

ANNUAL REPORT
Sydney City Skywatchers Annual General Meeting
04 October 2023



Officers Elected at the meeting:

President : Dr Andrew Wood

Vice President: Dr Andrew Jacob, Ann Cairns

Secretary: Elizabeth Cocking

Treasurer: Elizabeth Budek

Committee Members:

Janette Brennan

Jeff Portelli

Dirk Goes

Dr Toner Stevenson

Retiring Presidential Address – Ann Cairns

I would like to acknowledge that we are all attending this meeting from the lands of First Nations people, in my case, the lands of Gadigal people of the Eora nations. In particular, we acknowledge the first astronomers of our world who used and shared their observations of the southern skies. I wish to pay my respect to all elders, past, present and emerging.

Our committee is committed to keeping up the high quality of talks and club activities. The pandemic has taught us that online meetings are here to stay and provide us with a wider range of high quality speakers from around Australia and the world. We were hoping in the past year to be able to have hybrid meetings so that our members (and speakers) can come in person or join us from elsewhere via streaming-due to ongoing renovations at Sydney Observatory this has not happened. This inability to not meet in person has led to a number of field trips and outreach events that have allowed us to occasionally meet in person.

The committee has met with leadership at the Powerhouse about meeting space and our library which is currently relocated to the Powerhouse storage facilities in Castle Hill. We are planning to organise a night tour as a meeting for our members at the Observatory for early next year and are committed to maintaining our close association with Sydney Observatory and the Powerhouse Museum. While we value our 127 years as an association and remain tied and interested in the history, we also value scientific presentations and learning to be better amateur astronomers as is show by our activities over the last year.

It has been my honour and pleasure to serve Skywatchers as president for the last two years and I look forward to remaining active on the committee. My sincerest thanks go to Toner for her ongoing efforts to secure quality speakers and Elizabeth Cocking for keeping us all organised and Elizabeth Budek for keeping us financial. Janette continues to provide us with a top quality Astronomers Bulletin that can be found on our excellent website. The two Andrews are both knowledgeable, contributing members of the committee. Long-time member, dedicated solar observer and past president Monty Leventhal is stepping out of the committee this year to attend to family matters and we wish him the best and we will welcome him back if and when he chooses.

SCS EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS FOR AGM 2023

SPEAKERS

- 7th November 2022 Dr Rok Nezic. Armagh Observatory.
Armagh Observatory: An astronomical past, present and future
- 5th December 2022 End of Year Celebration.
Dumpling Bar on Kent St
- 6th February 2023 Dr Luke Bozetto. University of Sydney.
Supernova Remnants – Life after death
- 6th March 2023 Dr Toner Stevenson & Prof Nick Lomb.
Eclipse Chasers: Remarkable expeditions in Australia and the Pacific
- 3rd April 2023 Dr Sara Webb. Swinbourne University of Technology.
The Dark Universe: 100 Years of astronomy
- 1st May 2023 Dr Noelia Martinez. ANU.
Laser Guide Stars to push the limits in ground based astronomy
- 5th June 2023 Trevor Leaman, UNSW.
Researching First Nations People's astronomy
- 3rd July 2023 Members Presentation Night
Frank Catanzariti, Dark Matter
Dirk Goe, Scorpius
John Harris, The mystery of Chichen Itza
Rob Luxford, Video – Comets
Craig McIlveen, How discoveries in space are communicated in images
Peter Osman, My favourite astronomical websites
Wayne Orchiston, The Hirsts and Jupiter: A brief excursion in Trans-Tasman astronomy
Dr Toner Stevenson, Annie Dodwell: scientific by nature
Elizabeth Cocking, How Pluto got its name
- 7th August 2023 Brenan Dew. Australian Space Agency.
From Ancient Egypt to the Stars
- 4th September 2023 Dr Cullan Howlet. University of Queensland.
Mapping the Cosmos
- 4th October 2023 Rob Horvat. WSAAG. Western Sydney Amateur Astronomy Group. History of Linden Observatory 30" Evans Telescope

We are still getting 25-30 people (members and visitors) to meetings.

SOCIAL EVENTS

- 5th December 2021 End of Year celebration. Dumpling on Kent St. 20 members and guests attended. A good evening.

OUTREACH EVENTS

- 8th October 2022 Launch Australasian Sky guide. Sydney Observatory.
Cancelled due to bad weather.
- 2nd November 2022 Brian Cox – Infinite Monkey Cage. Interview with Brian Cox. We had front row seats ! Event moved to Powerhouse due to weather. Several members bought telescopes.
- 8th November 2022 Lunar Eclipse viewing night. Sydney Observatory. Several members bought telescopes.
- A run of bad weather We had to cancel the below outreach events because of bad weather !
- 22nd January 2023 Lunar New Year. Sydney Observatory
- 14th February 2023 Centennial Park. Valentines Day
- 25th March 2023 Earth Hour viewing. Sydney Observatory
- 20th April 2023 Solar Eclipse Viewing. Lindesay House. Weather not good, joined into livestream from Western Australia. Ann and Elizabeth gave talks on eclipses.
- 19th May 2023 Centennial Park – Camping 101 Viewing Night. Several members bought telescopes
- 22nd June 2023 Winter Solstice Viewing. Sydney Observatory.
Weather not good. Unable to do viewing. Several members attended.
- 20th July 2023 Apollo Moon Landing Anniversary. Lindesay House. Viewing done. Talks on the Apollo Moon landing.
Toner gave a talk on Eclipse Chasers.
Elizabeth gave a talk on the Apollo 11 Moon landing
- 19th August 2023 Centennial Park Orchestra in the Park Viewing Night. 6 members attended with telescopes.
- 20th August 2023 Centennial Park Science in the Swamp. Day event. Solar viewing done. A HUGE event about 10,000 people over the course of the day.

MEMBER VIEWING NIGHTS

- 12th July 2023 Members viewing night. Sydney Observatory. 8 members attended with telescopes.

CLUB FIELD TRIPS

- 21st May 2023 Visit to John Tebbutt exhibition Hawkesbury History Museum.
- 22nd July 2023 Visit to Castle Hill Discovery Centre to see items stored there. 8 members attended.

22nd July 2023 Tebbutt's Observatory Viewing Night organised by Hawkesbury Astronomical Society.

CLUB VISITS

20th May 2023 Trip to Linden Observatory. 12 SCS members attended. Viewed through 30" Evans Telescope.

6th July 2023 Visit to Sutherland Astronomical Society (SASI) to hear Toner Stevenson's talk on the Eclipse Chasers. Good chance to visit the SASI members.

SECRETARY and MEMBERSHIP REPORT - Elizabeth Cocking

This year has thankfully seen a decline in the COVID pandemic, and we are slowly getting back to normal. We are still holding our monthly meetings via Zoom. We are aware that Zoom is not everyone's preference however it allows our interstate members, and international member, to be able to attend the meetings. Zoom has also allowed the amazing speakers we have had at our meetings. For that, thanks must go to Toner Stevenson as she has done all the organizing. Holding meetings by Zoom means that we can secure speakers not otherwise available to us.

Thank you to the SCS Committee

It has been my pleasure to work with the very dedicated members on the Committee. I wish to thank Ann Cairns for her leadership as President and tireless work in the outreach viewing events, particularly at Centennial Park. To Toner Stevenson for securing the most amazing speakers: to Elizabeth Budek for her great work as Treasurer and keeping us solvent: to Andrew Jacob for being the go-between between SCS and Powerhouse: to Janette Brennan for her wonderful work as Bulletin Editor: to Monty Leventhal and Andrew Wood for their work and sage suggestions and input into the running of the Club.

Membership

We welcomed 8 new members in this past session, 2022-2023.

There are currently 76 members on the books. Our attendance at meetings remains solid, with an average of 25-30 members/visitors attending. Meetings continue to be held via Zoom, which is proving popular among members. It has helped us to continue to provide communication and networking among the members.

Communication with members

Membership renewals and AGM documentation continue to be sent via postal mail. This is a check to ensure that the contact details of members are correct. This is a timely reminder to all members to notify me of any change in their contact details. Regarding communication, with the increase in identity fraud and scams I would like to advise that your details are handled in the strictest privacy. The membership list is never given out, and I always check with members before handing out their details.

I would also like to reiterate that I am always available to discuss any aspect of the club. If there is anything you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me. As I always say, the club is here for you.

Thank You to Sydney Observatory and Powerhouse

Thank you to Sydney Observatory and Powerhouse for providing our meeting venue. Without this we would not be able to operate. I know it has been some time since we have been able to meet face-to-face, and unfortunately it looks like there is still a way to go until we can return. We are very mindful that some members do prefer a face-to-face meeting but hang in there, we will return hopefully next year. It is important that we continue to support Sydney Observatory by volunteering at their outreach events. They are very generous in providing discount rates to SCS members at their events.

I wish all SCS members good health during these challenging times and while we are not completely out of the woods yet the light at the end of the tunnel is shining brightly. Good times are ahead for us. It has been my pleasure to serve you as Secretary. I have found the job rewarding and enjoy the synergy with all of you.

Thank you for the support you have given me.

SYDNEY CITY SKYWATCHERS ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT – Elizabeth Budek

I am pleased to advise that Sydney City Skywatchers finances are in a healthy state. We continue to run in a surplus and hope to keep doing so. Even though we have not received additional income, other than annual subscriptions and donations, our overheads continue.

We are running an operating budget of approximately \$2,500.00 which covers expenses such as internet costs, Public Liability insurance, BAA(UK) Membership, Department of Fair Trading costs, telescope accessories, postage, photocopying and stationery. We also have in reserve approximately \$5,000.00. This money is set aside to purchase equipment such as telescopes or binoculars and for any future purchases that may arise.

The Committee wish to thank those members who made donations this past year. Their generosity is appreciated.

Elizabeth Budek

Treasurer, Sydney City Skywatchers

4 October 2023