

8 July 2026

ASSA Durban Centre Chairman's Report 2026

Dear Members,

1. Introduction

At the end of my second year of my second term as chairman of the Durban Centre, I'm happy to report that the centre is in a healthy state and has been run satisfactory over the past 12 months, with the support of my committee

*Our numbers have decreased slightly over the year with some of our members leaving KZN and others finding it difficult to travel to the monthly meetings due to distance and security reasons. However, we also have a number of new members replacing those who have left. At the moment we have **114** members, which includes a number of families. We have had **23** new members join us during the past year and I know others are waiting for our new financial year to join. Welcome to you all!*

2. Finances

Despite the economic conditions that we face in our country at the moment, our finances are healthy as has been reported at our general meetings by Francois our treasurer, who will report on our finances later.

3. Monthly Meetings

Our year has been full, with our monthly meetings being well attended with an average of in the order of 20 members. We've had a number of visiting presenters including Prof Mike Brooks, Dr Rituparno Goswami, and a number of research students from various departments at UKZN. We have also had a number of our own including Prof Mike Watkeys and Kurveshan Purumal, giving presentations. We thank them for giving up their time to meet with us and give a presentation. In addition, we have our regular updates on NASA, now Science Update, by Francois and on the sky of the month by either Piet Strauss and now, Kurveshan Purumal. We would like this to continue, and as usual we are requesting our members to assist us in sharing their knowledge with all, by giving us a presentation.

Although very often our monthly meetings were clouded, we have managed to have some evenings where the society's telescope was opened and we had viewing by our member at the society's telescope and other telescopes that our members brought along for viewing.

4. Observatory

We attempt to have a public viewing from the telescope at the dome on the Friday closest to the new moon every month. This however is weather dependent and the past year has been very poor for viewing with only two viewing evenings being possible! Nevertheless, I must thank the members of the Observatory crew for their assistance and being ready and willing.

During the course of the year we have had a number of days where the Observatory has been cleaned and serviced. Details on the Observatory will be included in the Observatory report prepared by Kurveshan.

5. Activities

Once again, we had planned a number of activities during the course of the year of which some were unsuccessful due to poor weather conditions, including our attempts in January 2025 of our viewing of the Planetary Parade and our attempts to have a public viewing Steinbank Nature reserve and Monteseel.

One successful activity was the 'on the moon' viewing held at the Whalebone Pier Umhlanga. Details of this will be reported on under outreach.

6. Outreach

In terms of outreach and publicity we have also had a successful year, particularly since Sihle Khune returned from Eastern Cape and agreed to fill the Outreach and events portfolio. He will report on the outreach events carried out during the course of the 2024/25;

Future activities programmed for later in the year include;

- our trip to Bloemfontein on the weekend of 25-27 July.*
- A star viewing evening at Monteseel on 29th August.*
- Telescope/Observatory Workshop – September?*

7. n'Daba/Website

Nothing of our activities and various aspects of astronomy will be known to all of us if we didn't have our monthly publication the 'nDaba, which is put together by Claire every month.

A big thanks must go to Claire for putting this publication together. It's great to see that this year we have had a number of our members contributing as well.

Thanks also has to go to Moya and Kurveshan for managing of our website and social media.

8. ASSA National

As you all know, the Durban Centre is part of ASSA National with whom we are in constant communication and submit quarterly reports of the activities of our centre. ASSA National has reminded us to view their website and access MNASSA the monthly notes of the astronomical society of southern Africa.

9. Thanks

Thanks, must go to my committee who have worked endlessly in keeping the various aspects of the society running smoothly, including monthly meetings, outreach and the participation in various activities. Finally, thanks to all of you for your participation and attendance at our society's meetings and functions throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MH' or 'MH.' with a stylized, cursive flourish.

Mike Hadlow.