



THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

www.rasnz.org.nz



KEEPING IN TOUCH #53. Fri 29th April 2022

PLEASE pass on to all your local astronomical society members and astro friends

Hi and welcome to 'Keeping in Touch' #53. This issue is mainly about forthcoming RASNZ conference...

1. THE 2022 RASNZ ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN WHANGAREI -

The RASNZ AGM and Conference is fast approaching! It will be hosted by the Northland Astronomical Society in Whangarei over **Queens Birthday weekend, Fri 3 – Sun 5 June 2022**. More information can be found at - <https://rasnzconference.org.nz/> . The RASNZ conference is the pinnacle of the Society's yearly activities. It's an excellent time to listen to entertaining talks and find out what New Zealand (and overseas) astronomers are doing, be it observational or theoretical. Conferences are a tremendous meeting place to make new acquaintances and catch up with old friends. The Saturday night banquet and after-dinner speaker is a highlight of the weekend. It's certainly worth coming!

RASNZ President Steve Butler



The 2021 RASNZ Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Affiliated Societies' meeting minutes are below

The AGM and Aff Socs meeting agendas will be sent out closer to the RASNZ conference in Whangarei.

2. RASNZ SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2022 -

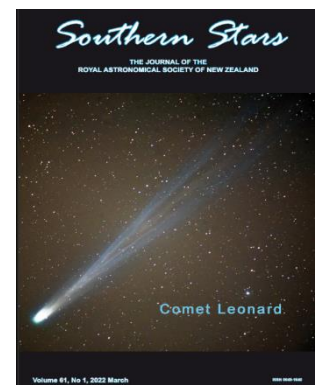
The **2022 RASNZ subscriptions were due** on the 1st of January 2022. See - <https://www.rasnz.org.nz/rasnz/payments-and-donations> . Many thanks for your continued support of RASNZ.

3. FORTHCOMING STAR PARTIES -

THE DARK SKIES RETREAT: Friday 24th – Saturday 25th June 2022 (supported by ASTRONZ). A weekend getaway of astronomical proportions! Astronomy, astrophotography, night sky education, outreach, with a big focus on dark skies. Held over the first Matariki Public Holiday in June, under the dark skies of Camp Iona, Herbert Forrest, Herbert (20-minutes south of Oamaru). Contact Damien McNamara, solaur.science@gmail.com **Please note the change in dates from the last KIT, it is now on Friday and Saturday nights.**

CENTRAL STAR PARTY: Thursday 12 – Tuesday 17 (lunchtime) January 2023. Pencil this date into your calendars, for it is the great five nights of telescope viewing, talks and socialising in the sunny Hawkes Bay. More details to follow closer to the time.

4. SOUTHERN STARS - Got an interesting astronomical story, area of astronomical research or article to share? *Southern Stars* editor Bob Evans would love to hear from you! He's always keen to see more articles in *Southern Stars*. *Southern Stars* is the journal of the RASNZ and an excellent forum to publish within. Write to bevans@xtra.co.nz



Remember to visit our Affiliated Societies page – <http://rasnz.org.nz/rasnz/affiliated-societies-details> .



John Drummond, FRASNZ, RASNZ Exec Sec. IAU NOC for NZ.
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The 2021 RASNZ Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Affiliated Societies' meeting minutes are below...

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

98th Annual General Meeting – Saturday 10th July 2021, 4:00pm until 5:05pm

MINUTES -

1. **Roll of members -**

Present –

- Steve Butler (Chair), Nalayini Davies (Vice-President), Susan Shoebridge (Treasurer), John Drummond, (Exec Sec), Ross Dickie, Marilyn Head, Frank Andrews, Rebecca Greatrex, Al Sutton, Dennis Goodman, Roland Idacyk, David Britten, Euan Mason (c), Stephen Stuart, Antony Gomez (c), Peter Jaquiery (c), Glen Rowe, Simon Lowther, Bill Allen, Alan Gilmore, Pam Kilmartin, Orlon Petterson, Graeme Jonas, Warwick Kissling, Darron Baxter, Chris Monigatti, Ian Transom (c), Robert Rea, Gareth Davies, Peter Felhofer, Norm Izett. Observers: Edwin Rodley, Mike McGavin. ((c) = Councillor)

Apologies -

- Councillor Bob Evans, Gerry Gilmore, Wayne Orchiston, Gary Sparks, Alan Baldwin, Graham Jones (Skydome Observers Inc), Ralph Bradley, Brian and Pauline Loader, Stan Walker, Gordon Hudson, Gloria Witherford, Graham McKay, Karen Pollard, Jennie McCormick, Ed Budding, Roger Butland, Grant Christie.
- Moved by Steve Butler from the Chair, Carried.

2. **Respect for Deceased Members –**

- Terry Butt (passed away on 28 March 2021). A moments silence was held. John Drummond (Exec Sec) to pass on condolences (done).

3. **Greetings to Absent Members –**

- Gloria Witherford, Gerry Gilmore, Tom Richards, Brian Warner, Gordon Hudson, Alan Baldwin, Stan Walker, William Tobin, Wayne Orchiston.
- Moved by Steve, Carried. JD to send greetings (done).

4. **Minutes of the 97th AGM online ZOOM AGM, 2020 – are available [here](#) –**

- Moved by Steve Butler from the Chair, Carried.

5. **Matters arising from the minutes –**

- Online meetings, Steve mentioned we are purchasing a Zoom licence.
- The SCC has new members. Thanks to Peter Felhofer, Ian Transom, and Richard Easter.
- Megan Poehler resigned from RASNZ Council..
- Simon Lowther asked if we should keep John McKay (Minter Ellison Rudd Watts) (Simon L to check contacts) on as the Society solicitor. Frank Andrews agrees. Dennis Goodman stated that if we need some law changes then we need one. Perhaps we write and enclose an honorarium (Simon). **Action:** Nalayini, to find out if he's still willing.

6. **Annual Report of Council for 2020 – in the March and June 2021 issues of *Southern Stars* –**

- Moved by Steve Butler, Carried.

7. **Audited Financial Statements for 2020 –**

- Susan explained that C-19 didn't affect us too much (apart from the conference). The sale of the 2021 calendar made a profit of about \$3,000. She is now using Xero accounting software. Thanks to Susan for all her work – and Nalayini for transferring the KT funds to the Auckland Trust. There is a second account to withdraw funds from to pay successful applicants. Steve stated that the conference accounts used to be managed separately by the SCC but now they're managed within the RASNZ xero accounts by Susan.
- Simon Lowther, Move a vote of thanks to Susan Shoebridge for all her hard work with Xero, Seconded by Marilyn Head, Carried.
- Susan moved that they be accepted, Nalayini Davies seconded it. Carried.

- 8. Appointment of Auditor** – Ashton Wheelans be appointed as our auditor for the 2021 year -
- Susan Shoebridge (RASNZ Treasurer) recommends that we retain Ashton Wheelan as our auditor for the 2021 financial report, Seconded by Simon Lowther. Carried.
- 9. Appointment of Honorary Solicitor** –
- See above (5).
- 10. Future RASNZ Conferences** –
- 2022 – June 4-6 (Queen’s Birthday) Whangarei
 - 2023 – Auckland (AAS 100th)
 - 2024 – Nelson (they desire it to be returned to the May dates).
 - Warwick Kissling asked whether the 2022 conference should be held over the Queen’s Birthday – expensive, road travel, etc. Peter and the SCC to discuss among themselves.
- 11. General Business as allowed for in the Rules -**
- 11.1. Dark Skies motion – Ralph Bradley, For all National Parks to be designated as Dark Sky sites. Steve Butler read the letter from Ralph Bradley that will be sent to the Department of Conservation. Steve added some background information about this remit. Nalayini added some comments about Great South working with DoC regarding the Fiordland National Park and lighting, etc. DoC controls 30% of New Zealand’s land mass. Australia has come up with a national guideline for marine reserves (migratory species, etc). The US National Park has done the same. The Top of the South Dark Sky Committee is doing the same. Darren Baxter mentioned that he could lend some advice since he is a lighting engineer. The question was raised re DoC reclassifying land down the track. Dennis stated that Ralph intended to come to the conference but couldn’t, the Nelson Astro Soc is right behind this move, and it would be great if RASNZ also supported it. DoC ‘natural quiet’ policy, Steve thinks light control is even more important. Steve proposed that the RASNZ AGM support this motion, “That we (RASNZ) request The Minister of Conservation to designate all Department of Conservation estates, including all National Parks, State Forests and other areas of New Zealand such as the Molesworth Station as official Dark Sky Areas sufficient to allow International Dark Sky Designation over each site.”, Frank Andrews seconded it, Carried.
 - 11.2. RASNZ with a Māori name connection, e.g., ‘RASNZ – Māori name’. Marilyn Head suggests that RASNZ has a Māori name. Nalayini Davies agrees, it lines up with the Matariki holiday. Steve recommends that Council needs a remit – start the process of talking it through. Marilyn is happy to help. Steve asked if we are in support, Carried.
 - 11.3. Nalayini raised the issue of the Dominion Observatory. That the AGM instructs the Council to seek options regarding if we could hire a room.

Items to action –

- John D to send condolences to the Butt family
- John D to send greetings to absent members
- Nalayini – does Graham McKay (Minter Ellison Rudd Watts) want to continue as our solicitor?
- Susan – ask Ashton Wheelans if they can continue to be out auditors for 2021
- Steve – send JD the dark skies remit motion wording
- Council – Marilyn Head, RASNZ includes a Māori aspect in the name
- Nalayini – price enquiry of hiring a room for RASNZ in the Dominion Obs., Wellington

The AGM closed at 5:05pm

John Drummond, Executive Secretary

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

2021 RASNZ Affiliated Societies' Meeting MINUTES

A meeting of the Affiliated Societies will be held on Friday 9th July 2021 at the RASNZ Conference in Wellington, at the Wharewaka Events Center on the Wellington Waterfront, commencing at 4:09p.m.

Agenda:

1) **Apologies** – Hawkes Bay Astronomical Society, Skydome Observers Inc, Southland Astro Soc. Carried

Present: Steve Butler (President), John Drummond (Exec Sec), Peter Jaquiery, Al Sutton, Antony Gomez, Nalayini Davies, David Platts, Ian Transom, Euan Mason, Matt Boucher, Stephen Stuart, Peter Felhofer, Hamish Barker, Norm Izett, Nichola Vanderaa, Stephanie da Silver, Alistair Emerson, Dennis Goodman, David Britten.

2) **Minutes of the previous affiliated societies meeting** held via a Zoom meeting – John Drummond (Executive Secretary) briefly read the 2020 minutes.

3) **Matters arising from the minutes** –

- Steve Butler mentioned that the insurance was to be done by local societies.
- Steve Butler mentioned Jennie McCormick's sterling 2021 calendar work and that we plan on doing a 2022 one with AAS photos being used. There was a reasonable profit from them, so it was decided at Council today to donate 50% of the calendar sales to the Graeme Blow Fund – whereby a tertiary student is granted a Graeme Blow Scholarship to attend each annual conference. If we just used the fund it would disappear in a few years, hence the reason to top it up.
- Steve moved that the 2020 minutes be moved. Carried.

4) **General business** -

- ASTRONZ's Partnership Programme for Affiliated Societies. Nalayini spoke to this. If a society recommends ASTRONZ to a person interested in purchasing a telescope, etc, there is a 'finder's fee' given to that society. Last year was fairly good with people doing this. This year, if any member of a society buys something they get 5% discount, and their society gets an 8% finder's fee (every quarter). If a society buys something, the society gets 20% discount. WAS grants free membership if they spend over \$500 at ASTRONZ. Each society has its own code. People showed appreciation for ASTRONZ's initiative.
- Steve mentioned the **RASNZ register of observatories in New Zealand - refer to AS/NZ 4282:2019, 'Control of the obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting' document** – This relates to a NZ Standard 'Control of obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting'. See Section Two – effect of light on astronomical observations. A list of community and scientific observatories (even private observatories) is to be kept. He suggests that the RASNZ Council will add observatories to the website – the big ones, the local societies, private observatories, etc. He proposes a levelled structure with different tiers be listed. People are to come to RASNZ to ask for their observatory to be listed. We then show this list to the

various city councils. Steve then read a few excerpts from the document. Stephen Stuart – available online from ‘Standards NZ’ (cost \$130). Steve will do a summary of the document and Peter J will put it on the website.

- Antony spoke as a RASNZ Society Rep, he asks how they can work together more with local societies. Perhaps online Zoom meetings every few months? RASNZ is soon purchasing a Zoom license. Antony, do one a month? Perhaps Zoom talks for smaller societies to watch. Perhaps an Aff Soc Facebook page? ‘What’s App’? Discussion followed about the pros and cons of the various social media methods. Peter F, why/what for? Antony, so smaller societies can be supported, share ideas, etc.
- John D asked how the societies were going. Euan stated (a CAS statement) from CAS that they have had their most successful year in decades, 100 new members in four months, outreach, GAStronauts (aimed at young kids), aiming to get old members back. 4,000 observatory tickets sold last year.
- David Britten asked where the Auckland Astro Society people were. Why? The main reason seemed to be cost (travel, registration, dinner). They are in good heart, ~650 members. Strategic plan is being developed.
- The Hibiscus Coast rep spoke. It was asked what the value for dollar/RASNZ membership is.
- Dennis Goodman spoke re the RASNZ conferences cost. Nothing has changed over the years. We are amateurs and must pay our way, despite the SCC trying to keep the conference costs down. They are low compared to other conferences. He spoke re the Nelson Society, a few clear public viewing nights, and new members.
- Steve stated that the 2024 conference will be held in Nelson – and thanks for their offer, and for stepping aside for Wellington to have the conference here this year (the 100th anniversary).
- Hamish Barker spoke re the Nelson Astronomical Society. Keen volunteers for public nights. Hard to get people to step up to do the work.
- Steve B stated that the Southland Astro Society observatory closed but they have now moved to Ariki Sands, with dark skies. A good amount of public interest. Lockable room with scopes. Clubrooms, good for meetings, etc.
- John Drummond spoke about what’s happening with the Gisborne Astronomical Society – and the GAS Juniors. Get kids and you get the parents!
- Peter F stated that the 2022 conference will be in Whangarei next year.
- Ian Transom stated how the Hamilton Astro Soc is doing. Many public events, zoo sleepovers, over 500 visitors in a few months.
- Matt Boucher stated how the Wellington Astronomical Society is going. Looking forward to Zoom meetings with other societies. They have a bequest to build an observatory – perhaps in Martinborough for an automated observatory for astrophotography.
- Norman Izett talked about the Whakatane Astro Soc. Knocked about by C-19, but more school visits now, a new member who works for Rocket Lab. Working on getting the EQ mounts going. Been working with the city council to try and keep the sky fairly dark.
- Nalayini reminded everyone that there is a dark sky workshop this Monday, 9:00am – 12:30pm. \$30 to register.

The meeting closed at 5:00pm.

John Drummond

Executive Secretary (kiwiastronomer@gmail.com)

9th July 2021