

PREFACE

The XXVth General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union, hosted by the National Committee for Astronomy of the Australian Academy of Science and by the Astronomical Society of Australia, was held July 12 to 26, 2003, in Sydney Conference and Exhibition Center, Darling Harbour, Sydney, Australia.

The formal General Assembly Opening on July 15, 2003, was held in the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera with the audience of more than 2000 people. It was preceded by a Welcome Reception in the Opera House foyers, and followed by the First Session of the IAU General Assembly. The Opening Ceremony began with a traditional aboriginal welcome, and included a special presentation using David Malin's astronomical images in conjunction with music composed by Sandy Evans, and an address plus an organ performance (accompanied by the Voice Australia Choir) by Australia's Chief Scientist, Robin Batterham. The formal opening speech was delivered by the Hon Brendan Nelson, Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training.

The National Organizing Committee, co-chaired by Professors Harry Hyland and John Whiteoak, with support from a 14-member Board and a Local Organizing Committee supervised by Dr. Richard N. Manchester, arranged a very well-organized and pleasant meeting, which was much appreciated by the 1926 astronomers and students, and 360 Registered Guests, from a total of 66 Countries. The attendance of this General Assembly was threatened by SARS and the international tension including the war in Iraq and the terrorist bombing in Bali so these attendance figures were impressive and exceeded expectations.

Financial support for the participants was received from ESA, ESO and NASA is gratefully acknowledged here. Following an approach and offer of 'seed' money from the US National Committee for the IAU, a meeting for Women in Astronomy was added to the program, and Dr. Anne Green (University of Sydney) took on the organization. A successful luncheon was held on July 21 with a booked-out attendance of 180 IAU delegates. A successful session for Young Astronomers, through the initiative of Melanie Johnston-Hollitt and others, formed a model that will be copied at future IAU General Assemblies.

The General Assembly featured a rich scientific program, organized by Professor Hans Rickman, IAU General Secretary 2000 - 2003. Between three Invited Discourses, six Symposia, twenty one Joint Discussions, four Special Scientific Sessions, and well over ninety Commission and Working Group meetings. The Abstract Book of the GA contains over 2100 scientific abstracts. Proceedings of the Symposia are published in the regular IAU Symposium Series as IAU Symposia Nos. 216 - 221, and condensed, yet still voluminous, proceedings and summaries of the Joint Discussions and Special Sessions of the General Assembly are published in the series Highlights of Astronomy, Volume 13.

The present Volume XXVB of the Transactions of the International Astronomical Union records the organizational and administrative business of the XXVth General Assembly. Chapter I contains the addresses given at the Inaugural Ceremony on July 15. Chapter II records the results and decisions of the two Working Sessions of the General Assembly itself on July 14 and 24.

Chapter III presents the Resolutions approved by the General Assembly. The Reports of the Executive Committee and of the Divisions, Commissions, and Working Groups are the subject of Chapters IV and V, while Chapter VI contains the Statutes,

Bye-Laws and Working Rules as modified and approved by the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. Finally, Chapter VII provides details on the Membership: The Adhering Bodies representing our Full and Associate Member Countries, and the names of the Individual Members listed by Commission membership and member country as well as in alphabetical order. The list of addresses of Individual Members is also maintained accessible on-line from the IAU WWW page (www.iau.org).

I am deeply grateful to the Division and Commission Presidents for their kind cooperation by providing their contributions in standardized or camera-ready format for this Transactions XXVB of the General Assembly. I also sincerely thank our Secretariat staff, Ms Monique Leger-Orine, and Ms Claire Vidonne, for invaluable help in preparation of this volume. I deeply regret that a number of problems have delayed the completion of this volume despite everyone's efforts. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the IAU Publisher 1998-2003, the Astronomical Society of the Pacific Conference Series, for pleasant cooperation in the preparation of this and numerous previous publications of the IAU.

Paris and Oslo, 2006
Oddbjørn Engvold
General Secretary