

WSAAG Receives UWS Community Award 2015

On Monday 14th September 2015, WSAAG was presented with a UWS Community Award for our support of Penrith Observatory and contribution to public outreach – promoting the Sciences and in particular, Astronomy.

The award was presented at the first of four graduation ceremonies on the day (9:30am start) in the Ian and Nancy Turbott Auditorium at the Parramatta Campus. I attended and accepted the award on behalf of WSAAG. I was also invited to be part of the academic procession and official party on stage during the award ceremony. The Community Award, which was the only non-academic award presented at the event, was announced roughly mid-proceedings by the Vice-Chancellor Barney Glover (immediately to right of Chancellor in photo below) who read out the following text:

The Western Sydney Amateur Astronomy Group (WSAAG) has provided invaluable voluntary support to the UWS Penrith Observatory and in turn to the community of the Greater Western Sydney region and beyond.

WSAAG have helped make the UWS Penrith Observatory's Public Astronomy Programs the amazing success they have become. By bringing along their telescopes, enthusiasm and passion to the Observatory's Public Astronomy Nights, WSAAG have helped the Observatory achieve its mission "to enhance and extend the community's understanding and appreciation of the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) in order to help to build a stronger, more competitive Australia".

The Chancellor Peter Shergold (centre of front row in photo below) presented the award. I'm the one without the hat!



This is a well-deserved award. Our group of dedicated members have put in a lot of time volunteering at Penrith Observatory on their public astronomy nights. With their competence and enthusiasm, these members have shown a definite knack for communicating and spreading interest in astronomy and the sciences.



By year's end (2015), WSAAG will have supported Penrith Observatory on 26 Saturday nights throughout the year. This is up from 22 Saturday nights in 2014 and 20 Saturday nights in 2013.

We have many WSAAG members to thank for this award. Our regulars at the UWS public astronomy nights: Tony Barry, Peter Nosworthy, Sel Yusuf, Gerry Flanagan and Neville Fraser. Then there are a host of others who filled in when they could ... e.g. Angela Keane, Alan Lay, Charles Yendle and Niv Chandra.

Of course, we couldn't be at UWS on many of the Saturday nights if we didn't have WSAAG members Bob Paton, Lachlan Davis, Joe Seychell and also Ted Dobosz attending to our club observing nights at Linden. When not at Linden, Bob, Lachlan and Ted often helped out at UWS as well!

Our thanks also go to Ain De Horta (Astronomer in Charge at Penrith Observatory) for nominating us for this ward.

Rob Horvat (President WSAAG)