

REPORT
Sydney City Skywatchers Annual General Meeting
06 October 2021



Officers Elected at the meeting:

President : Ann Cairns

Vice President: Dr Toner Stevenson, Dr Andrew Jacob

Secretary: Elizabeth Cocking

Treasurer: Elizabeth Budek

Committee Members:

Janette Brennan

Monty Leventhal OAM

George Mavrocordatos

Andrew Wood

Retiring Presidential Address – Dr Toner Stevenson

I acknowledge all First Nations Peoples, elders past present and emerging, and I respect their custodianship of country, never ceded. Aboriginal Peoples were the first watchers of the Southern Stars, Moon and planets from Australia and their knowledge of astronomy is enduring and relevant.

I am proud that we have made the most of these times and in the tradition of the past I have decided to re-instate the 2-year term for president. I have enjoyed and always felt privileged to be president of this small, but rich and vibrant society, and a change in leadership provides opportunity for renewal, growth and diversity and true leadership is about empowering others.

The reason our society was formed in 1895 was to bring like-minded people together to share and enhance knowledge about astronomy and, despite all, we have kept true to our origins. This time last year we had hopes that the pandemic would ease and that we could return, in 2021, to talks at Sydney Observatory and members viewing nights. This was not to be but I am thankful for the opportunities we had to observe the 26 May total Lunar Eclipse at Sydney Observatory and our end of year celebration at Centennial Park.

We had a very poignant meeting in February, inspired by Elizabeth Cocking's suggestion to ask Members for your views and interests. Your contributions shaped one of our most important achievements this year, the growth of membership reports. I want to thank the members including Monty Leventhal, Jonni Harrison, Craig McIlveen, Andrew Wood, George Mavrocordatos, Elizabeth Cocking, Mike Chapman and Ann Cairns who stepped up to present short talks and I will never forget Robert Luxford's fabulous Lunar Eclipse video. All who have attended our Zoom meets have contributed to our community of learning through your engagement with our speakers.

As I reflected on our program I realised that we have revelled in the opportunity to host speakers from Scotland, Tasmania, Western Australia as well as locally, to share diverse areas of astronomical research:

- Last October I presented my research about the women who measured the stars for the Astrographic Catalogue.

- In November Dr Lucyna Chudczer unlocked some of the mysteries of Jupiter through the Juno Mission. Jupiter continues to surprise us and was in the news recently re changes to the great Red spot turbulence.
- In March Dr Martin George from Launceston took us to Planetariums around the World explaining their importance in education, family participation, and enjoyment.
- In April Rami Mandow discussed his search for Planet Nine. He gave insights into research methods through the story of how pulsars were discovered.
- In May Dr Graziella Caprarelli asked us to consider the discovery of underground lakes on Mars and how this alters our understanding of that planet.
- The Astronomer Royal of Scotland, Professor Catherine Heyman joined us in June to explore the dark side of the Universe.
- July was Members' presentation night, a model we will repeat next year.
- Dr Ian Kemp spoke at the meeting in August about the Cataclysmic Variable Stars: Searching for ripples in the cosmic Niagara Falls.
- In September we heard theories about the discovery of the Moons reflected sunlight from Philosopher Professor Rick Benetiz, from the University of Sydney..

Our website has evolved and also become more inclusive with reports from Andrew Wood and Garry Dalrymple as well as the 24 posts by Elizabeth Cocking and Monty Leventhal's monthly solar observations. We capture data on our most popular blogposts and the extent of our website reaches across the globe. This month alone we had over 6,000 people engage with our website content.

Our social media presence continues to have impact thanks to Ann Cairns and Mike Chapman and all those who like, share and comment on the Sydney City Skywatchers Facebook page. The Sydney City Skywatchers Astronomers Bulletin is available on the website and editor Janette Brennan continues to make this valuable contribution with many articles contributed by members.

Before I relinquish this role, I want to thank the committee for their support:

- Secretary and Membership Manager, Elizabeth Cocking for her dedicated enthusiasm, great ideas and administration. Elizabeth was awarded Life Membership in December last year.
- Vice president Ann Cairns, and committee member George Mavrocordatos, thank you for your dedication for the historic telescope collection and organisation of outreach activities.
- Vice president Dr Andrew Jacob, has generously contributed expertise and is our strong connection with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
- Prabina Lord- Doyle supported our mission through her work on our image and more.
- Monty Leventhal OAM brings his wisdom and experience to our decision-making. I want to congratulate Monty for his success in the Harold Ridley Grant from the BAA.
- Treasurer, Elizabeth Budek provides meticulous financial reports and ensures we stay financially viable and operate professionally as a not-for-profit.
- Susan Berdo thank you for your enthusiasm and support at outreach events. It was a shame Covid stymied some of your ideas for astronomy-inspired walks.
- I would also like to thank Presiding Officer Ken Robinson, who will conduct the election of committee members tonight.

We are grateful for our continuing affiliation with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Whilst we have not been able to resume our meetings at Sydney Observatory, many members experienced the total Lunar Eclipse at Sydney Observatory. Another area where our society is interested in is the restoration of the Hoskins telescope by MAAS. This quite spectacular instrument was once owned by a member of our society and donated to the Observatory

SECRETARY and MEMBERSHIP REPORT - Elizabeth Cocking

I started my report last year by saying what a year it has been. Who would have thought this year we are still in the midst of COVID-19 and once again I say Well, what a year it has been! Whilst COVID has had an impact on our daily lives for everybody I am happy to say that our members have come through relatively unscathed.

COVID-19 has made the Committee think “outside the box” on how to keep the club going. We have introduced Zoom for our meetings and short talks at meetings by the members. With these innovations we have hardly missed a beat. I want to look at the positive side to come out of COVID-19 and that is with the amazing speakers we have had at our meetings. For that Toner Stevenson must take the thanks as she has done all the organizing. Holding meetings by Zoom means we can secure speakers not otherwise available to us such as Professor Catherine Heymans from Edinburgh and speakers from around Australia.

It has been my pleasure to serve you as Secretary. I have found the job rewarding and enjoy the synergy with all of you. At our End of Year event last December, you presented me with Life Membership of SCS and for this I am very humbled. Thank you for the honour.

Membership

There are currently 73 financial members. We welcomed 5 new members in this past session, most have become aware of us due to the website. Our attendance at meetings remains solid, with an average of 25-30 members/visitors participating, and thankfully attendance has not decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members receive information about the meetings via email as well as the website. Zoom is proving popular among members because it has helped us to continue to provide communication and networking amongst the members, as well as enabling interaction with the speakers.

Membership renewals and AGM documentation continue to be sent via postal mail. This is a timely reminder to all members to notify me of any change in their details.

We look forward to meeting again at Sydney Observatory in 2022. Thank you to Sydney Observatory and MAAS for providing an active program of on-line but live viewing events, which have been publicised to our members, many of whom have attended these. The MAAS also provide discount rates to SCS members at events. It is important that we continue to support the Observatory and other areas of MAAS by volunteering at outreach events and assisting wherever we can.

I wish all SCS members good health during these challenging times and thank you for the support you have given me.

SYDNEY CITY SKYWATCHERS ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

01 OCTOBER 2020 to 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

INCOME

Subscriptions:	\$1845.00
Renewals and New Members	
Supper takings	\$Nil
Donations	\$110.00
Astronomy 2021 sales	\$Nil
SCS Badge sale	\$Nil
Miscellaneous - MAAS for Telescope Night refund	\$264.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$2219.00 CR

EXPENDITURE

Administration costs.	\$304.80
Postage	\$244.38
Photocopying	\$50.43
Stationery	\$9.99
Supper costs (food, paper cups etc.)	\$Nil
Public Liability Insurance.	\$474.65
Dept of Fair Trading	\$47.00
Internet costs	\$133.69
BAA (UK) membership	\$91.85
Presentations - Life membership E. Cocking	\$137.40
Miscellaneous-	
MAAS for Telescope Night event	\$264.00
AAVSO for Bulletin postage (USA).	\$169.82
TOTAL EXPENDITURE.	\$1623.21 DR

SURPLUS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/2021 **\$595.79 CR**

BANK BALANCE AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2020. **\$5851.08 CR**
BUSINESS DEBIT CARD **\$349.20 CR**

ASSETS

Telescopes and Binoculars estimated value \$2,500

Elizabeth Budek
Treasurer, Sydney City Skywatchers
6 October 2021