

NEWCASTLE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY INC
MINUTES
28 April 2006

MEETING OPENED: 7.30 pm with 39 members and guests present.

CHAIRMAN: Mr Ghul Hussain

MINUTES: The minutes from March 2006 were read and accepted. (Graeme Johnson/George Barnes, carried).

APOLOGIES: Alan Meehan.

GENERAL:

- Ghul announced that there would be a BBQ on the afternoon of the May viewing, at the McArthur Street viewing site, starting 3.30 pm. Ten to fifteen members showed interest and some money was collected on the night. The cost is \$2 with two sausages, buns, and sauces provided. BYO drinks.
- Ghul asked for members interested in bringing their telescopes to a Rotary Club viewing at Singleton. About 10 members offered their services.
- David Hough and Richard Crisp both gave us photo presentations of their trip to the Ilford Star Party.
- Prof. Fred Menk spoke to us, using a PowerPoint presentation, about extra-solar planets. He outlined the five major techniques for detecting planets orbiting other stars. They include: 1) Modelling variation in pulsar rates that imply the orbit of planets. 2) Doppler spectroscopy of stars whose wobble implies the presence of planets. 3) Astrometry, which measures the change in a stars position due to orbiting planets. 4) Photometric measurement, which measures the change in brightness due to transit of planets across the stellar disk. 5) Gravitational micro-lensing in which an intermediate star with orbiting planets causes perturbations in the lensing effect. Direct imaging using nulling techniques is still in its infancy. This whole area of astronomy is still very new and developing rapidly.
- There will be a viewing night this Saturday at McArthur Street. No lawn mowing is required.
- The next meeting will be on 26 May 2006 starting at 7.30 pm.
- The meeting closed at 9.18 pm and a light supper was served.