

## Preface

The XXV<sup>th</sup> IAU General Assembly took place in Sydney, Australia, 13-26 July 2003 and it featured an impressively rich and varied scientific program of 6 Symposia, 21 Joint Discussions and 4 Special Scientific Sessions. In addition were held a large number of meetings of the IAU Divisions, Commissions and Working Groups.

This IAU Highlights of Astronomy contains the Proceedings from 20 out of the 21 Joint Discussions and the 4 Special Scientific Sessions. The organizers of four Joint Discussions (JD04, JD09, JD13 and JD16) informed us that they wished to publish full Proceedings of their meetings which would consume a lot more space than available to them in this joint Proceedings. These organizers therefore submitted summaries and abstracts for the Highlights of Astronomy arranged for separate, full Proceedings from their meetings with other publishers. In addition, the Proceedings of the six Symposia (nos. 216 - 221) are being published in regular IAU Symposium Series.

I am deeply grateful to all authors and Editors of the individual events for their kind cooperation by following the instructions given by submitting their manuscripts on time. Only a very few manuscripts were late incoming and manuscripts from only one meeting were never received.

A special thanks goes to Dr. Terry Mahoney who, as a consultant to the ASP, prepared the LaTeX style file for this volume, and most importantly, with gracious permission from the ASP, also helped prepare the Table of Contents and the Authors Index.

Oslo and Paris, August 2004  
Oddbjørn Engvold  
General Secretary