



# ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

*Incorporated in the ACT*

*ABN 37 660 297 848*

**Minutes of the 54th Annual General Meeting  
held at 1.30 pm (AEST)/1.00 pm (ACST)/11.30 pm (AWST) Wednesday 8 July 2020  
Zoom online meeting**

The Meeting was opened at 1:30 am with the President in the Chair and approximately 110 members of all grades present in an entirely online meeting using Zoom.

## **1. Apologies**

Caroline Foster, Lisa Kewley

## **2. Minutes of the 53rd Annual General Meeting**

Motion that the minutes of the 54th Annual General Meeting be accepted.

**Couch/Lattanzio  
Carried**

## **3. Business arising from the Minutes**

None.

## **4. President's Report**

The President, Cathryn Trott, presented a Powerpoint version of the official written report (below).

### **1. Council 2019-2020**

Cathryn Trott  
John Lattanzio  
Stuart Wyithe  
John O'Byrne  
Marc Duldig  
Yeshe Fenner

President  
Vice President  
Immediate Past President  
Secretary  
Secretary  
Treasurer

Elisabete da Cunha  
Krzysztof Bolejko  
Ilya Mandel  
Barbara Catinella  
Daniel Zucker

Councillor  
Councillor  
Councillor  
Councillor  
Councillor

Christopher Matthew

Student Representative

Stas Shabala  
Tanya Hill (Co-opted)  
Michael Brown (Co-opted)

Chair, PASA Editorial Board (from January 2020)  
Prizes and Awards co-ordinator  
Media and Outreach co-ordinator

I would like to thank all council members for their contributions in the past year. Particular thanks go to council members holding ongoing roles in the society (John O'Byrne, Marc Duldig, Tanya Hill, and Michael Brown). Thanks go also to Gary Da Costa for continuing in his role as our "Public Officer", and to Chapter Chairs Daniel Price, Mike Fitzgerald, Manodeep Sinha, Katie Jamieson and Dan Zucker. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Krzysztof Bolejko as Acting Prizes and Awards co-ordinator, while Tanya Hill is on leave. We again thank Melanie Johnston-Hollitt for her role steering PASA as its EiC for two years.

### **2. Challenges**

2020 has thus far been a challenging year for everyone, both professionally and personally. The COVID-19 situation has changed the way and order we implement actions the Society, but many of the initiatives being developed by the ASA align well with a COVID and a post-COVID world, and we will be working to capitalize on the positive aspects of this difficult time (e.g., improved virtual conferencing, reduced travel, flexible working arrangements).

### **3. Highlights**

After input from the community, the ASA created a Sustainability committee in late 2019. The committee is formed by interested members of the community. Originally, this committee discussed the Carbon Footprint white paper that was prepared for the Decadal Plan Mid-Term Review by Adam Stevens and others, and was planning to undertake a census of university departments and institutions of their carbon usage. This census was to provide a benchmark against which future improvements could be measured. With the changes in working that occurred since the COVID restrictions were enforced in March, the committee has mostly focused on finding optimal online conferencing and meeting solutions, but activity has been reduced in the past few months.

Gavin Rowell from the University of Adelaide proposed to the ASA and the AIP the creation of a joint group in Astroparticle Physics to represent the astroparticle community and help to bridge the gap between the astronomical and physics community. The ASA and AIP have been working through their by-laws to allow for a joint group of both societies – “Group for Astroparticle Physics (GAP)”. The Letter of Intent is currently under review by the AIP Council.

**Strategic Plan:** During 2018 the ASA Council undertook a strategic planning exercise to understand the longer term goals of the Society, and to allow short term priorities to be placed in a broader strategic context. Following input from ASA Chapters through their steering committees as well as incorporation of feedback received from members. The Strategic Plan is based around the following 5 goals

**Goal 1)** Enhance the ASA’s role as the pre-eminent body representing Australian astronomers

**Goal 2)** Expand the scope of the reach and impact of ASA activities, and build on the ASA’s role as a facilitator of Australian professional astronomy conversation and networking

**Goal 3)** Maintain the ASA’s role as a leader in the promotion of diversity in science and in Australian astronomy in particular

**Goal 4)** Harness the positive impact of Australian astronomy through maximising the effectiveness of educational and outreach activities undertaken by members

**Goal 5)** Broaden the ASA’s support for student training, with focus on equity of access to activities and opportunity for all Australian astronomy students

The ASA Strategic Plan and accompanying Statement of Activities and Priorities may be viewed at the ASA website.

<http://asa.astronomy.org.au/strategies.html>

The Strategic Plan aims to articulate the priorities of the ASA, and seeks to identify opportunities with the goal of maximising the effectiveness of the ASA in achieving these priorities.

**Code of Conduct and Equity and Conduct Committee:** It is the policy of the Astronomical Society of Australia (ASA) that all participants in its activities are able to enjoy an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and that its members conduct themselves appropriately during all professional activities. As part of our ongoing commitment to this policy, during 2018/2019 the ASA Council revised the [ASA Code of Conduct](#) and [Statement of Ethics](#) documents. In particular, the revised Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics makes it clear that ASA guidelines apply to all participants at ASA-endorsed meetings or activities, and to ASA members at all astronomical meetings or activities.

During 2019 the ASA Council also instituted a new process by which potential breaches of the Code of Conduct or Statement of Ethics can be reported. This process is outlined in the new document [Handling of Potential Breaches of the ASA Statement of Ethics and Code of Conduct](#). Council has also convened a new [Ethics and Conduct Committee \(ECC\)](#). The ECC is charged with oversight of the ASA Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics as well as handling of potential breaches. During 2020, this committee discussed one case. After this initial case, the documents have been revised to provide a more streamlined process, and also expanded to cover conflicts between members, and between the Society and members.

In 2020, an Internal Disputes Committee was also instituted as an extension to the ECC, to handle disputes between members where these were outside of the codes, or disputes between one or more members and the Society itself. This was also a requirement of recent changes to ACT legislation. Clause 13 of the ASA Constitution will have to be changed through a vote of members to comply with the new legislation and that this will be progressed soon.

#### **IAU GA location and bid**

In late 2019 Trott contacted all Heads of Departments and major institutions to put forward the idea that Australia might host the IAU GA in the future. Trott convened a meeting of the Heads of Department in the cities that would

be large enough to host the event: Brisbane; Sydney; Melbourne; and Perth. They were asked to caucus amongst themselves prior to the meeting. There was consensus among the group, and a general feeling that Australia should once again bid to host the GA (having previously hosted in Sydney in 1973 and 2003). Given the timeline for SKA and the long timeline for preparing a bid and then hosting the meeting, it was felt that a bid for a 2030 Perth-based bid would be well supported nationally. 2030 ties in with full science operations for the SKA and we hope to have full membership of ESO pending funding and the mid-term review. The Western Australian contingent will continue to monitor this over the next couple of years so that we are well-prepared for a 2030 bid. There was also discussion on what a GA in 2030 would look like. Information provided on the IAU website is still very traditional in its approach to hosting large events and the current astronomy community is now further ahead in aspects such as remote meetings and exploring sustainable solutions.

**Awards:** Members of the ASA were recognized in several awards over the past 12 months:

- Professor Rachel Webster AO FAA, from the University of Melbourne, was awarded as an Officer of the Order of Australia in this year's Australia Day Honours. Rachel was awarded "For distinguished service to education in the field of astrophysics, to astronomical research, and to young women scientists."
- Professor Tamara Davis AM, from the University of Queensland, for significant service to astrophysical science, to education, and to young astronomers.
- Professor Tim Bedding, from the University of Sydney, was elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science. This is recognition of Tim's leadership in the field of asteroseismology and service to Australian science. He joins a distinguished group of the country's leading scientists.
- A/Professor Sergio Leon-Saval from the University of Sydney SAIL laboratory, won the Australian Optical Society John Love Award.
- A/Professor Adam Deller, from Swinburne University, received the Australian Academy of Science 2020 Pawsey Medal.
- Professor Lisa Kewley, from the Australian National University, received the 2020 US National Academy of Science James Craig Watson Medal.

**Meetings:** The 2019 ASA Annual Scientific Meeting was held from the July 7-12 at the University of Queensland, with the organisation led by Holger Baumgardt and Tamara Davis. This was the 53rd Scientific Meeting of the Astronomical Society of Australia.

234 people registered to attend the ASA Meeting at which there were 28 scientific sessions, 7 special meetings (Town Halls, AGM), 3 poster sparkler sessions, and 1 public lecture delivered by Kirsten Banks from UNSW.

The HWSA was co-hosted by UQ and USQ, and was held on Stradbroke Island with the theme of "Do-it-yourself". There were 68 participants, with 38% being female, representing an even spread of national institutions.

APRIM 2020, due to be held 6-10 July 2020 in conjunction with the ASA's 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability of international and interstate visitors to travel to Perth. The ASA thanks Dr George Heald, Dr Barbara Catinella, and their Organising Committee for their dedicated work.

#### **4. ASA events in 2019/2020**

IDEA chapter Town Hall at ASM 2019 and Rainbow Dinner.

The ECR Chapter aimed to run the ECR Mentoring Workshop in March, but this was postponed due to COVID-19. The committee are considering options for operating workshops later in 2020.

The 2020 Australian National Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics Workshop was held on 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at UNSW Canberra, with 62 registrants.

The ANITA Summer School on "Cosmic Explosions" was held on 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at UNSW Canberra, with 36 registrants.

The 2020 HWSA and ASM are being held virtually. As of this report, there were 315 registrants for the ASM, which exceeds the normal face-to-face attendance. Due to the shortened program, only students and ECRs are able to present their work. The HWSA has at least 170 registrants, allowing a much larger cohort to participate than for a usual face-to-face School.

## **5. ASA membership**

The ASA membership has increased modestly. Membership numbers are now 770 (729 in 2019) with 149 overdue renewals.

Deaths: 2019/2020 saw the passing of two long-standing, and highly-respected members of our community.

**Richard Hunstead.** Dick has many enduring legacies, but his commitment to training and inspiring the younger generation of astronomers is a role in which many of us knew him. He was the former head of the Sydney Institute for Astronomy (SifA) and the Director of MOST. Scientifically, he had significant contributions to the fields of quasars, galaxies and the Lyman-alpha Forest. He was a committed member of ASA for many years, serving on ASA Council, and starting as an ASA as a student member in 1966.

**Jean-Pierre Macquart.** J-P was at the peak of his research career, having been part way through publishing world-leading research in Nature and Science. J-P had been instrumental in the detection and characterisation of Fast Radio Bursts, and their use as cosmological probes. He had recently published work detecting the missing baryons in the intergalactic space in the Universe. J-P was a strong supporter of ANITA and the broader theory community, and had many more years of science excellence to contribute before his passing.

## **6. Honorary Fellow**

The ASA Council elected Professor Lister Staveley-Smith for Honorary Fellowship of the Society. Lister is elected for his service to ASA Council and the Society over the years, but also his broader service and contribution to the Australian community.

## **7. Financial**

The ASA's finances are in a very healthy position. At the time of writing (June 2020) the Foundation for Astronomy holds sufficient funds to cover ASA prizes for the next 15 years. In addition, the overall ASA expenditure is well below income, leaving a typical free cash flow of around \$40,000 p.a. Our current membership is at 770 members with 620 financial (compared with 729 members of whom 624 were financial last year). We have 149 overdue renewals.

ASA retained Debra Gooley at 0.2FTE to provide administrative support to the Council. Deb has been an excellent addition, organising meetings, taking minutes, running elections, and running the virtual ASM. ASA Council views Deb's appointment as easily providing the return on the investment in an Administrative Officer.

Details on the Society's finances and audited accounts are available in the Treasurer's report.

## **8. Publications of the ASA (PASA)**

The Editor-in-Chief position transitioned from Professor Melanie Johnston-Hollitt to Dr Stas Shabala in January 2020, and Melanie has continued as an Editorial Board member. The Chair of the Editorial Board, Stas Shabala, reports that PASA is doing well, with submissions having increased and the impact factor being on an increasing trajectory. Consequently, the threshold for getting into PASA is higher and the quality of the papers being published is now on par with other major journals. Whether PASA should expand or remain at the current ~1100 page per annum level is now being considered.

PASA's impact continues to increase. Both the 2 and 5-year Impact Factors have gone up, with the 2019 IF (released on June 30, 2020) at an all-time high of 5.067. This maintains PASA in the top quartile of Journal Citation Reports-listed journals, at number 14 of 68.

Citation data are typically only available mid-year, but a comparison with ADS suggests that we can reasonably accurately estimate the PASA IF before then.

The journal editorial board has made a concerted effort to improve the quality of manuscripts accepted by the journal, and this increased standard is paying dividends in the submission rates and Impact Factor. PASA has also returned to a shorter turnaround time, which is one of the hallmarks of our journal.

Other highlights of PASA will be listed in the separate PASA report.

ASA Council commends the Editorial Board, and in particular Melanie and Stas, for their dedicated work to continue PASA’s high standards.

## **9. ASA Prizes and awards**

The following prizes have been awarded during the 2020 virtual-Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM):

### **Bok Prize for outstanding research in astronomy by an Honours or eligible Masters student**

Awarded to **James Beattie**. James completed his honours research at Australian National University supervised by Christoph Federrath. His Honours project was related to magnetohydrodynamical simulations of molecular clouds. Apart from the main Prize, two Honorable Mentions were given to Sarah Caddy from Macquarie University and to Kirsten Banks from the University of New South Wales.

### **Charlene Heisler Prize for the most outstanding PhD thesis in astronomy**

Awarded to **Hayley Macpherson** for her Thesis “Inhomogeneous cosmology in an anisotropic Universe” completed at Monash University and supervised by Daniel Price and Paul Lasky. An Honorable Mention was given to Colin Jacobs from Swinburne University of Technology.

### **Louise Webster Prize for outstanding research by a scientist early in their post-doctoral career**

Awarded to **Katie Auchetti** from the University of Melbourne for her paper “New Physical Insights about Tidal Disruption Events from a Comprehensive Observational Inventory at X-Ray Wavelengths” (2017, ApJ, 838:149).

### **Anne Green Prize for a significant advance or accomplishment by a mid-career scientist**

Awarded to **JJ Eldridge** from University of Auckland for work on Binary Population and Spectral Synthesis, BPASS code, which has been important, high-impact code applicable in diverse fields of research from high-redshift galaxies and reionisation to nearby galaxies and stellar evolution.

*Awarded separately:*

**Berenice and Arthur Page Medal** is awarded to TG Tan for his outstanding Perth Exoplanet Survey Telescope Observations. TG designed, built and operates the Perth Exoplanet Survey Telescope Observatory, which co-discovered nearly 50 exoplanets, including one potentially habitable planet.

**Encouraging gender diversity:** The ASA is strongly committed to improving the representation and status of women in astronomy. The Society expects that female candidates should comprise at least 30% (increased from previous expectations of 20%) of the nominations for each prize and encourages institutions to help achieve this goal. The percentage of female nominations are variable because of the relatively small total number of applicants, but the statistics over recent years are as follows:

Prize	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Bok	37.5%	61%	0%	29%	50%	83%	50%	0%	17%
Heisler	45%	38%	44%	43%	25%	40%	33%	25%	20%
Webster	50%	50%	100%	0%	0%	100%	33%	0%	0%
Green	40%	40%	50%						

Many thanks to Tanya Hill and Krzysztof Bolejko for overseeing the awards, and to the judges of the awards.

## **10. Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in Astronomy (IDEA) Chapter**

Katie Jamieson has assumed the role of IDEA Chair, succeeding Dan Zucker. We thank Dan for his service in this role and more broadly on the Steering Committee and in the Pleiades Awards process.

The Chapter has undertaken a number of activities over the previous year. These include:

- IDEA Town Hall at ASM 2019

The Pleiades Awards winners were announced prior to the ASA ASM and then presented during the IDEA Chapter Town Hall. During the Town Hall, we also discussed ways to remove bias from proposal review by Australian TACs. The anonymising procedure used by HST and the randomising of investigator names by ESO and ALMA were proposed as possible solutions that could be tried.

- Rainbow Dinner

After the 2018 ASA ASM, we received feedback indicating that some members of the LGBTQI+ community didn't feel it was a safe and comfortable space at the Rainbow Dinner, which we believe was due to the invitation being more broadly inclusive for the first time. As a result, at the 2019 ASA ASM, we specified that the invitation was for members of the LGBTQI+ community and Allies. The dinner went well and we only received positive feedback.

- New Steering Committee

In February, we sent a call for nominations for new members of the Steering Committee. The number of nominations for the IDEA steering committee was not large enough to warrant an election and all nominees were accepted as members of the new Steering Committee. We have 6 returning members (including the new Chair) and 3 new members (including the Deputy Chair). We have already held 3 meetings since the announcement of the new committee at the end of May. We will continue to meet fortnightly while we re-invigorate the IDEA Chapter.

### **11. Education and Public Outreach Chapter (EPOC)**

Michael Fitzgerald is the outgoing Chair of the ASA's EPOC Chapter. The new Chair is Jacqueline Bondell.

### **12. Australian National Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics (ANITA)**

Chapter has undertaken a number of activities of the over the previous year. They elected a new Steering Committee in March 2020, with Ilya Mandel taking over from Daniel Price as Chair. Activities include:

- The 2020 Australian National Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics Workshop was held on 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at UNSW Canberra, with 62 registrants.
- The ANITA Summer School on "Cosmic Explosions" was held on 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at UNSW Canberra, with 36 registrants.
- ANITA have restarted recording seminars on topics relevant to theoretical astrophysics and posting them to the ANITA YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsbSpRiV6DI0Lf9PJopEO5g>. The goal is to provide access to colleagues at institutions that have limited size or funding for regular astrophysics seminars. Prof. Hagai Perets (visiting Monash from Technion, Israel) gave a seminar that started this series, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpv1WwSVmBs>. Unfortunately, the Covid lockdown put this on hold, but we intend to resume this activity as soon as possible.

### **13. Early Career Research Chapter (ECR)**

Manodeep Sinha is outgoing chair of the ECR chapter from 2017-2020, with Nichole Barry assuming the role. The Chapter has undertaken a number of activities of the over the previous year. These include:

- The ECR Townhall meeting was held at the ASA ASM 2019. The Steering Committee organised a new initiative to get feedback on writing (papers/proposals) and matched 14 requests for feedback with volunteers from the community. The logistics and speakers were planned for the ECR Mentoring workshop but had to postpone because of COVID-19. We are not planning any activities during the ASA ASM 2020.
- Steering committee member Nichole Barry has been working with Rachel Webster on a complete survey of Australian Astronomy PhDs and the variety of career pathways. Manodeep was selected to be the inaugural EMCR forum member to the National Committee for Astronomy and has been speaking for ECR interests within the NCA.

### **14. Designated Observatories**

On behalf of Standards Australia, the ASA compiles and maintains a list of *designated* optical observatories that are

judged to be valuable resources for (i) research, (ii) education and (iii) community use. Acceptance as a designated observatory does not imply any form of legal status, but it should enhance a case for protection against obtrusive lighting. The new designated observatory approved in 2019-2020 has been:

- Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary (several facilities) – South Australia

The Standard AS4282 on The Control of the Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting was issued in October 1997 by Standards Australia and revised in 2019. John O'Byrne and Fred Watson represented the ASA in this review.

## **15. Communications**

The ASA email mailing list remains the primary communication avenue for ASA news. Members can post directly to the list [asa@mailman.sydney.edu.au](mailto:asa@mailman.sydney.edu.au). Note that this is a new form of the address, although the older form still works for now. This list is also used for Communications from the ASA Council to members regarding items of broad interest.

The ASA provided input into several processes over the past year:

- Satellite constellations: the ASA, along with several amateur astronomy societies, co-wrote a letter to Ministers Andrews (DISER) and Fletcher (Communications), and Dr Megan Clark (Australian Space Agency) voicing concern about the proliferation of mega-constellations of satellites, and their potential impact on professional and amateur astronomy in Australia. The letter, counter-signed by 12 HoDs and amateur society Presidents, requested that astronomers are able to join a national and international dialogue to find solutions in this area that are of mutual scientific and commercial benefit
- NSW curriculum review process: Kathryn Ross, a former University of Sydney student and a PhD student at ICRAR, is leading an initiative to increase the representation of female scientists in the NSW school science curriculum. Women are currently extremely under-represented in the syllabus. The ASA provided a letter of support to Kathryn in her work to improve the disparity.
- ARC grants process: the ASA wrote a letter to Minister Tehan (Education) about the timeliness and process of ARC grants announcements and the impact on ECRs and MCRs of the uncertainty around this process. This work has also been supported by the AIP and STA.

Michael Brown is the ASA's media and outreach coordinator and oversees the ASA facebook and twitter accounts and provides general media advice to the society. The ASA (internal) Facebook page continues to be a valuable avenue for quickly highlighting recent articles, awards and upcoming events. A new outward facing Facebook page was created and aims to provide information to a wider audience. The ASA twitter account (@AstroSocAus) has 1,334 followers and regularly tweets ASA and general astronomy news. This is an increase of 200 followers in the past year.

The ASA Events Calendar lists all ASA sponsored events as well as conferences, workshops and meetings that are open to broad Australian and international participation (see <http://asa.astronomy.org.au/calendar.html>).

New in 2020 is the creation of a webform, and website-based database, for online astronomy lectures in Australia (and relevant meetings from overseas). This initiative aims to create an easy location for people to post their online presentations, and for others to easily access information about what is available. As of June 30, there were 58 presentations and full conferences listed (see <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JFjxqDvY-rrmmQZb-BFyV9uefwHoPeA7u9WC9A7j9kY/edit#gid=0>)

## **16. Science & Technology Australia**

The ASA is a member of Science & Technology Australia (STA), which is Australia's peak body across science and technology. ASA members attended major STA events in the past year, including Science Meets Parliament, and have participated in STA programs such as Superstars of STEM, and STEM Ambassadors. STA's focus in late 2019 was on improving the timeliness and process of ARC grants, and beginning to discuss initiatives for improving the representation of indigenous Australians in STEM careers. In 2020, the focus has shifted somewhat to ensuring support for students and ECRs who are affected by COVID-related job losses, travel restrictions and visa issues. It also produced a report highlighting the relatively larger impact on the female STEM workforce than the male STEM workforce due to lockdown restrictions and the closing of schools. More recently, STA has provided input the government on the effect on the sector of the announced changes to the funding of university degrees. Cath Trott is the current Physical Science Cluster Representative on the STA Board, with a term ending in September 2020.

## **17. Progress against 2019/2020 priorities**

- 1) Implement some components of Strategic Plan
  - Deb Gooley was retained to support the Society's administrative processes
  - Feedback from the Heads of Department focused our attention on supporting and developing the student and ECR members of our community. As part of this initiative, ASA Council approved an increase in the availability of domestic travel funding for travel to the APRIM meeting, in combination with the HWSA
  - ASA Council also supported an initiative by the ECR Steering Committee, in their capacity to organize the ECR Mentoring workshop, to provide some funding support for members using sustainable travel options for the meeting. Unfortunately, the meeting was postponed due to COVID-19, but ASA Council is committed to making this a broader "green fund" initiative for Society meetings, as part of a broader sustainability initiative
  - ASA Council have discussed the availability of small amounts of seed funding for ASA workshops, to be sought via a competitive process. This is an attempt to use some of the Society funds to support community-led workshop initiatives, where other funding is not available. This workshop funding has been placed on-hold during the current COVID-19 situation.
- 2) Following the publication of the PASA history, decide on next direction for the ASA history project
  - In consultation with Nick Lomb, who has written the previous publications related to the ASA history, it was decided to document the history of the two IAU General Assemblies held in Australia. The 1973 General Assembly of the IAU in Sydney is now the subject of a journal paper by Nick Lomb: [Australia and the International Astronomical Union: the 1973 Sydney general assembly](#) in the [Historical Records of Australian Science](#) which should be accessible to most local ASA members through their institutional library.
- 3) Web upgrade
  - The upgrade is ongoing, and new materials have been developed. Deb Gooley and John O'Byrne are working to decide the best means of hosting the website and materials.

## **18. New Priorities for 2020/2021**

In addition to any carry-forward priorities, Council has identified the following possible priorities to concentrate on for the next 12 months (for discussion):

- 1) Strategic Plan highlighted support for students (and ECRs) in our community. With the savings in travel funds for students in 2020 due to COVID, Council has been discussing ways in which we can support the community. Council are proposing a COVID-fund to re-purpose some of the unspent funds. Points for consideration, with feedback requested from the membership:
  - a. Open to all members, but priority for students and ECRs
  - b. Available for non-salary related expenses associated with scientific research. Options include, but are not limited to, online conference registration fees, interim childcare during conferences, travel to observatories, travel to domestic meetings, professional development and career development programs to increase job prospects.
  - c. Proposals capped at \$1,500 per person (but with the expectation of smaller requests), and a total available capped fund from ASA surplus.
- 2) Implementation of a "Green Fund" for ASA workshops and events. This is a fund to support choice of sustainable options in ASA events. For example, greener travel options, carbon neutral catering, others as justified in proposal. ASA Council proposes that this green fund will be available as part of workshop or travel support requests from the community to Council.

## **19. Harley Wood School of Astronomy and ASM/AGM 2021**

ASA Council has received interest from the University of Melbourne to host the 2021 HWSA and ASM/AGM, and we expect a full proposal shortly.



## **20. ASA Council for 2020/2021**

Cathryn Trott	President
John Lattanzio	Vice President
Stuart Wyithe	Immediate Past President
Yeshe Fenner	Treasurer
John O'Byrne	Secretary
Marc Duldig	Secretary
Michael Brown	Media and Outreach
Stas Shabala	PASA editorial Board Chair
Tanya Hill	Prizes and awards co-ordinator
For election	Student Representative
Elisabete da Cunha	Councillor
Krzysztof Bolejko	Councillor
Barbara Catinella	Councillor
Ilya Mandel	Councillor
Daniel Zucker	Councillor

## **21. Closing Remarks**

Difficult times such as those we are now facing make the role of communities all the more important, and the ASA will continue to support students and ECRs as they face the challenges of effective and efficient research, scientific communication, and career planning. The ASA Strategic Plan, completed in 2019, highlighted this early career cohort as a primary focus of the Society and its activities, and it is this commitment that we can build upon.

As well as the challenges presented to our community, 2020 has also presented us with opportunities to improve astronomy, and society in general. The sustainability initiatives, pioneered during 2019 but now taking-on more immediate activities, can be used to make permanent positive changes to the way we undertake research, and our carbon footprint as a professional community. Online meetings and virtual conferencing, while currently imperfect, are finding a renewed interest to develop and test better and more effective systems, and this work can be used to support more flexible work arrangements and conferencing for those in our community who are less able to travel (financially or for personal reasons).

We also have the opportunity to continue finding better ways to support and encourage a diverse community, and the activities of the IDEA Chapter to increase awareness of the under-representation of some parts of the community in science, and find ways in which we can address this, have received a lot of attention this year, and have accelerated work in this area. In the ASA, we aim to represent, support and develop astronomy in Australia, for all Australians and our international colleagues, and we will continue to play a strong role to advocate for that.

### **Discussion**

Sarah Brough asked about continued ASA engagement on the issue of satellite constellations. The President confirmed that the Society wished to follow on from the letter mentioned in her report, to further engage in the discussion.

Natasha Hurley-Walker asked about ASA support for moving supercomputer facilities to renewal energy. The President noted that this had been discussed by the Sustainability committee. Yeshe Fenner noted that the Swinburne OzSTAR supercomputer was already running on 100% renewable energy.

Warrick Couch noted that the ASA's contribution to the IAU membership fee in 2020 presumably did not mean that this problem was resolved. The President reported that the NCA and AAL were in discussions about how to handle it in future and the ASA had made it clear that this was a one-off payment by the Society.

Richard de Grijs asked what counts as an ASA workshop for the proposed seed funding and green funding. The President acknowledged that this had been discussed by Council but still needed to be defined.

Motion that the President's report be accepted.

**Mandel/Pearce  
Carried**

## 5. Treasurer's Report and presentation of accounts

The Treasurer, Yeshe Fenner, presented a Powerpoint summary report of the Society's financial year ending 31 March 2020. The financial audit was still underway at the time of the AGM, so the presentation contained preliminary figures from the draft report. The delays were related to the need for the auditors to work from home due to Covid-19. These have been updated to match the final audit in the values reported below.

The Society's finances remain very strong with a healthy surplus that will be used to fund administrative assistance, a new ASA website and support the implementation of the strategic plan. We currently have about 769 members, of whom 620 are financial (81%) are financial as of the AGM date.

Account balances at 31/3/20 were:

<b>ASA accounts</b>		<b>FAA accounts</b>	
ASA a/c and Term Deposit	468,357	FAA a/c and Term Deposit	262,692

The surplus for the year was approximately \$50,000, which was around the average of the last 3 years, but higher than the longer term average of the last 7 years. The FAA received \$636 in donations, which is quite low compared to previous years.

The Treasurer noted expected COVID-19 impacts on the 2020-21 financial forecast:

- Lack of travel would lead to saving of APRIM/HWSA travel subsidies that had been budgeted at approx. \$15,000 total
- Fewer student travel awards would lead to saving of up to \$15,000
- Cancellation of most ASA events was expected to be approximately cost neutral
- Most other operational expenses were unaffected

The Treasurer proposed freezing the 2021 fees at the 2020 level, in recognition of the financial impact COVID-19 may have had on ASA members, their families and their institutions.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Discounted rate</u>	<u>Full rate</u>
Honorary Fellows	no cost	no cost
Fellows	\$180	\$213
Full members	\$145	\$178
Student/Retirees/Associates	\$63	\$85
Overseas (excl. GST)	\$57.27	\$77.27
Associate Societies		\$119
Corporate members		\$618

The discounts applied to most grades for payment by the end of February and for AIP members. The Overseas members rate is the same as for Student/Retirees/Associates but excludes GST.

### Discussion

There was no further discussion of the Treasurer's Report.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and audit and the new Fee structure.

**Catinella/Croom  
Carried**

### 6. Election of Auditor

The Treasurer recommended the appointment of the auditor, David Pettman from CAAA Wong and Mayes, as Auditor for 2020-2021.

Motion that David Pettman from CAAA Wong and Mayes be appointed as Auditor for 2020-2021.

**Cortese/Patterson  
Carried**

### 7. Editorial Board Report

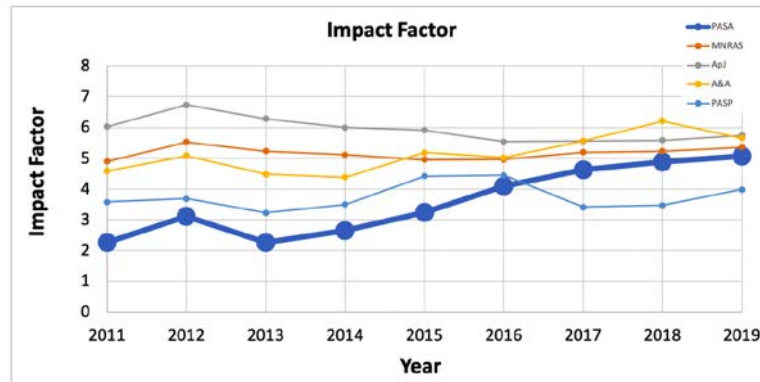
The PASA report was presented in Powerpoint by Stas Shabala, the Editor-in-Chief and Chair of the Editorial Board. The text below is adapted from the Powerpoint.

The Editor outlined reasons why members should consider publishing in PASA

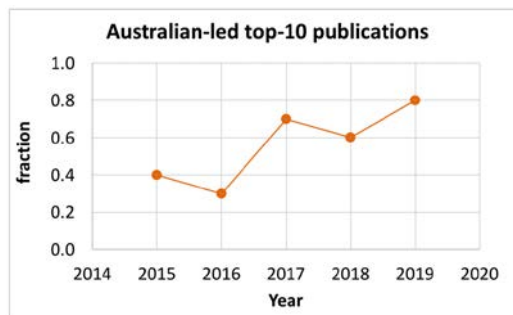
- Society-owned. All profits go to the ASA (PASA has returned a surplus to the ASA in the past several years).
- Fast turnaround. Median 33 days between submission and first decision, for papers going out to review.

- 2019 ISI Impact Factor 5.067
- Publish-on-demand. Online-only, rapid publication model.
- Free to authors. Moving paywall model (2 years behind paywall, then all articles open access). Editorial Board select limited number of articles to be open access from day one.
- Integrated with Overleaf (online collaborative LaTeX authoring tool) and Crossmark (version tracking).
- PASA datastore. Publish 1Tb+ of data alongside your article free of charge.
- Collections. Opportunity to group together thematically-linked articles.
- Regular articles, supplement-style/code/instrumental/catalog papers, articles with an Australian/southern hemisphere focus and high profile ARA&A-style “Dawes reviews”.

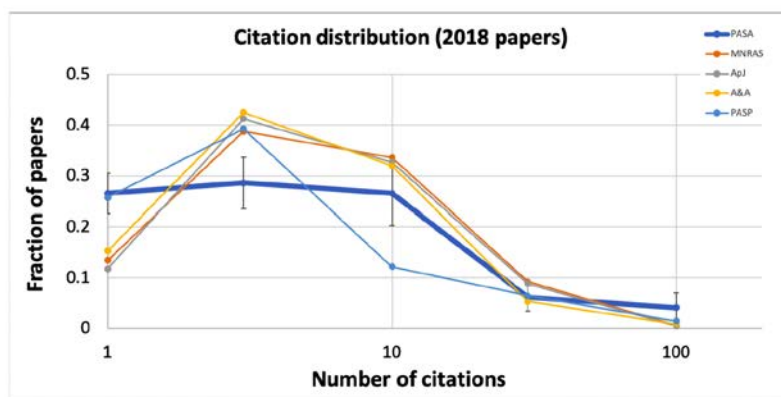
An updated graph was presented showing evolution of the PASA impact factor over recent years



As seen in the graph, PASA’s Impact Factor (IF) continued to rise with the 2019 (citations in 2019 to papers published in 2017 and 2018) results just out showing an increase to 5.067. The Editor highlighted that this IF was led by Australians – as seen below in the graph of the fraction of top 10 publications that are Australian-led:



He also pointed out that there was no difference in citations between PASA and the “majors” at high-citing end:



The Editor pointed out several of the high citing papers in recent years and also noted the continued solid citation rate for the Dawes Reviews.

The Editor pointed out some highlights in 2020:

- Quick turnaround times. Median 17 days from submission to first decision (33 days for papers going to review).

- Copyright: change to “License to publish”. Authors no longer asked to transfer copyright for their articles.
- Crossmark: Access to an authoritative version of a publication, including any errata.
- Double-blind review as an option: Simply de-identify the submitted pdf, and request double-blind review in the cover letter.
- Author tools: Overleaf and Datastore.

The Editor also described the concept of Collections based around a science theme, instrument or technique. Papers were published continuously as articles are accepted, making an ideal place for large projects.

### **Discussion**

Matthew Colless noted PASA’s impact factor was high in part because of the journal’s adoption of innovative features. He asked how that impact factor would be maintained when other journals catch up. The Editor thought the success was more related to a high fraction of high quality submissions. Nonetheless he encouraged members to provide suggestions for innovative approaches to scientific publishing.

Barbara Catinella asked if the non-Australian publications in PASA were coming from any particular country. The Editor noted that quite a few papers came from the Asia-Pacific region, as we would expect.

Motion to accept the PASA Report.

**Lattanzio/Cole  
Carried**

### **8. Any other business**

None.

Before closing the meeting the President noted again the difficult times caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many members were separated from their families, either by domestic or international borders. The ASA membership could play a role in supporting each other and the Society could use some of its funds to help people in their professional lives. It would also be an opportunity to look for more flexible ways of working and come through this period more strongly as a community.

The meeting was closed at 2.42 pm (AEST)/2.12 pm (ACST)/12.42 pm (AWST) by the President, Cathryn Trott.