



# Astronomical Association of Queensland

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The Astronomical Association of Queensland (AAQ) was formed in June 1978 through the amalgamation of the Astronomical Society of Queensland (founded 1927) and the Astronomers' Association of Queensland (founded 1969). The ASQ itself was the inheritor of the earlier Brisbane Astronomical Society formed in 1896.

The Association's principal objectives are the fostering of the science of astronomy, encompassing research and public education, and the encouragement and support of observational astronomy. Membership is open to all those with an interest in astronomy.

Meetings are held monthly at the University of Queensland, and regular field nights are held in Brisbane and at dark sky sites. The AAQ publishes a monthly newsletter and annual proceedings, has an extensive library and telescope collection available to members, and operates a website.

## AAQ Meetings

The AAQ holds monthly Ordinary General meetings from March to December, and an Annual General Meeting in February. The AAQ also collaborates with other astronomical societies in the Queensland Combined Societies annual meeting, and Queensland Astrofest which is usually held at a dark sky site in August each year.

The Ordinary General Meetings (OGMs) have a format of brief business proceedings followed by a main item which is usually a presentation by a speaker on an astronomical topic. The main item is followed by presentations of images and observations by members and reports on section activities.

Monthly OGMs are held in a lecture theatre at the University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane, 4-6pm, Saturdays. The venue for a particular month can be found on the AAQ web site. Visitors are welcome; just look for the signs at the building for that month's meeting. There is free off-street parking available at the university. Meetings are followed by supper, and night sky observing in a park nearby (weather permitting).

## Sections

The AAQ maintains special interest sections, with experienced members appointed as Section Directors (contact details are listed at the front of the monthly Newsletter). The activities of the sections include disseminating information and providing assistance to members undertaking activities in their area of interest, conducting research, organising observing nights or excursions for members and visitors to attend throughout the year, and publishing a report on the Sections' activities in the Annual Proceedings.

The AAQ has the following special interest sections:

- **Astrophotography:** The Astrophotography Section supports the imaging of astronomical objects using digital cameras, cooled CCD cameras and webcams or similar. The objective of the section is to share knowledge and techniques, and provide education, support and encouragement to those interested in this rewarding but potentially demanding pursuit.
- **Computers:** The Computers section aims to keep members updated in advances in hardware and software used in amateur astronomy.
- **Double Stars:** The Double Star Section is dedicated to the enjoyment of observing double and multiple stars. By simply using a telescope, your eyes and some easy-to-learn techniques you can discover more about your equipment and the sky, and contribute to some useful astronomical research by imaging and measuring double star separations and position angles. A "Double of the Month" is featured in each Newsletter.
- **Education:** The education section takes telescopes to schools to demonstrate the wonders of the universe to students and stimulate young minds, and engages in other outreach activities.
- **Instruments:** This Section helps members understand the diverse range of equipment that is available commercially or by building your own. The AAQ also has a wide range of telescopes available for members' use.
- **Occultations:** An occultation occurs when a body passes in front of and obscures a more distant body, as in a solar or lunar eclipse. Lunar and asteroidal occultations are the main types studied by this Section.

- **Solar System:** Telescopic viewing of the Sun, Moon and planets is rewarding for the amount of detail that can be observed and the ever changing appearance of the bodies as they move across the sky.
- **Spectroscopy:** Starlight is analysed by spectroscopy to determine the chemical elements present in the star, and its relative motion. This Section builds and uses spectrometers for astrophysical research.
- **Variable Stars:** The Variable Star Section was formed to educate and assist members to observe stars that change in brightness over time. Members are encouraged to submit their observations to international databases (AAVSO, VSS etc.) where the data is used by professional astronomers and AAQ members to determine how stars behave and evolve over time. Variable star observing is one of the fields where amateur astronomers can make a real contribution to the science of astronomy.
- **Visual Observing:** The Visual Observing Section of the AAQ aims to assist and encourage members in observing astronomical objects with the unaided eye, with binoculars or through a telescope. The Section publishes monthly objects of interest and provides observing programmes for those members wanting to achieve more outcomes from their viewing.

## Benefits of Membership

### Newsletter

The AAQ publishes a monthly newsletter between February and December, and annual proceedings in February each year. Full colour versions of the newsletters and annual proceedings are available to members by email. For a modest fee the newsletter and proceedings can be printed and posted to members without internet access. The newsletter contains minutes from the previous meeting, news and notices of upcoming events and photographs and articles by members and Sections. The annual proceedings contain the annual reports of the AAQ office bearers, section directors, research fund recipients, observatories and members activity reports.

### Library

The large AAQ Library contains items on a wide range of astronomically related topics including current astronomy magazines and books as well as a collection of historical material. New books are constantly being added to the library. Members have access to an online list of library holdings. Current books are kept in the library at the UQ meeting venue, allowing borrowings after meetings. Library items can also be posted to members unable to attend the meetings. Historical items in the Library can be accessed on request.

### Equipment Loans

The AAQ has acquired a wide range of items of equipment through government grants, donations or through purchases by the research fund. They range from easy to use telescopes up to full GOTO models as well as Hydrogen Alpha solar telescopes and research apparatus. Eligible members may borrow items for special purposes or who simply wish to try out equipment prior to purchase.

### Research Grants

The Edward Corbould Research Fund (ECRF) of the AAQ was established in 1987 with a grant of \$50,000 from Edward Corbould, a property developer in the Queensland Sunshine Coast area. The purpose of this fund is to support astronomical research projects by amateur astronomers and tertiary students. Grants are provided from the investment income of the fund, with grants usually offered each year.

### Website

The AAQ Website ([www.aaq.org.au](http://www.aaq.org.au)) provides reference material for members, notices and advice on current activities, a calendar of events, and a gallery of member's images.

**Other Benefits:** Each year AAQ produces a wall **calendar** for members which showcases member's images selected at the annual AAQ **photo competition**. **Publications** are offered to members at discount prices. The AAQ is an 'approved astronomical organisation' for the purposes of the Queensland Weapons Act providing for legal use by members of **laser pointers**. **AAQ Membership cards** can be provided to members.