

Crago Report 2011-2012  
Delivered to the AGM of ASNSW on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for the opportunity to deliver to the annual report on the current years activities at the Crago Observatory on Bowen Mountain, and our plans for the future.

Despite the continuing general lack of clear sky, this year was an improvement over previous years. Whenever we had the good fortune to see a clear sky on the designated public nights, the observatory was well attended by members and the public. In July, despite the cold we had one such night with over thirty visitors, mostly in family groups, and we were able to provide sky tours and present visitors with some views they are likely to remember for a long time. It is always a delight to see kids glued to the eyepiece and coming back for more.

This will be my last year in the role of VP Crago although I will remain active on the Crago sub-Committee. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their help and support. I would like to thank the Committee for their diligence and hard work and in particular the outgoing President, Mr. Paul Hatchman, who has worked so tirelessly to provide the Society with a new Web Site and Membership database which will dramatically simplify administration and provide a our members with the tools to manage their own contact details as well as keeping informed on Society events. The web site will be a valuable base from which to grow the Societies membership and advance the interests of both amateur and professional Astronomers in New South Wales. Paul has also managed to deliver an outstanding run of Star Parties with clear skies and we will hope his influence in these matters will continue into the future in his new role as Web Master.

I am of course completely biased, so I think that Crago Observatory, due both to its elevation and lack of light pollution, has the darkest and steadiest skies in the Sydney region which makes it a valuable asset for observers and imagers alike. The seeing alone is worth the trip, something that I would remind imagers of in particular. As the climate patterns of the last few years finally turns around I look forward to many more clear nights on the Mountain and its increasing use by members, some of whom may have forgotten how good it actually gets up there.

I am pleased to report that the Lease renewal is proceeding and we expect that it will be concluded successfully in 2013, whereupon we will be in a position to put some money and effort into remediating the site. National Parks have outlined their plans for a joint working bee to deal with non-native grasses and I think we may finally see the support we need to undo some of the erosion issues on the road and field.

Although the building itself in great condition the dome structure will need quite a bit of work and potentially a rebuild. Our upgrade plans for the venerable telescope itself should now be able to proceed with installation of new primary and secondary mirrors, a mirror cell and focuser replacement. There is also the possibility of replacing the noisy main dome ring and finally motorising the dome so it tracks in unison with the telescope via the Stellar Cat.

I thank you all for the opportunity to deliver this report and hope that you will all find the time to join us on the Mountain and enjoy one our societies finest assets.

Ian Parr

Vice President - Crago

Astronomical Society of New South Wales