My thanks to all those volunteers who helped with the cooking, cleaning, photography, registration tent, meeting hall, gate duty, camping field, prizes, observing field and house

area. The whole event ran very smoothly and it was solely due to the enormous efforts of our volunteers.

We have created two new competitions this year. As a result of our collaboration with the Space Odyssey Team, run out of Tara Anglican School for Girls, we have launched the Young Writer Award, which is designed to encourage students to write about astronomy. This competition is also open to members and their children.

Before introducing the second competition, I must say a few brief words about Scott Mellish. His sudden passing was a shock to us all. He was a treasured member of the society, serving the society as observations officer for many years. He won the editor's award too many times to count and was awarded life membership for his many contributions to the society. He will be sadly missed.

In memory of Scott we are about to announce the launch of the Scott Mellish Memorial Sketching competition. This competition will be run at the star party and will be open to sketchers worldwide. It will allow sketchers to showcase their talents and be recognised by their peers in the astronomical community.

This year we also partnered with the Red Room Company in their Clubs and Socs project, whose aim is to embed poets in societies throughout NSW. Kit Brookman joined us a few months ago and some of you may have met him at meetings or at Wiruna. Kit will be writing a poem for the society and we look forward to seeing the results of his efforts.

I would like to say thanks to Chris Ross once again for organising an outstanding line-up of speakers again this year. Attendance at the Friday talks has been fluctuating, but seems to be on the increase again. I would encourage all members to attend the Friday night talks as they really have been excellent.

We have started work on replacing the existing ASNSW web site, with the aim to automate processing of memberships, star party registrations and other society functions. A small team has been put together to begin work on the new site and you should see some new improvements being launched over the coming year.

Regular publication of the Journal has become infrequent over the past few years, with combined issues becoming the norm. In response to this, the committee made the decision to try and form a small editorial team as it has become apparent it is a difficult job for just one person. Lesa Moore has volunteered to lead this team and I have every confidence that she is the right person for the job. Please give Lesa as much support as you can by writing articles or volunteering your time to the Journal. The Journal is for the benefit of all members, but can only exist with your support.

This year we ran two education courses, with the help of Lesa Moore, Karen Whittingham and Chris Douglass. The feedback from these courses has been overwhelmingly positive and we will be running these again next year.

Again I thank the committee who have put in a big effort to ensure the smooth running of the society this year. My special thanks to Judy Cauchi for stepping in as Secretary when Les Sara had to resign due to work commitments.

Lastly I would like to thank you all for the effort you have put in over the past year. To everyone who has attended a school night or public night; To everyone who has shown someone through the view a telescope, helped out at meetings or at Ilford or at Crago or has helped with the general running of the society; You have my heartfelt thanks. Without your efforts the society would not exist as we know it.

Here's hoping for another successful year.