

**ATNF Director's Response  
ATUC meeting 1 and 2 May 2007**

<b>ATUC Recommendations</b>	<b>Director's Response</b>	<b>Traffic light</b>
<b>New actions on ATUC:</b>		
1. Secretary to ask the ATNF to post the mm white paper on their web pages (in an appropriate place). <i>See above.</i>	<i>Done</i>	Green
<b>Commendations and successes</b>		
1. ATUC congratulates the ATNF on the successful installation and first light observations with the 7 mm systems at Narrabri.		
2. ATUC is pleased to see the first science results from PAM(H)ELA as presented by Tasso Tzioumis.		
3. ATUC is pleased with the success of the Mopra spectrometer MOPS as voiced by the user community and reflected by the science presentations during the ATNF Symposium on Monday 30 April as well as the increased number of Mopra science publications.		
4. ATUC noted with pleasure the high attendance at the meeting on 'Technical challenges and science potential of SKA FPA pathfinders' held at ATNF in March, and we look forward to reading the MIRANdA science case.		
<b>ATUC Recommendations [ATNF response requested]</b>		
<b>Matters arising from the Director's Response to the October 2006 ATUC report</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The previously requested email distribution lists for requests for green time at the observatories are not yet advertised on the observatory web pages. Members of ATUC are not aware of an email having gone out to announce the availability of the new lists.</li> </ul>	<i>The requested email distribution lists have been set up: Narrabri-oic@atnf.csiro.au for ATCA and Mopra and Parkes-oic@atnf.csiro.au for Parkes. The ATNF web page giving information on Director's time has belatedly been updated with these addresses.</i>	Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. The availability of skype via pink cables should be mentioned to visiting astronomers.</li> </ul>	<i>As many visiting astronomers have found, Skype appears to work from the visitor network. As far as ATNF is aware, Skype uses the same network port that regular web browsing uses (i.e. TCP port 80) which is not blocked from the visitor network. CSIRO recently revised its IT Security Policy and this policy explicitly deems that it is unacceptable to use peer-to-peer software (and mentions Skype as an example) on the CSIRO network. As such, ATNF cannot explicitly mention that Skype works from any CSIRO provided network connection. However, there is no reason why Skype won't continue to operate into the future. Many visitors do realise that Skype does work, but we can't advertise it.</i>	Yellow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. ATUC noted that the promised information on future development projects was not available at our May 2007 meeting. ATUC would very much like to see a full list of possible future hardware developments, with ballpark manpower requirements, for discussion at our next meeting in October.</li> </ul>	<i>This will be made available</i>	Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8(e) AT users value the availability of the lodge flat as short-term accommodation for observers with accompanying persons/family. While we would be like to see self-catering accommodation</li> </ul>	<i>The Narrabri flat is predominantly used as short-term accommodation for observers with accompanying persons/family and there are no</i>	Yellow

available at Narrabri for longer-term stays, we think it is important to keep the lodge flat available for short-term visitors and observers.	<i>plans to change this policy. The Narrabri Cottage ("House 3") has been made available in the past for longer-term (1~2 week) accommodation for people wishing to self-cater, but this option is currently unavailable as the cottage is being rented by a member of staff (who is providing on-site on-call support).</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10. ATUC would be interested to know the outcome of this meeting. (i.e. discussion of VLBI scheduling at Tidbinbilla)</li> </ul>	<i>No further progress</i>	Yellow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 (d) ATUC is pleased by the progress made (Narrabri web pages and Jessica Chapman's presentation to ATUC) and would like to see this to be further pursued.</li> </ul>	<i>We advise ATUC that the search engine on the public site has been replaced with a Google search facility, and should now be much easier to use. Some other small changes have been put in place on the public sites and we have also improved the internal web site. Further upgrades are planned.</i>	Green
<b>New recommendations:</b>		
<b>AT operations</b>		
1. ATUC appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the planning of future ATNF operations and are happy to assist in consulting with the user community. ATUC would like to see more details about proposed operational models for Narrabri (including the future role of DAs) and Parkes in the near future. We are encouraged by the ATNF's commitment to continue the operation of all observatories for at least the next decade.	<p><i>Since the May ATUC meeting, the ATNF has established two internal working groups to study various aspects of the proposed operating model. These groups have now delivered their reports and recommendations to the Director. The result will be a refined description of the future operating model, with some specific questions for the user community to answer. At present (17 October) we hope to have that description and those questions formulated in time for presentation at the November ATUC meeting. If this proves impossible we will request "out-of-session" consideration of those items by ATUC, later in November.</i></p> <p><i>To correct a point in ATUC's report: the ATNF committed to operate all current telescopes until the end of the planning decade (2006-2015), not "for another decade".</i></p>	Green
2. Several users have voiced concerns about Tidbinbilla support after the departure of Jim Lovell. Will the position be refilled? What is the status of current observing requests at Tidbinbilla? To what degree will the ATNF be able to support Tid observations (other than VLBI) in the future?	<i>The ATNF intends to open a position for radioastronomy support at Tidbinbilla. The process has been delayed, but is now (17 Oct 2007) proceeding. The lack of radioastronomy support has meant that some, but not all single dish astronomy with Tidbinbilla has been possible.</i>	Yellow
3. ATUC welcomes the appointment of the new mm research scientist and the opening of an operations support position at Narrabri. ATUC has received a number of specific mm-related suggestions from users which will be passed on to Kate Brooks.		
<b>Technology development</b>		
4. ATUC is pleased to note the progress made on the development of the CABB and the plans to have it available for general use by the observing community for the 2008 mm season. ATUC would like to see a structured commissioning plan which includes	<i>An update on progress and timeline estimates of the system's availability will be presented.</i>	Green

hardware, real-time and data reduction software timelines.		
5. Based on the assumption that there will be a spare 7 mm receiver for Narrabri, leaving enough parts for another to go onto the Mopra telescope, there is strong support from the user community to see that extra 7 mm receiver assembled and installed at Mopra in time for the 2008 millimetre observing season.	<i>A spare receiver is soon to be installed on the CA and parts are being assembled to outfit the Mopra receiver</i>	Green
6. ATUC were pleased to hear of plans to install of a 3 mm noise injection diode on one of the ATCA antennas. This will make it possible to carry out 3 mm polarisation measurements, for which there is a strong science interest within the community.	<i>Installation of the 3mm noise injection diode system on CA02 is happening this week (17 October 2007)</i>	Green
7. ATUC is aware of some potential future projects that have been proposed (115 GHz upgrade, WVR, focal plane array at Parkes, 7 mm receiver for Mopra, Narrabri 20/13 and 6/3 cm receiver upgrade), but are not sure what it is the ATNF wants ATUC to rank against each other. More information is required to do so. Prioritising these projects is especially important in the context of the forthcoming re-organisation of ATNF operations.	<i>This will be made available</i>	Green
8. A similar listing (for prioritisation) of software projects would also be valuable to have (e.g. on-the-fly mapping, sched, ASAP, end-to-end use of target properties/coordinates etc. from proposal to observation; unified observer interface?)	<i>In May the AT Steering Committee recommended a moratorium on development projects on ATNF telescopes until detailed plans for ASKAP appear, and the future of operations of other facilities is established. This applies to major new software projects. However, we are committed to upgrading miriad for proper CABB support. That work continues. The new Operating Model, once it is finalised, will lead to a list of software enhancements needed for its support. There may be room in that list for the community to determine the priority of that work.</i>	Green
<b>Documentation</b>		
9. ATUC requests that an announcement be sent to users (via the at-users email distribution list) when a new online issue of the ATNF Newsletter is released.	<i>This was done. An email announcement to all registered users (about 1500) is now sent for each newsletter. The newsletter is also posted to about 800 individuals.</i>	Green
10. We would once again like to request that all ATUC members are sent a printed copy of the ATNF Newsletter (currently several members are not receiving this and would like to).	<i>The newsletter distribution list was updated for ATUC members and will be checked before each issue is posted. Hopefully all ATUC members received the June 2007 issue. However if any ATUC member does not receive an issue please let us know directly by email to <a href="mailto:newsletter@atnf.csiro.au">newsletter@atnf.csiro.au</a>.</i>	Green
<b>Remote observing</b>		
11. We welcome the relaxation of restrictions on remote observing with the ATCA. ATUC request that the DA checklist be updated to include DA instructions for remote-to-remote observation handovers. The goal here is to ensure that this does not impose an extra load on the DAs.	<i>DAs are given instructions on handling changeovers to and from remote observing. It is already the case that, for handovers from one remote observer to another, arrangements have been made for this to happen without the requirement that the DA be present. We appreciate the support provided by DAs and share the concern that they not be overloaded.</i>	Green
12. ATUC recommends Mopra remote observing should become available from sites other than Narrabri. As a first step, we suggest that a Mopra remote observing station be set up at Marsfield, similar to what is already available there for remote operation of	<i>Some trials of Mopra remote observing from Sydney have already been undertaken successfully.</i>	Green

the ATCA.	<p><i>We propose to have a similar “currency” requirement to the ATCA, requiring people to have observed with Mopra from Narrabri within the previous 12 months.</i></p> <p><i>Establishment of Mopra remote station at Marsfield is being planned</i></p>	
13. ATUC also sees a demand for 3 mm remote observing with the ATCA and recommends that a trial system be set up from Marsfield for competent observers.	<p><i>The advice from our experienced 3mm ATCA observers (Juergen Ott, Tony Wong and others) is that they thought that 3mm observing was sufficiently stable and/or mature that remote 3mm observing could now be allowed for experienced observers. Indeed we have allowed this on a trial basis over the last few months for experienced observers (Juergen Ott, Ilana Feain) and encountered no serious issues. We do need to improve our 3mm documentation, and also impose a competency requirement as well as a currency requirement, but there are otherwise no serious issues.</i></p>	Green
14. ATUC would like to know whether it is possible to relax the two-person rule at Parkes, particularly due to the new possibility of remote observing that was recently demonstrated. The idea would be that one person is at Parkes and sets up the equipment etc. He/she could then go to bed or do their own work whilst a remote observer carries out the observations.	<p><i>Unattended operation of the Parkes 64-metre (operation with no-one within 1km of the tower) raises a number of significant issues in safety, of both persons and equipment, and in business continuity. The Observatory management is currently considering possible solutions to these risks as part of developing a new Operations Model for the ATNF. The feasibility and time scale should be known by the next meeting of ATUC.</i></p>	Green
<b>TAC/scheduling/archive</b>		
15. ATUC received comments from users regarding TAC feedback on pulsar projects. Users were concerned that with pulsar experts having to leave the room there was insufficient expertise to rank these proposals. The ATUC chair will discuss these comments with the TAC chair.	<p><i>This comment is noted and was discussed within the TAC. We consider that the TAC does have sufficient pulsar expertise to rank proposals and note that a pulsar expert has been present during the discussion of almost all pulsar proposals.</i></p>	Green
16. Concern was raised that the Parkes schedule is being released too late for overseas observers to make their travel arrangements in time. This is a particular problem for the April semester, with the delays caused by Christmas/New Year.	<p><i>Concerns noted. We acknowledge that the one calendar month lead-time for publication of the Parkes observing schedule is not being routinely met. However every effort is made to notify overseas PIs directly at least four weeks ahead of any scheduled observing allocation. If four weeks is felt to be insufficient notice perhaps ATUC might consider the option of advancing the proposal deadlines by one or two weeks. Incidentally, the ATNF is exploring computer aided scheduling, possibly to produce linked schedules for all ATNF facilities. This research, we hope, will resolve this long-standing issue.</i></p>	yellow
17. ATUC supports the proposed changes to procedures for new large proposals and asks that the next call for proposals makes it very clear which proposals this applies to (and what the status of currently active proposals is).	<p><i>Done The call for proposals had specific information on this and this is also available on the web pages.</i></p>	Green

18. ATUC has identified Mopra MOPS data as the highest priority for inclusion in the AT Online Archive (ATOA) in the future. The ATOA should contain a search tool for all observations at all telescopes, even if there are no data in the database for these observations at present.	<i>We thank ATUC for their input on this. The development of the ATOA to include Mopra data will begin in November 2007. Further additions will be considered later.</i>	Green
<b>VLBI</b>		
19. With the high priority ATNF is giving to eVLBI at the moment, could some resources please be redirected to update the eVLBI web pages? This was requested by ATUC in June 2004 and a response was promised, but there has been no visible improvement.	<i>eVLBI &amp; VLBI observing webpages have been updated often. The problem may be that not all links reflect the new pages and this has been addressed. Pages of interest are: <a href="http://www.atnf.csiro.au/vlbi/wiki/">http://www.atnf.csiro.au/vlbi/wiki/</a> &amp; <a href="http://www.atnf.csiro.au/vlbi/evlbi/">http://www.atnf.csiro.au/vlbi/evlbi/</a></i>	Green
20. Since the three new AuScope antennas will be available for some fraction of the time for science (40-50%), ATUC would welcome more information on how will they work (if at all) with respect to the current LBA?	<i>AuScope will be available around 2010. Provision is already made to correlate any recorded data from these antennas with the DiFX software correlator. An assessment of the operational feasibility of the inclusion of these antennas has not been made.</i>	?
<b>Other business</b>		
<b>ATNF co-supervised students</b>		
21. Some users reported their dissatisfaction with the procedure currently used to approve co-supervised ATNF students. They felt that despite having complied with the published guidelines for co-supervision, un-documented, arbitrary requirements were preventing their students from becoming ATNF co-supervised students (in some case despite having an ATNF staff member already signed up as a co-supervisor). Such requirements included (apparently) unreasonable residency requirements in Epping and a level of project oversight that was seen as unnecessary and unreasonable. This was perceived as giving students from outside NSW a significantly reduced chance of becoming involved with ATNF. Please could ATNF provide an updated and accurate policy and procedure for application for ATNF studentship?	<i>The policy and procedure for approval of ATNF co-supervised student are being reviewed to insure clarity and transparency. We lament any lost opportunities for effective collaboration with University based researchers, which remain a very strong imperative.</i>	Green
22. Observers would like to applaud the staff at Narrabri for the provision of new low-fat meals at the lodge.		
<b>Other comments from AT users [for information]</b>		
<b>Mopra status</b>		
What plans are there to characterise Mopra and is there a long-term monitoring plan? The tasks I am thinking of include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the beam-shape being monitored?</li> <li>• is the main-beam and extended beam efficiency published by Ladd et al (2004) still appropriate? do we have standard spectra of OrionKL, M17SW for the new system?</li> <li>• skydip (i.e. <math>T_{\text{sys}}</math> vs elevation) scans - can observers do their own skydips with TCS?</li> <li>• <math>T_{\text{sys}}</math>-Frequency scan</li> <li>• cross-calibration of MPCOR and MOPS - is there a recommended method for combining data from the two backends?</li> </ul>	<i>There is a plan in place to characterise Mopra during the summer season to be ready for the 2008 winter season. A calibration monitoring plan will also be implemented in the 2008 winter season. The TCS is currently being upgraded to permit skydip scans. There is no recommended method for combining MPCOR and MOPS data.</i>	Green
What is the status of some problems from last year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the broadband ripple?</li> <li>• the <math>T_{\text{sys}}</math> offset between polA and polB, and the "jitter" in polA <math>T_{\text{sys}}</math>?</li> </ul>	<i>The broadband ripple is symptomatic of all single-dish broadband measurements. Trial methods are being developed to remove the ripple in post-processing software.</i>	Green

	<i>It has been noted that there are different Tsys measurements in the different polarisation bands. This is under investigation.</i>	
<b>VLBI web pages</b>		
Particular problems with VLBI web pages include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• references to the S2 correlator which has been (or is about to be) decommissioned,</li> <li>• broken links,</li> <li>• pages that have not been updated since 2000,</li> <li>• contacts to website maintainers that have long since departed ATNF, and</li> <li>• poor visual presentation.</li> </ul>	<i>The VLBI webpages have been tidied to reflect recent changes and clean up the area. The S2 system has just been decommissioned and aspects of it (e.g. DAS) remain in use. The VLBI/eVLBI facilities are changing fast and are reflected in newer pages (e.g. WIKI) rather than constantly updating old pages.</i>	Green
<b>ATOA/OPAL</b>		
The standard ATNF acknowledgement blurb, which currently only resides on the ATNF Publications page ( <a href="http://www.atnf.csiro.au/research/publications/">http://www.atnf.csiro.au/research/publications/</a> ) lies within the "Astrophysics Research at the ATNF" section; it is not that easy to find for external visitors. It should be copied onto the top-level OPAL and ATOA web pages.	<i>The publications acknowledgment should be easier to find now that the web search engine has been replaced. A link will be added to OPAL and the ATOA.</i>	Green
Would it be possible to have a button to click on OPAL that allows you to simply resubmit a previous proposal unchanged to the next semester? Having to download and upload such proposals seems pointless.	<i>OPAL - At present we do not allow a direct resubmission of a previous proposal. Almost all proposals do have some changes from one semester to the next and this does not seem a high priority.</i>	Red
Some users report that they have had no response to requests for access to their own data on the online archive.	<i>ATOA data access - the access to ATOA data has now been automated (using OPAL registration information) so this should no longer be an issue.</i>	Green