



CAASTRO NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2011

2011 Annual Retreat

A stellar first year for CAASTRO culminated in our inaugural annual retreat in November 2011, for which 63 members of CAASTRO travelled to Molonglo Observatory near the small country town of Bungendore, NSW. Across the course of two days, participants enjoyed a series of research presentations and interactive sessions, including keynote addresses from Guinevere Kauffmann (Max-Planck Institute for Astrophysics) and from Shri Kulkarni (Caltech).

The retreat provided an opportunity for CAASTRO members to meet - many for the first time - and to learn about the Centre's overall goals. Collaboration is central to CAASTRO's activities, and the retreat enabled all participants to contribute to our plans for 2012 and beyond. A "mentor speed-dating" exercise will match CAASTRO members in areas of common interest and will open dialogue between students, early career researchers and senior scientists across CAASTRO.



Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to the retreat; special thank-yous to Duncan Campbell-Wilson, Darshan Thakkar and Lindsay Harkness for hosting us at Molonglo Observatory, and to Susan Parker for organising the event. The CAASTRO executive will be working hard over the next couple of months to incorporate all the ideas and suggestions we received at the retreat into our plans for 2012.

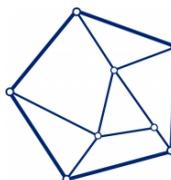


Click [here](#) to view more photographs from the CAASTRO 2011 Annual Retreat.

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FOR ALL-SKY ASTROPHYSICS

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR NEWSLETTERS

Contributions from CAASTRO members are welcomed for future editions of the newsletter: please submit material to [Susan Parker](#).

NEW MEMBER UPDATE

CAASTRO would like to welcome the following new members:

[Martin Bell](#)
[Julia Bryant](#)
[Duncan Campbell-Wilson](#)
[Karl Glazebrook](#)
[Eval Kazin](#)
[Hansik Kim](#)
[David Laotutua](#)
[Daniel Mitchell](#)
[Bart Pindor](#)
[Sharon Rapoport](#)
[Hong Tao](#)
[Edoardo Tescari](#)

[Click here for a full list of members](#)

Public Outreach and School Engagement



CAASTRO is dedicated to Education & Outreach and will showcase results in our three research themes on a local, national and international level. The second half of 2011 has seen an accessible multi-channel internet presence being created, with the launch and regular updates of the new [CAASTRO website](#), and with growing uptake of our [Facebook page](#), [Twitter feed](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

The first CAASTRO Science Media Release, on the discovery of a "diamond planet" by Prof Matthew Bailes and his team, [was published on 26 August 2011](#), following joint preparation by CAASTRO, Swinburne University and CSIRO. In the spirit of leveraging digital media, Prof Bailes produced a [short, voiced-over video](#). Within the first 24 hours of its availability, the video was downloaded over 500,000 times! Uptake of both the story and associated video extended well into the national and international media and also into private websites and blogs. The "Diamond Planet" is still regularly referenced in digital media, even a good three months after [its publication in Science Magazine](#).

At The University of Sydney, CAASTRO Senior Research Fellow Dr Greg Madsen has started making use of the "Connected Classrooms" initiative of the New South Wales Department of Education & Communities. Beginning in 2012, CAASTRO will launch "[CAASTRO in the Classroom](#)", in which our researchers will give seminars to high school students in both metropolitan and regional areas of NSW via video-conferencing technology. In two successful trial sessions run in October and November 2011, Dr Madsen delivered seminars on the topic of "Einstein and Special Relativity" to approximately 200 students, as part of the Physics Stage 6 Syllabus.

Following the CAASTRO Annual Retreat in Bungendore last month, CAASTRO staff and students participated in a full day "Communication Skills & Media Training" workshop. Participants received advice on how to structure and deliver an effective presentation to a non-technical audience and how to handle interviews and questions. Two representatives of Canberra-based broadcasting agencies were invited to share their experience and suggestions for communicating our science stories to the general public.

For questions, suggestions and feedback on any of the above activities, please contact the CAASTRO Education & Outreach Coordinator, [Dr Wiebke Eheling](#), at Curtin University.

CAASTRO Member Profiles

In each CAASTRO Newsletter, we will feature profiles of some of the members of our growing team. In this edition, we profile:

RESEARCH STAFF PROFILE:

[Dr Ramesh Bhat, Swinburne University of Technology](#)

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

[Mr Jay Banver, The University of Sydney](#)

STUDENT PROFILE:

[Ms Moraq Scrimgeour, University of Western Australia](#)

UPCOMING CAASTRO Workshops



COSMIC FLOW IN THE RAINFOREST

CAASTRO is a co-sponsor of the workshop "Cosmic Flow in the Rainforest", to be held over 20-22 February 2012 in the Gold Coast Hinterland. Click [here](#) for more information.



SAMI CONFERENCE - LARGE SURVEYS IN THE MULTI-IFS ERA

The AAO, The University of Sydney and CAASTRO are sponsoring the two-day conference "Large Surveys in the Multi-IFS Era", which will take place at CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science in Sydney over 9-12 February 2012. Click [here](#) for more information.

Things you need to know:

EARLY CAREER RESEARCH FORUM - AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

If you are a student or early career researcher, you may be interested in the Early Career Research Forum run by the Australian Academy of Science. [Subscribe](#) to the Academy's newsletter for information on upcoming funding and training opportunities as well as the Academy's quarterly newsletter Early Days.

FLAGSHIP ALLOCATION SCHEME OF THE NATIONAL COMPUTATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE (NCI)

Starting in 2012, CAASTRO will receive a guaranteed annual allocation of 4 million core-hours through the Flagship Allocation Scheme of the [National Computational Infrastructure \(NCI\)](#). Every 6 months, we will call for proposals from CAASTRO members for use of this time. The time allocation policy and proposal instructions are available on the [CAASTRO wiki](#).

CAASTRO PUBLISHING POLICY

It is important that all papers reporting CAASTRO work are identified as such. Before submission, a copy of the final manuscript of all CAASTRO papers should be emailed to the appropriate theme leader(s). This will normally be a pro forma process, with an almost immediate response with approval to submit. Please refer to the CAASTRO [publications policy](#) for more information.

This is one of a series of newsletters to keep interested parties informed about the progress of CAASTRO related activities. Previous newsletters are available from susan.parker@sydney.edu.au

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