

THE 2026 OZSKY "CLASSIC" STAR SAFARI

COONABARABRAN, NSW, AUSTRALIA

MARCH 14 – 21, 2026

www.OzSky.org



INTRODUCING YOUR OZSKY VOLUNTEER HOSTS

In addition to the amazing range of large telescopes which we provide for your use at these events, the OzSky Star Safari is further enhanced by a core team of dedicated and experienced volunteers who will be generously donating their own time during the OzSky week to help make the OzSky Star Safari a very special and unique event for you. Following is a brief biography on each of the Volunteers who will be assisting at the 2026 OzSky Star Safari.

Like many star parties around the world, the OzSky Star Safari is a highly social event where lifelong friendships are forged. Closer to the event, we will circulate a similar document to this, containing summarized profiles of everyone attending the 2026 OzSky Star Safari to help you get to know everyone better before your big trip to Oz.

LACHLAN MACDONALD

Location: Sydney, NSW - Australia

Email: Lachlan@OzSky.org

Astronomical Affiliations: Co-Founder of the OzSky Star Safaris and 3RF Australia; Board Member of 3 Rivers Foundation (3RF) in Texas; Member of the Astronomical Society of NSW;

Professional Background: Working as a Data Engineer during the day, Lachlan spends most of his spare time planning and co-ordinating the OzSky "Classic" and "Alumni" Star Safaris.

Lachlan is also a proud recipient of the Astronomical Society of NSW's most prestigious award, "The McNiven Medal", for volunteer services to the amateur astronomy community.

Lachlan has been co-ordinating the OzSky "Classic" and "Alumni" Star Safaris in their various forms since 1993.

Astronomy Pursuits: Sharing the amazing Southern Skies with folks from the north, visual astronomy using large-aperture telescopes, showing off all the "WOW" objects (*aka "Eye Candy"*) in the Southern night sky, as well as dabbling in wide-field astrophotography and composing "NightScapes" when time permits.

Previous Trips South: I live here - Volunteer Coordinator of the OzSky Star Safaris since 1993.

OzSky Wish List: I'm hoping that you'll all have the most awesome time of your life here at OzSky and that the Southern Skies (and OzSky itself) will exceed your wildest expectations!

Observing Instruments: Custodian of 3RF's 25" *f*/5 Obsession, 18" *f*/4.2 UC Obsession, 25x150 Giant Fujinon Binoculars and Coronado PST plus my own 11" SCT and a 10" *f*/5.6 Home-made solid-tube Dobsonian which I built at age 16 and several other smaller telescopes.



TONY BUCKLEY

Location: Sydney, NSW - Australia

Email: TBuckley@ihug.com.au

Astronomical Affiliations: Co-Founder of the OzSky Star Safaris and 3RF Australia; Member of the Astronomical Society of NSW;

Professional Background: Prior to his much-earned retirement, Tony was an appointed Commissioner in the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW, and was President of the Astronomical Society of NSW for 10 consecutive years.

Tony has been the primary point of contact for countless numbers of astronomical visitors from abroad for well over 25 years, and continues to spend his time demonstrating to astronomers from the northern hemisphere what they have been missing out on in the South all this time.

Tony has been volunteering with the OzSky Star Safaris in their various forms since 1993.

Astronomy Pursuits: Visual observing using BIG dobsonian telescopes and sharing the southern skies with folks from the north.

Previous Trips South: I live here - Volunteer with the OzSky Star Safaris since 1993

Observing Instruments: 20" *f*/5 Obsession, 14½" *f*/7 dob, several smaller instruments



JOHN BAMBURY

Location: South Coast, NSW - Australia

Email: JBambury@bigpond.net.au

Astronomical Affiliations: Volunteer with 3RF Australia and the OzSky Star Safari; Member of the Astronomical Society of NSW;

Professional Background: Finance Manager of an Australian beef and lamb company, John has been a keen amateur astronomer for many years, and is a well-known and highly respected contributor to many of the online astronomy forums.

John has been volunteering with these trips since April 2006.

Astronomy Pursuits: Visual Astronomy with a specialty in "Eye Candy" objects.

Previous Trips South: I live here - Volunteer with the OzSky Star Safaris since 2006

Observing Instruments: Custodian of 3RF's 14" $f/4.5$ SDM and 3RF's 18" $f/4.5$ Obsession, plus my own 10" Dobsonian



GARY KOPFF

Location: Sydney, NSW - Australia

Email: Gary@Wildcard-Innovations.com.au

Astronomical Affiliations: Volunteer with 3RF Australia and the OzSky Star Safari; Member of the Astronomical Society of NSW;

Professional Background: A fully qualified Electrical Engineer, Gary is the Managing Director and co-founder of Wildcard Innovations Pty Ltd and co-developer of the [Argo Navis™ Digital Telescope Computer](#) (DTC).

Gary is a proud recipient of the Astronomical Society of NSW's most prestigious award, "The McNiven Medal".

Gary has been volunteering with the OzSky "Classic" Star Safaris since June 2004.

Astronomy Pursuits: Deep Sky observing and development of the Argo Navis™ Digital Telescope Computer (DTC).

Previous Trips South: I live here - Volunteer with the OzSky Star Safaris since 2004

Observing Instruments: Custodian of 3RF's 18" $f/4.5$ Obsession



ANDREW MURRELL

Location: Central Coast, NSW - Australia

Email: Andrew@AndrewMurrell.com.au

Astronomical Affiliations: Volunteer with 3RF Australia and the OzSky Star Safari; Member of the Astronomical Society of NSW

Professional Background: Running his own [wedding and event photography business](#) on the Central Coast of NSW, Andrew loves getting out to enjoy both astronomy and photography.

Andrew is a former committee member of the Astronomical Society of NSW, and is well known in astronomy circles, particularly following his discovery of a faint planetary nebula which has since been confirmed and named "Murrell 1".

Andrew has been volunteering with these trips since June 2004.

Astronomy Pursuits: Deep Sky Visual Astronomy with a specialty in "Faint Fuzzies" and "Horror Lists". Andrew is well known in astronomy circles, particularly following his discovery of a faint planetary nebula which has since been confirmed and named "Murrell 1".

Previous Trips South: I live here - Volunteer with the OzSky Star Safaris since 2004

Observing Instruments: Custodian of 3RF's 18" $f/4.5$ & 25" $f/5$ Obsessions, plus my own 10" and 20" $f/5$ home-made dobs



MATT BIELSKI

Location: Niles, MI - USA

Email: ski82566@gmail.com

Astronomical Affiliations: Michiana Astronomical Society; Andrews University Astronomy Club

Professional Background: Hailing all the way from Niles, Michigan, Matt owns and runs a mechanical contracting business and is a grandfather of six.

Non-astronomical interests include sunset and landscape photography.

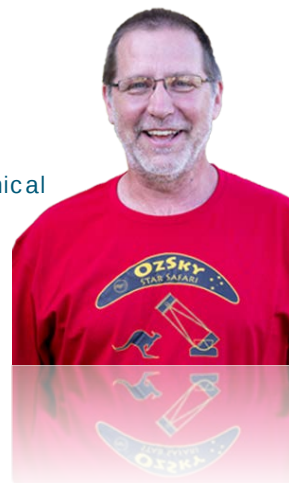
His favourite telescope is a very portable 22" $f/4$ Ultra-Compact Obsession. Matt is a member of the Michiana Astronomical Society and Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association.

Matt has been volunteering with OzSky for the "Classic" events since March 2023.

Astronomy Pursuits: Deep Sky Visual Astronomy and also enjoys "Challenge Lists" like the Herschel 2,500, Herschel I, Herschel II and Herschel III lists.

Previous Trips South: This will be my TENTH OzSky Star Safari, including OzSky "Classic" 2018, OzSky "Classic" 2019, OzSky "Alumni" 2022, Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2023; OzSky "Alumni" 2023; Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2024; OzSky "Alumni" 2024; Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2025 and soon to be OzSky "Alumni" 2025 and Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2026!

Observing Instruments: 16" Meade Lightbridge



DAVID BATAGOL

Location: Central Coast, NSW - Australia

Email: DavidBatagol@hotmail.com

Astronomical Affiliations: Volunteer with 3RF Australia and the OzSky Star Safari; Member of the Astronomical Society of NSW;

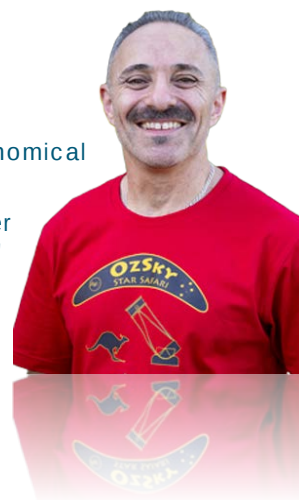
Professional Background: A Doctor, and father of five, David has been a keen amateur astronomer since his early teens. He built his first telescope at the age of 16, and currently operates a 12½" reflector which he built in 2012.

Other random interests include guitar, karaoke, aviation, and anything radio-control, but particularly radio-control submarines and ships. David has been volunteering with these trips since April 2014.

Astronomy Pursuits: Observational astronomy with a particular interest in Planetary Observing.

Previous Trips South: I live here - Volunteer with the OzSky Star Safaris since 2014

Observing Instruments: Custodian of 3RF's 18" $f/4.5$ Obsession, plus my own 12½" Newtonian reflector which I built in 2012. Built my first telescope at age 16.



DONNA BURTON

Location: Coonabarabran, NSW - Australia

Email: Donna@Born2Fly.com.au

Astronomical Affiliations: Volunteer with the OzSky Star Safari; Member of the Astronomical Society of NSW;

Professional Background: Donna runs her own astronomy business in Coonabarabran (The Astronomy Capital of Australia) after many years working for one of the world's most respected observatories.

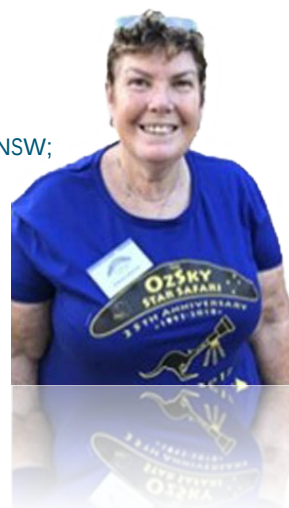
A flying instructor, passionate amateur astronomer, and post-graduate student at the University of Southern Queensland, Donna is also a keen sidewalk astronomer and is the Australian representative for the global astronomy community, "Astronomers Without Borders".

Donna has been volunteering with OzSky for the "Classic" events since March 2013.

Astronomy Pursuits: Comet Hunting, Sidewalk Astronomy, Extra-Solar Planets and "Spotty Stars".

Previous Trips South: I live here - Volunteer with the OzSky Star Safaris since 2013

Observing Instruments: Custodian of 3RF's 12" $f/5$ binocular telescope



ANNE ADKINS

Location: Limpia Crossing, Fort Davis, TX - USA

Email: Anne@limpiagirl.com, limpiagirl@gmail.com

Astronomical Affiliations: Astronomical Society of NSW; Volunteer with 3RF Australia and the OzSky Star Safari; Board Member of Three Rivers Foundation (3RF) in Texas; Austin Astronomical Society; Texas Star Party; Eldorado Star Party; McDonald Observatory Board of Visitors.

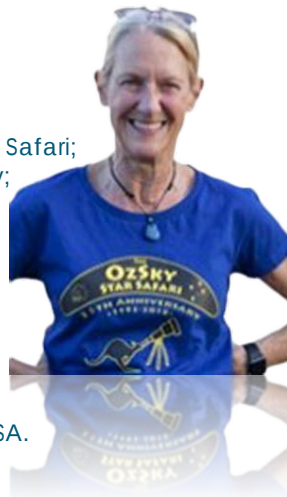
Professional Background: A freelance Volunteer, Anne is very active in numerous non-profits in Texas USA and is also heavily involved in organizing the famous Texas Star Party.

Anne has been volunteering with these OzSky trips since 2002, co-coordinating what was then named the Deepest South Texas "Classic" and "Alumni" Star Safaris from 2004-2009, during which time she used her expertise to transform these ad-hoc events into what are now highly popular "must-do Bucket List" events for amateur astronomers around the world, applying significant improvements and successfully marketing these events to the wider astronomical community across Texas and the USA.

Astronomy Pursuits: Observational astronomy, and turning kids, and adults, onto astronomy and the big science set to happen on next generation 30-meter telescopes.

Previous Trips South: Many! Volunteer Coordinator of the OzSky Star Safaris between 2004-2010 and attended DSTSS 2004, DSTSS 2005, DSTSS "Alumni" 2005, DSTSS 2006, DSTSS 2007, DSTSS 2008, DSTSS 2009, OzSky "Classic" 2010, OzSky "Outback" 2010, OzSky "Classic" 2018; OzSky "Classic" 2019 and now again at OzSky "Classic" 2026.

Observing Instruments: 15" and 20" Dobsonians



VELLO TABUR

Location: Wanniasa, ACT - Australia

Email: Vello@pcug.org.au

Astronomical Affiliations: Canberra Astronomical Society

Professional Background: With a PhD in Astrophysics and a background in Computer Science, Vello truly lives and breathes astronomy.

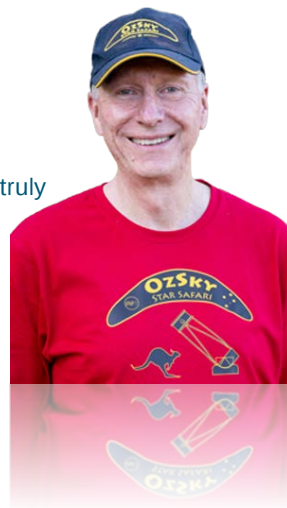
In addition to having multiple professional publications and prestigious awards to his name, Vello has also discovered at least three comets and three novae, including C/1996 Q1 Tabur (August 19, 1996); C/1997 N1 Tabur (July 2, 1997); V4744 Sgr (October 25, 2002); V2573 Oph (July 10, 2003); DZ Cru (Nova Crucis 2003) (August 20, 2003); C/2003 T3 Tabur (October 14, 2003).

Vello has been actively volunteering with OzSky for the "Classic" events since March 2023.

Astronomy Pursuits: Observing deep-sky objects & comets, and writing astronomical software to support those interests

Previous Trips South: I live here and this will be my TENTH OzSky Star Safari, including OzSky "Classic" 2018, OzSky "Classic" 2019, OzSky "Alumni" 2022, Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2023; OzSky "Alumni" 2023; Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2024; OzSky "Alumni" 2024; Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2025 and soon to be OzSky "Alumni" 2025 and Volunteer at OzSky "Classic" 2026!

Observing Instruments: 18" Obsession Classic



MICHAEL PROCHODA

Location: Maunaloa, HI - USA

Email: mprochoda@hotmail.com

Astronomical Affiliations: Northern Colorado Astronomical Society, Colorado Springs Astronomical Society

Professional Background: Hailing from Maunaloa, Hawai'i (previously Colorado), Michael is a retired physician and passionate Deep Sky observer. Michael has been an active veteran of the OzSky "Classic" Star Safaris since 2018 (our 25th Anniversary of OzSky)

We are very proud to welcome Michael to the ranks as an official OzSky Volunteer starting with us, starting in March 2026.

Astronomy Pursuits: Visual observing of Deep Sky Objects, Planets and Double Stars, with a passion for going even DEEPER into the southern skies each trip to OzSky.

Previous Trips South: This will be my FOURTH OzSky, and my first as a Volunteer!!! I've been to OzSky "Classic" 2018 (the 25th Anniversary of OzSky), OzSky "Classic" 2023. (the 30th Anniversary of OzSky), OzSky "Classic" 2025 and now OzSky "Classic" 2026 as an official OzSky Volunteer!

OzSky Wish List: Revisit old favorites and find some new objects and double stars.

Observing Instruments: 18" Obsession Dob, 140 mm APO refractor, Celestron 11

