

## EDITORIALS

The study of Australian ethnoastronomy (commonly called 'Indigenous astronomy') has experienced a surge of interest in recent years as researchers focus on exploring the astronomical knowledge and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. This focus resulted in a significant number of refereed papers that have appeared in the literature (particularly in this journal), as well as postgraduate theses and educational programs. The *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage (JAHH)* has been a major outlet for research on indigenous astronomy since 2009, with the publication of five papers on Aboriginal Australian astronomy, six papers on indigenous astronomy in India, and one paper on Maori astronomy in New Zealand.

The first conference dedicated to Australian Indigenous astronomy was held at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra on 27 November 2009. The meeting featured astronomically-themed artworks from Yamatji artists near Geraldton, Western Australia, as part of the bid to build the Square Kilometer Array (a large array of radio telescopes) on the traditional lands of the Yamatji people. This meeting, titled "*Ilgaridjiri: Things Belonging to the Sky*", brought together Aboriginal Elders, academics, educators and researchers to share their work and knowledge of Indigenous Australian astronomy. This set a precedent for hosting annual events and meetings on Indigenous astronomy. One of the featured speakers at the AIATSIS meeting was Dr Dianne Johnson, who spoke about various Aboriginal traditions of the Pleiades. She is well known for her book *Night Skies of Aboriginal Australia: A Noctuary* (Sydney University Press, 1998), which was the first comprehensive book to be published on Australian Indigenous astronomy. Sadly, Dr Johnson passed away in 2012, but her influence in the field of Australian Indigenous astronomy remains strong.

However, it was not until the Australian Space Sciences Society hosted their 2012 annual meeting in Melbourne that researchers and Elders were again brought together to discuss Indigenous astronomy. In 2013, the Society held its annual meeting at the University of New South Wales, which coincided with the inaugural meeting of the Australian Society for Indigenous Astronomy, held at the University's Nura Gili Indigenous Centre. The ASSC session, Chaired by Alice Gorman and myself, included a number of quality presentations on Indigenous sky knowledge. Dharawal Elder, Les Bursill, opened the session and speakers included Hugh Cairns, Robert Fuller, Trevor Leaman, Ragbir Bhathal, David Pross, Geoffrey Wyatt, Alice Gorman and

myself. John Goldsmith also gave a plenary talk on his work with Aboriginal communities in Western Australia. His paper won the award for Best Student Presentation and it appears in this issue of *JAHH*.

The conference organisers, Wayne Short and Iver Cairns, kindly granted me permission to invite the speakers to submit their papers for inclusion in this special conference issue of *JAHH*. This resulted in a number of high quality submissions on various aspects of Australian Indigenous astronomy, including more recent submissions. I would like to thank Professor Wayne Orchiston, the Editor of *JAHH*, for dedicating this issue to Australian Indigenous astronomy and for giving me the opportunity to develop my editorial skills by taking charge of the ethnoastronomy papers in this issue. The experience has been positive and I hope to continue this relationship in the future.

**Dr Duane Hamacher, Guest Editor**

I am grateful to Duane Hamacher for overseeing the preparation of the papers on Indigenous Australian astronomy that appear in this issue of *JAHH*. Duane faced the challenge of getting all the submitted papers refereed, and then editing those accepted for publication.

Over the past year or so the size of each issue of *JAHH* has increased from the original 88-90 pages (when we mailed out hard copies and postage limited the size) to between 110 and 140 pages. When it came time for me to format the papers Duane supplied and assemble the July-August issue of *JAHH* I quickly discovered we had room for additional papers, so I have selected two that were to appear in the November-December issue. Whilst neither relates to Australia, each is on archaeoastronomy, which means we are able to devote this entire issue to ethnoastronomy and archaeoastronomy.

**Professor Wayne Orchiston, Editor**