

MINUTES OF THE 9TH BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR GENERAL RELATIVITY AND GRAVITATION

held at Monash University, Clayton, Thursday 3 December, 2015

The meeting opened at 4.30 p.m.

21 Society members were registered as attending ACGRG8, and 14 of these were present at the Biennial General Meeting. Since at least one quarter of the members attending the Conference were present at the Meeting, the Meeting was quorate.

Apologies: Matt Visser, Bram Slagmolen, David McClelland

1. The minutes of the 8th Biennial General Meeting, held at the Reef View Hotel, Hamilton Island on Tuesday 10 December, 2013, were presented to the meeting. Joerg Frauendiener moved that the minutes be accepted, and Paul Lasky seconded. The motion was approved.

2. President's Report: Leo Brewin reported that the major activities the Society had been involved in over the last two years were the AIP council meetings in January 2014 and February 2015, and the ASGRG parallel session at the AIP Congress in Canberra in December 2014. The next AIP Congress was due to be held in Brisbane in December 2016.

Two issues arising from the 2014 AIP Congress were that (i) Society members were in a minority (5 out of 14) as speakers at the ASGRG session, and (ii) there was a breakdown in communications between the AIP and the ASGRG over the choice of the general relativity plenary speaker.

[Paul Lasky raised the possibility that some Society members had spoken in other AIP sessions, and said that this should not be discouraged. Leo agreed, but insisted that Society members should still wave the ASGRG flag whenever possible.]

[The discussion then turned to the unfortunate circumstance that the Australian Optical Society's annual meeting, in Adelaide from 30 November to 3 December this year, overlapped substantially with ACGRG8, with the result that many experimentalists were not present at ACGRG8. David Wiltshire asked if it would be possible in future to hold ACGRGs jointly with Optical Society meetings. Susan Scott indicated that Bram Slagmolen should be liaising between the ASGRG and the Optical Society.]

Leo mentioned that the ASGRG has a very basic web page, which needs to be built up to form a members' showcase of sorts, with a view particularly to attracting postgraduate students to join the Society.

[John Steele made the point that we need a dedicated web master.]

Leo congratulated ASGRG member Michael Tobar for his receipt of two prestigious scientific awards in 2014. Leo finished by mentioning that a proposal for a Centre of Excellence for gravitational wave discovery, prepared by a number of ASGRG members under the umbrella of ACIGA, had made the first cut in the ARC selection procedure. The full proposal was due to be submitted to the ARC on 16 December, and if chosen as one of the 10 successful

Centres of Excellence in May 2016 would receive \$5 million a year in funding for 5 to 7 years starting in 2017.

[There followed a discussion of the choice of general relativity plenary speaker for the AIP Congress in December 2016. Previous speakers had included Bruce Allen, Gary Horowitz and Barry Barish. It was decided that Susan Scott would ask David Reitze of CalTech, the Director of LIGO, if he would agree to give a plenary talk. If he does, Leo will inform the AIP.]

3. Treasurer's Report: John Steele reported that the Society now had a total of 62 members, of which 53 were life members (an increase of 6 since the last ACGRG), 4 were ordinary members (some in arrears), 4 were student members, and 1 was retired.

The Society's current account contained \$19,843 and there was another \$3,500 in Paypal. The expenses of the current conference had not yet been defrayed. At the corresponding stage in 2013, the Society's balance was \$14,881, so there had been an overall increase of about \$8,500 since the last ACGRG.

John reported that the Society's credit card facility had been dropped, as it was a financial drain and Paypal was cheaper. He had investigated the possibility of opening a high-interest deposit account. This would need a minimum \$10,000 deposit and would earn 2.35%-2.8% per annum, depending on the term. It would also require a change of signatories.

[On this, see item 7 below.]

4. Auditor's Report: The Auditor, John Schutz – who was present at the BGM – stated that he was satisfied with the Society's accounts.

5. Appointment of Auditor for the next session: John Schutz was nominated to remain the Auditor of the Society's accounts.

6. Election of officers: The following people were elected officers of the ASGRG Committee for the 2015-2017 session unopposed:

President:	Leo Brewin	(nominated: Malcolm Anderson, seconded: Susan Scott)
Treasurer:	Todd Oliynyk	(nominated: Leo Brewin, seconded: John Steele)
Secretary:	Malcolm Anderson	(nominated: Susan Scott, seconded: John Steele)
Officer:	Susan Scott	(nominated: Malcolm Anderson, seconded: John Steele)
Officer:	Paul Lasky	(nominated: Susan Scott, seconded: Leo Brewin)

John Steele and Bram Slagmolen were also co-opted as Committee members.

Todd Oliynyk and Leo Brewin were appointed as signatories to all the Society's bank accounts.

7. High-yield checking account: John Schutz moved that the Meeting authorise the ASGRG Committee to open a high-yield checking account, with Todd Oliynyk and Leo Brewin as the signatories. John Steele seconded. The motion was approved.

8. Date and venue for ACGRG9: The date and venue of the next Conference remained undecided. Leo promised to ask Chunnong Zhao if the UWA group would be prepared to host ACGRG9 at Gingin, WA, in December 2017.

9. Other business

ACGRG8 programme: Some of the members present expressed their unhappiness at the length of time allocated for the lunch break at the Conference (which was only one hour on the second and third days). It was agreed that there should be a minimum of 1 ½ hours set aside for lunch at future ACGRGs. Paul Lasky also urged that plenary talks should be reduced to 45 minutes instead of 60 minutes, and ordinary talks to 12 minutes plus 3 minutes for questions instead of 20 minutes.

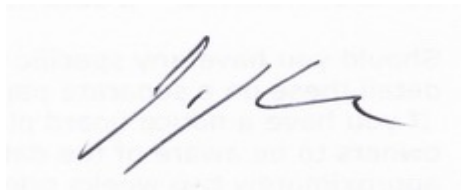
Student representative on the ASGRG Committee: It was agreed that Paul Lasky would act as the spokesperson for student matters on the ASGRG Committee.

The meeting closed at 5.58 pm.

Malcolm R. Anderson

Malcolm Anderson
Secretary, ASGRG

12 January 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Steele', is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

John D Steele
Treasurer, ASGRG

18 January 2016