

## President's AGM Report

The Annual general Meeting gives us an opportunity to report to the members about the activities that the society has engaged in over a 12 month period. It's also a time when elections will be held for the various positions within the society.

I might at the outset pass on a very sincere and heartfelt thankyou to all members who have contributed to making this society so enjoyable to belong to. Unfortunately it's been a mixed year on the weather front with many planned activities cancelled or deferred sometimes at the last possible moment. I am crossing my fingers that this year things will be a little kinder and rain on the days when we have nothing planned!

Without doubt this would have to be one of our finest years for guest speakers, previously it has been one of my main duties to organise and secure speakers for our club and I thank everyone who has provided suggestions and advice in this area.

John Rombi has enthusiastically taken over the role of inviting guest speakers from me for the year ahead. I am very thankful for this as this gives me time to concentrate on Space Cadets and Stargard. Hopefully by the time you are reading this these projects might have progressed beyond the drawing board.

### Guest Speakers

**16/05/05** Zane Hammond, Director Magellan Observatory and farm stay, his talk featured astrophotography and promotion of the observatory.

**26/06/05** Bernard Kornfield, excellent presentation on Globular Clusters, Bernard is one of our members who was completing an internet astronomy course.

**18/07/05** DVD presentation on the Apollo missions, courtesy John Rombi

**15/08/05** Dr Miroslav Filipovic, Miroslav is a professional astronomer who was a key scientist for NASA's Deep Impact space probe.

**19/09/05** Dr Enno Middleberg, professional astronomer from the Australian National Telescope Facility, subject was unlocking the mysteries of the universe using Radio Astronomy, Enno has placed a webcam at The Parkes Radio Telescope, so take a peek on the net.

**17/10/05** Glenn Dawes, founder and author of the astronomy yearbooks, his talk gave us insights on the early years of the yearbook up to the current astronomy 2006, which is just fantastic.

**21/11/05** Bishop Chris Toohey. Bishop Toohey's invitation was courtesy of John Rombi, his talk was on focal ratios of telescopes and historical aspects of Galileo's life and discoveries, also his relationship with the church. A great night.

**16/02/06** Astrophotography presentation by members Martin Felito and Ned Pastor, included photos of the solar system and deep space objects, excellent presentation.

**20/02/06** Dr Fred Watson, astronomer in charge of the Anglo-Australian Observatory at Siding Springs. Fred's talk was on gravity and

featured Albert Einstein, the man and his equations, an amazing night by all accounts.

**20/03/06** Dr Michael Dopita from the Australian National University and Mt Stromlo, his talk was on Star Formation, invitation courtesy of John Rombi

## Special Events

14/05/05 MacAstro star night at Dudley Chesham Sportsground  
 04/06/05 Magellan Observatory  
 10/06/05 Campbelltown Rotary Observatory  
 18/06/05 Rotary Club Observing night at Wedderburn  
 06/08/05 International House overseas students night at the Forest  
 10/11/05 Mount Carmel High school night  
 24/03/06 Campbelltown Rotary Observatory  
 01/04/06 Keep the Stars Shining night Girl Guides at Tara

The society was invited to attend the Mary Magdalene High School for a stargazing night. This was back in either August or September last year, it was a great night however the actual date alludes me at present, my apologies. We also had other events planned however the weather was not kind and several cancellations took place. I hope we have better luck this year.

## Field Nights

We held many Forest nights, again the weather was a factor which led to great conversations with friends inside the cabin. When clear the sky as always was spectacular. Also The Oaks Airfield proved again what an excellent place it is for us to observe from and many excellent nights were held there.

Just to recap to The Forest, I acknowledge the great support given to our club by International House. For those who don't know this is the Alumni association of Sydney University. International House grant us the use of the grounds down at the Forest as well as the log cabin. The cabin is fully equipped with a modern kitchen with all appliances, bunk beds, dining area and toilets.

Its very nice and the hire fee is a modest \$8 per overnight stay per member. I might say that we are the only outside organisation to enjoy these facilities.

## Appreciations and Thankyous.

Without doubt I believe that the outgoing committee has served the society very well. When it is all said and done we are a small society with limited resources. Certainly in comparison with the NSW Astronomical Society with 400 plus members and I would imagine substantial resources at their disposal. Sutherland Astronomical Society have about 140 members and have been going for 45 years, they also have their own Observatory at Green Point.

In saying that it's a real testament to us here at MAS that we can proudly hold our heads up high in the Astronomical community. This is confirmed by the way we receive fantastic support from our professional guest speakers. Indeed we are certainly on the map so to speak and I never get a comment such as, "and who are you guys?"

In my discussions with many members I can say that we have a strong feeling as to how we want to be as a club, friendly and supportive without taking ourselves too seriously, perhaps sometimes even a little

informal and laid back as well. Many times I have received comments back that this is a great club to not only visit but belong to.

I have to ask the question, Why is this so? Well I believe it comes about from the efforts, friendship and creativity of not only our committee people but also to all members who help out and support the club in anyway big or small.

For example something like informing someone you know about the club, they come along and enjoy their time with us and become an enthusiastic member as well. How good is that! It could be organising a school night and taking a telescope along to show the wonders of the night sky.

It could be donating some equipment to the club, showing someone how to use a particular eyepiece or even giving someone a lift to a meeting. I believe that all contributions are important and without in anyway diminishing what I have said I do need to make some particular mentions.

To John Rombi, who has been a fantastic Vice President, opening meetings and arranging guest speakers, John sends out the Critical MAS emails to keep everyone informed. John also has organised the dates for this year including the upcoming Magellan visit. These are just a few of the many things that John has done on behalf of the society. I sincerely thank John for everything.

To Martin, your work on the website is greatly appreciated, not only does it convey information it also looks good and is fun to use, a very valuable asset to the society. Martin also helps out with our star nights and

enthusiastically promotes the society at every opportunity

Ian Cook. Ian time and time again shows his enthusiasm in showing the public the night sky. Ian has spent considerable time and effort in writing the "Wot I See this Month" articles in our journal, well done and thankyou.

Ned Pastor and Lloyd Wright, your assistance in running our Forest nights is greatly appreciated, duties include picking up and delivering the keys, preparing the cabin, the next morning tidy up, great work.

Daniel Ross, thanks for your technical expertise with the computers, preparing name badges and for the year ahead with Kate's assistance the tea and coffee. Thanks.

Ragbir Bhathal, With Ragbir's help we have been able to secure our meeting rooms at the university without charge, recently we moved to a new room with better facilities and easier access for all. We also have held some very successful Observatory nights. The weather however was not kind to us last year at all with several nights cancelled including the Siemens Science School night. Thanks Ragbir

Dick Everett, thankyou for handling the finances and treasury duties and for regularly discussing various items at our monthly meetings. The treasurer is a vital part of any organisation and I thank you for handling this task with great enthusiasm, as attested to by the desk out the front and receipt book in hand at meetings, Dick is always available to receive your money, on behalf of the society!

Bob Bee, Thanks Bob for all the great work with our journal. Bob enjoys a high profile in the community with his articles in the Chronicle newspaper and nights at the Botanical Gardens. He regularly fields enquiries on behalf of the club and has just released his book on Binocular viewing. Thanks Bob.

Frank Kish, Last year Frank donated to the club a Maxim DL imaging software package and an Argo Navis digital pointing system. Over the years Frank has been a contributor of articles for Prime Focus and also has also been a strong supporter of our club, thank you Frank.

Peter Hubert, Thanks for all you help with our star nights for the public. Peter has now taken upon himself to set up a lap top computer showing wonderful images of the night sky at the public nights, went down a treat at the last observatory night. Keep up the good work and thanks.

Ursula Braatz, Ursula enjoys her astronomy very much and contributes to our journal with stories about her holidays and adventures, sometimes with a telescope in hand, thanks Ursula.

I know I have forgotten someone, if so please accept my sincere apologies. The society operates as a collective of very talented people. It's my opinion that our society should be successful and move forward with new ideas and visions without sacrificing all the hard work that we have done, definitely we should retain those things give the Macarthur Astronomical Society such a strong identity not only in astronomical circles but also in the wider general community.

At this point I will close this report. All I can say is that I sincerely thank everyone for all the support over the last year. It certainly has made my time as President of this society very satisfying and rewarding.

Kind Regards  
Noel

### **Dr Mike Dopita – Star Formation Throughout Cosmic Time**

At our March meeting we enjoyed a lecture from Mike Dopita. It was certainly a detailed and entertaining talk on star and galaxy formation, as well as the inter-stellar medium which is Dr Dopita's (or Mike's) speciality.



It is almost impossible to summarise (in any comprehensible way without the PowerPoint images) Mike's talk but I'll try.

He started with how did galaxies get the way they are? Old elliptical galaxies star formation shut down 100s of millions of years ago – they are 'red and dead'. Spiral galaxies are loaded with star formation and also remarkably flat. But, he said, the 'fireworks' are nearly over. Showing us the Lilly-Madau Plot (you had to