

President's Report 2012

Paul Hatchman
President ASNSW

Dear Members and Guests,

It is my pleasure to present the president's report for 2012.

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, again making a surplus. Some of this surplus is due to the generous donation by the Mellish Family of over \$30,000 of the late Scott Mellish's astronomy equipment. Scott's absence is still sorely felt by many in the Society and it is of some small consolation that his telescopes and equipment will still be put to good use within the society.

Ian will give his report on Crago, where the main focus has been on renewing the lease for the Bowen Mountain property, which expires in late 2013. The weather has not been very kind to us this year and Bowen has not seen as much use as in previous years. But has still Crago still had many visitors from both members and the public, including local residents and community groups.

Joe will speak in more detail on Wiruna, which has continued to enjoy good use throughout the year. Plans for extending the bush kitchen are underway and it is expected that the ground breaking on these extensions will occur before the end of the year. A number of other improvements are planned for Wiruna which Joe will discuss in more detail.

This year, the Star Party was extended to four days by including the Thursday night. While numbers were down a little on previous years, those who attended were treated to four clear nights of great viewing. I can't thank enough all of you who assisted in the running of the star party.

The inaugural Scott Mellish memorial sketching competition was competition was held also this year at the Star Party. While there were only a small number

of entrants, the quality was very high and I hope this competition can grow and flourish in the future.

My sincere thanks to all those volunteers who helped with the cooking, cleaning, photography, competitions, 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.

Another new competition, held for the first time last year was the Young Writer Award. This competition is open to high school aged students to encourage them to write on an astronomy related topic. Brittany Fossey was the winner of last year's competition and I'd like to congratulate her on winning this award for year excellent entry on her research project on the moons of Saturn.

Attendance at the Friday talks has been down this year, sometimes drawing less than 20 people. It is hard to know the reason for this given the quality of the speakers. If you don't attend the talks, I'd encourage you to send your thought to the committee on why and what could be changed.

A major project this year was the upgrade of the ASNSW web site. The new system provides us with a way to automate many of the membership processing tasks and much of the event registration for the star party and other events. While there are still some teething issues and much work left to do, this has largely been successful. For those members who did have issues with the new system, I thank you for your understanding and patience while we worked out the bugs.

It has been great to see the journal coming out regularly again. Lesa Moore deserves a lot of credit for taking over this sometimes thankless job. So thank you Lesa on behalf of all of us. Please remember that the Journal needs regular contributions from members to be successful. If each member just wrote one article every couple of years, we'd be swamped with content. Please consider writing something for the journal next year, no matter how big or small. Your contributions would be greatly appreciated

After six years on the committee and three years as president, I will be not be running for a committee position this year. It has been my pleasure to serve

the society over the last six years and I'm confident that the society is being left in good hands.

The committee always appreciates any help or assistance members can offer and if you believe you can contribute in any way, no matter how small, please speak up and offer your services.

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 or written an article for the Journal; To everyone who has shown someone the view through 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.