

## Canterbury Astronomical Society

### Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 8pm Room: ER225

Level 2, Ernest Rutherford Building, University of Canterbury.

#### Welcome / Greetings:

Thank you all for attending tonight, and a warm welcome to our new members joining us for the first time this year.

#### Present:

Dale Kershaw, Ray Pointon, Simon Lewis, Carol McAlavey, Heather Skinner, Mandy Heslop, Preetha Sreedharan, Rob Glassey, Jason Kruger, Malcolm Carr, Orlon Petterson, Brent Schroeder, Adrian Sands, Terry Richardson, Tait Keller, Nick Fagg

#### Apologies / Acknowledgements:

Karen Wills, Ruth Snashall, John Pickering, Marc Bunyan, Gary Steel, Greg Hay, Anne Whitehead, Peter Whitehead

**Minutes of 2024 AGM** - read and confirmed true and correct.

*Simon Lewis moved from the chair. Preetha Sreedharan 2nd. All in favour.*

Matters arising? Nothing

#### Annual Reports:

President

Annual General Meetings may not be the most exciting events, but they are extremely important. They provide an opportunity for our committee and volunteers to showcase their efforts and the substantial number of hours they dedicate each year. Many have been contributing consistently over the years, often balancing their involvement in astronomy with other family commitments and hobbies.

So I'd like to say a huge thank you personally to our 2024 committee for their hard work and commitment to the society.

I've been on this committee in various roles for many years, I know how much effort goes into organising events like Hororata games, managing the open night programme and private

groups (thanks to Rob), and just keeping the grass cut, the weeds under control so that the observatory is ready for visitors and members.

So, thank you all of you and it's also time to thank those who are taking a well-earned break from committee this year and to those members who are offering to stand this year.

We should remind ourselves that we get some fantastic reviews from our visitors and that's solely due to the commitment and enthusiasm of those who volunteer either on committee or in some other capacity. So, on behalf of the society, thank you.

So turning to the year in review it's safe to say it's been another successful year for CAS and we continue to run a successful and healthy society.

We maintain a healthy presence with the public across our open nights and private group nights, as well as attending events like Hororata Games, Night Glow, Yuri's night and other small events.

It's fabulous to be invited back to these events time and again. They give an opportunity for CAS to be seen by thousands of people across the year however we shouldn't fool ourselves. We still have a job to do as each event brings us in touch with people who had never heard of CAS or know there is an observatory in West Melton and that's even for locals.

It still amazes me that we come across this and we still have a big audience to pull on for open nights and potential new members which is an opportunity for us to exploit.

We've maintained a good membership level and it's been great to meet so many new members this year. And we'd like to welcome those of you who joined us this year, make the most of the facilities and the amazing knowledge that our members have across such a broad range of astronomy activities.

Many of our members come from public events and our open nights and while these do place a burden on our volunteers we should not underestimate the importance of them.

They bring us into the public eye and in these days of social media and the internet it's easy for a hobby like ours to slip out of the public sight.

I see that as one of my key roles as President and one that I take very seriously when I see an opportunity to wave our flag or spot an opportunity to share our society's amazing wealth of knowledge.

If you have been out to the observatory during the year, you may be aware that some of our buildings are feeling their age and becoming difficult to keep watertight.

The observatory is our key asset and much more than a paddock with some sheds.

They are a facility we use for members' activities, for our public nights events and remain the most significant society asset.

Maintenance is a huge task each year for the observatory director and the many volunteers on working bees but is a critical one to ensure they remain operational. There's a small dedicated

team leading this work, that's Brent our obs director along with Terry our VP and Gary and a small army of helpers on those days that needs the grass cut or a paint brush applied. This year we've completed the woodwork on the 16" roof and we are now going to replace the 16" rails. These are rotten in place and in need of replacement. That's going to be done before open nights and will give us a chance later to motorise the roof mechanics too. The other big job that we have tried to progress this year was the replacement for the Nankerville dome housing the 120mm scope.

Society has spent a lot of money over the years trying to patch this up over the last five years and it still leaks like a sieve in winter.

Last year we decided we needed to replace this building as we can't keep having good gear exposed to water and dampness every winter and we are just spending money on fix up's. So we started looking at this alongside the 11" building which is also showing its age, to see what we can do to create a replacement larger shed that will last us another 30 years and meet the society's needs now and in the future.

Despite numerous attempts with various architects, designers and builds whose promises to deliver we have been let down again and again over this year.

After multiple let downs we have decided to do this work ourselves and will build two smaller roll off roof sheds which we can build ourselves without relying on contractors or designers. So this is now our approach and we are now planning this out for next spring.

You will have noticed we are taking the opportunity to spruce up the lodge facilities and some work has started on that already with a library refit completed this year which saw the eviction of many uninvited guests from the ceiling, new shelves, carpet and a lick of paint being applied.

Speaking of the library, our new librarian will be tasked to review the library as we are not seeing this being used. This is not too surprising as more and more media move to digital media.

In the short term we have stopped buying books this year as the ones we have are not being read and we will look at how we might reorg the library – perhaps looking at a digital subscription vs having physical books aging in the library.

We will be looking at further observatory development over the coming year but the priority is to complete jobs like the 16" rails, and new sheds first. Plus our steps from the lodge to the domes have seen better days and is another task for this year.

We have continued to add new features to the observatory over the past year too with the addition of another new meteor camera system which you may have heard me talk about earlier this year, thanks to James Scott from the University of Otago.

There are lots of other changes and activities over the past year and I do urge you to come out to one of our social nights and come check out the changes for yourselves.

While it's great to focus on the positive outcomes for the year, it's worthwhile just touching on some of the challenges we have faced this year.

Earlier this year our long standing Treasurer Dave Brian resigned and after many months searching for a replacement, the committee made the decision to ask Brent to pick up the role. Brent has a good background in business and is familiar with the financial coming and goings our society deals with. Brent was confirmed in the role at the October meeting and got to work on reviewing our financials and budgets.

What's become apparent to committee since Brent picked this role up is just how much the society has grown in terms of financial transaction volumes, a large portion of which comes from our growth in merch sales like calendars, sales at public events and open nights via EftPos and things like raffles for fundraising.

It's clear we've outgrown our spreadsheet approach to tracking our transactions and after reviewing the feedback from our auditor we have made two immediate changes.

Firstly we are in the process of moving banks to BNZ from Westpac and the migration of our accounting system into Xero.

This will give Brent the tools to tighten up our accounting processes and bring our financial system to a level we need for our activities.

This will take some months to do and given the current position we are at we do not intend to have the external auditor do an annual account review but intend to do these reviews more frequently during the year to reduce the time between transactions and audit making the job easier for them and for Brent.

We are happy with this year's figures and we'll have a much more traceable system this year to make FY 2025 a much easier task for everyone.

I can say that we are very lucky to have Brent on board and he will bring some improved rigour to our financial system this year, so thanks to Brent for taking on this mammoth task.

On a final note, this will be our last year with our current constitution due to important changes that are coming to the Incorporated Societies Act. These changes and the requirement to comply with other legislation such as the privacy act will require the society to modify our constitution to remain compliant to these important legislative acts.

Committee will continue to share these changes during the coming year and in time for them to be incorporated at next year's AGM.

In summary, as we enter the 2025 season we have a healthy society, a good bank balance, stable membership and share a vibrant and successful society and as president I hope I can

have your continued support to allow my committee and I to continue moving us forward in the coming year.

Please stay tuned for news updates on the website

our email news updates each month and at our monthly meetings and social nights.

*Simon Lewis moved from the chair. All in favour.*

#### Treasurer

#### Profit and Loss Trading Income

Calendars 444.60

Donations 5,064.50

EFTPOS Revenue 7,312.50

Event Revenue 15,929.30

Interest Income 2,777.41

Membership fees 6,964.81

Merchandise Sales 3,596.47

Total Trading Income 42,089.59

Gross Profit 42,089.59

#### Operating Expenses

Advertising 560.28

Bank Fees 2.70

EFTPOS expenses 569.34

Event Costs 720.24

General Expenses 3,320.83

Insurance 4,299.05

Light, Power, Heating 1,379.48

Merchandise costs 4,426.33

Misc unassigned expense 925.52  
Motor Vehicle Expenses 1,506.50  
Observatory Maintenance 7,507.25  
Printing & Stationery 49.79  
Telephone & Internet 1,188.00  
Website Expenses 783.29  
Total Operating Expenses 27,238.60  
Net Profit 14,850.99

*Brent Schroeder moved his reports. Dale Kershaw 2nd. All in favour.*

#### Observatory Director

Over the last year we have serviced the heat pump. Serviced the septic tank. Cleaned out and replaced the ball cock in the water tank. Built and set out the shed. 16" rails replaced.  
-Brent thanked Terry and Gary for their efforts.

Library refit. Toilets and part of lodge painted. Archives room set up. Flooring in the 14" dome and safety provisions in place.

-Brent thanked Mandy and Dale for their efforts.

This year we will upgrade the switch board. Become self-sufficient with our water and not rely on the aging system and agreement with the neighbours Bob and Louise. Focus on replacing the stairs and new builds ('domes') for the current leaky 120 and 11" scopes.

*Brent Schroeder moved his report. Terry Richardson 2nd. All in favour.*

#### Editor

Another busy year for Cas. There is always lots of things that happen behind the scenes to keep CAS running smoothly Casmags although reduced in the number published, following the change at last year's AGM. They still covered assorted astronomical information, Cas events, updates at the Observatory and other CAS news

Our merchandise has been busy with sourcing items/pricing etc, Thanks to Mandy for her assistance with this.

Having the eftpos terminal has made doing merchandise sales at all of our events

etc so much easier. Cas had a busy time with events in 2024, The Yuri Event at the Air Force Museum in April, and the The Highland Games in November. These events have always proved to be a great outreach for CAS, with more awareness to the public that we have our amazing facilities etc along with merchandise sales / new memberships Assisting with the Public Friday nights, Wednesday Group nights & Kidsfest, included questions/refunds/attending lists for the eventbrite bookings, Emailing to let our volunteers know if we were Open or Closed for each event. Along with attending on these nights his made for a busy time over the winter season A big thank you to those who submitted images for use in the 2025 CAS Cosmic Calendar 14 images were included this year.

*Dale Kershaw moved her report. Ray Pointon 2nd All in favour.*

### Membership Secretary

This was my second year as your membership secretary, It continues to keep me busy with database updates, tracking payments, new memberships etc, Along with answering any questions that come in re memberships. Updating the membership part of the website means paid members are able to read full forums etc.

The ability to be able to “view only” the bank account means I can update & add new members straight away This has made the process a lot quicker than what was possible in the past. Along with having the “eftpos terminal” to take instant payments

I have continued to send out “Welcome to CAS” emails when folks join followed by another to say your “Membership is confirmed” after formal acceptance at the committee meeting following them joining. Names are listed for this in the minutes I started last year to send personalized individual reminder emails to our members to remind them that their membership is due, These include their name, member number and type plus the \$\$ amount along with the bank details.

The 2025 emails were sent out, last weekend, Response to this has been positive with payments coming in, Several have responded that due to whatever circumstance they do not wish to continue.

Then sending a follow up “Thanks for your Payment” or “Thanks for letting us Know” email.

*Dale Kershaw moved her report. Heather Skinner 2nd. All in favour.*

## Webmaster

It's been a good year. The transition into the role took longer than expected. But once I was underway it was easy.

Keeping updates for plugins current.

Keeping the online calendar up to date.

Initiating an auto reply to the ongoing emails.

Changed the navigation of the website which makes it easier.

Uploading of images will be activated again after initial security concerns.

Back up for Website sorted so nothing can be lost.

Facebook - thanks to Mandy and Dale for monitoring this!

*Orlon Petterson moved his report. Terry Richardson 2nd All in favour.*

\*Terry thanked Orlon for his efforts. Best improvements in several years!

## Librarian

Sean Mullis is standing down. Thank you for your work!

Ray Pointon offered to stand for this role. We are looking to the future and how to engage more use of the library.

**\*No change to annual subscription rate**

## **Election of Committee Officers for 2025**

President: Simon Lewis nominated by Mandy Heslop. Jason Kruger 2nd. All in favour

Vice-President: Terry Richardson nominated by Dale Kershaw. Orlon Petterson 2nd. All in favour

Treasurer: Brent Schroeder nominated by Preetha Sreedharan. Ray Pointon 2nd. All in favour

Secretary: Mandy Heslop nominated by Dale Kershaw. Simon Lewis 2nd. All in favour

Membership Secretary: Dale Kershaw nominated by Orlon Petterson. Brent Schroeder 2nd. All in favour

CASMAG Editor: Preetha Sreedharan nominated by Simon Lewis. Rob Glassey 2nd. All in favour.

Librarian: Ray Pointon nominated by Dale Kershaw. Brent Schroeder 2nd. All in favour

Webmaster: Orlon Petterson nominated by Brent Schroeder. Terry Richardson 2nd. All in favour

Observatory Director: Brent Schroeder nominated by Simon Lewis. Mandy Heslop 2nd. All in favour

General Committee: Gary Steel and Jason Kruger - Dale Kershaw 2nd. Simon Lewis moved to accept.

Solicitor: TS Dacre and son. *Simon Lewis moved to accept. Terry Richardson 2nd.*

Auditor: Community Capacity Accounting. *Simon Lewis moved to accept. Orlon Petterson 2nd.*

Patron: John Hearnshaw will remain our Patron.

Banking Signatories and Trustees:

- To Remove Names N/A
- To add Names:

Simon Lewis, Terry Richardson, Brent Schroeder, Mandy Heslop. Dale Kershaw - read only.

*Simon Lewis moved to accept. Rob Glassey 2nd. All in favour.*

General Business:

Simon thanked Malcolm for his efforts bringing the tea, coffee, milo, biccies and all the mugs every week! Carol assists at times with a ride to the Uni but otherwise he busses. The large backpack is hard work so if he finds something better with wheels CAS will fund this for him.

Meeting Closed at 9.41pm