Director's response to ATUC Report – June 2017

ATUC Recommendation	Director's Response	Traffic Light
2. Commendations and successes		
ATUC commends CASS on: – The implementation of a Rapid Response Mode for the ATCA, while recognising that this is still a "work in progress" and has yet to be fully put through its paces. – Installation of all 30 PAFs on ASKAP and the commencement of early science. – Lisa Harvey-Smith's role in the success of the ABC "Stargazing Live" event. – Acceptance by NAOC of the 19-beam FAST receiver. – The delivery of a PAF to the Effelsberg telescope after successful commissioning.	CASS thanks ATUC for these commendations.	
Recommendations		
3. CASS Culture Project		
a) ATUC recommends that CASS continues to include all levels of staff in discussions on how to improve CASS culture, and requests regular updates on the progress of the CASS Culture Project.	a) The CASS Diversity Committee has a broad membership within CASS, including administration staff, ECRs, senior scientists/engineers, and management. CASS management, with assistance from the Diversity Committee, will continue to engage with all staff in implementing strategies to improve work-place culture. Minutes of the meetings to track implementation of the recommendations from the CASS Culture project report are being circulated to ATUC and the Director will include a report of activities and progress at each ATUC meeting.	
b) Consider a rewording of the new vision statement to acknowledge the value of diversity in the CASS workforce.	b) CASS management believes that the evidence shows that diversity is an intrinsic component of excellence. Highlighting diversity explicitly risks creating the impression that it is something that you do in addition to selecting the best staff. For this reason, the decision was made not to include "diversity" separately in our commitment in the Vision Statement to attract and retain the best staff. The statement that we will foster a diverse and creative workforce is, instead, included in	

	the accompanying Mission statement. We note that this approach is consistent with that of other similar astronomical institutions, such as RSAA, ICRAR, CAASTRO, and the Swinburne Centre for Astrophysics and Supercomputing.	
4. ASKA timeline and SSP priorities		
ATUC urges CASS to conduct a new assessment of the relative merits, priority, and resources to be offered to the existing ASKAP SSPs before any observing time beyond the Early Science allocations is awarded. ATUC also recommends that the plans for Early Science be reassessed and potentially revised in consultation with the SSPs, in light of the delay in timescale for the start of full ASKAP survey science.	It remains our plan to set up a Survey Science Project Assignment Committee to review the existing ASKAP SSPs. This review will inform final time allocation, taking into account the final anticipated performance of ASKAP, readiness of the preparations for the surveys and the current scientific context. Plans for Early Science are considered in consultation with the SSTs at the monthly Early Science Forum meetings, and refined based on progress with developing the capabilities of the telescope. Updates will be provided to ATUC at future meetings.	
5. Pawsey issues for ASKAP		
CASS is encouraged to draw up and communicate realistic plans for processing at the Pawsey centre, especially surrounding the design and timeline of a replacement machine for Galaxy.	In preparation for a formal process of Galaxy replacement, CASS is conducting a high-level review of future needs. This will be followed by a more comprehensive and detailed technical statement of requirements and options, to be issued in early 2018. The outline of the plan can be prepared for ATUC at its November meeting.	
6. ATCA and Parkes funding		
ATUC is very pleased to see the improvement in CASS's financial outlook and the consequent commitment to continue operating ATCA and Parkes into the medium term. While it supports the continued efforts in this space, ATUC recommends constraining the fraction of observing time that can be sold on any one telescope to be no greater than 50%.	This is indeed the intention.	
7. Long Baseline Array		
ATUC strongly recommends that retaining LBA capability should remain a high priority for CASS.	The continued support of the LBA remains a priority for CASS, although that priority is lower than that of continued operation of Parkes and the ATCA. These two telescopes are of paramount importance, justifying their mention in the ATNF Mission statement.	

8.	**Tidbinbilla**		
	CASS should strive to maximise the value of host country time on Tidbinbilla. CASS should provide statistics on the fraction of Tid host country time that is currently being utilised by the National Facility.	CASS does attempt to maximise use of the host-country time on the Tidbinbilla antennas. VLBI periods are registered with CDSCC as soon as they are known. A buffer of potential single-dish observations is maintained and Shinji Horiuchi at Tidbinbilla attempts to match these to gaps in the local schedule. Finally, some Parkes observations (particularly those at 22GHz) are moved to the 70m at Tidbinbilla because of its superior performance. CASS will report the statistics of host-country time usage at the next and subsequent ATUC meetings.	
9.	**ATCA override policies**		
	CASS should implement the revised override policy for Rapid Response Mode proposals (including how they interact with Legacy Programs), and should clarify to users that this policy will also apply to regular NAPA programs. ATUC recommends a slightly higher bar for the TAC scores at which RRO and NAPA observations can displace scheduled observers. All changes to the existing policy should be clearly communicated both to Legacy and large project PIs, and to the PIs of all active NAPA programs.	The revised override policy will be in effect for the 2017OCT semester, and the semester schedule release notes will describe the process; all project PIs will receive this description. The so-called “higher bar” option recommended by ATUC, that is to set the lowest successful NAPA score at the level above which all regular projects are scheduled, is acceptable to CASS. (Note that for the ATCA semester OCT2017, all projects with scores above that of the lowest scheduled have been allocated time; so, in this case, the higher bar has the same height!)	
10.	**ATCA override policies**		
	CASS should aim to provide the Legacy Project PIs with likely future allocations in advance, and should follow up with the Legacy teams to determine how the projects are progressing, and what the plans are for public data releases.	The guidelines being followed are to allocate about 40% of available time (1200 hours per semester) to Legacy Projects, approximately evenly split between projects. However, the precise allocations in specific semesters will depend on practical issues (LST ranges required, seasonal suitability of different wavelengths, etc.). Once a Legacy Project has accumulated its first two semesters of observing, a short progress report including a data-release plan and progress against it will be a required component of each proposal resubmission.	
11.	**Operational issues at ATCA**		

a) ATNF Friends should take responsibility for following up with users to ensure that the observing feedback questionnaire is filled out. b) ATUC should receive regular updates on ATCA and Parkes user feedback.	(a) CASS recognises the paucity of recent feedback from observers, and ATNF staff are actively soliciting completed questionnaires from observers. (b) Reports of ATCA and Parkes feedback will be included in future reports to ATUC.	
12. Staffing issues		
No recommendations		
13. CASS Students		
ATUC encourages CASS to continue the successful student co-supervision program with Universities. Students should be encouraged to visit CASS for research visits, in addition to DA shifts.	CASS continues to support the student co-supervised program. Currently PhD students at an Australian university are offered up to $5000 over the course of a PhD studentship for travel and all students in the program receive up to 3 months' free accommodation per year at CSIRO. We are currently considering (to be discussed by ATUC at an upcoming meeting) a modification to the student program in which all students receive up to $5000 over their studentship to stay at our observatories and our offices in Perth and Sydney. With this change we would not support major overseas travel, but would support more travel to the observatories.	
14. DA training and telescope expertise		
ATUC supports continuing the current DA system. To help it remain sustainable, ATUC suggests that CASS evaluate options for improvement, either by expanding the existing pool of DAs, providing less experienced DAs with more options in case of issues (whether via a wiki, webpage, or call to a more experienced, "secondary" DA via a pairing system), or by requesting large/Legacy projects to provide their own DAs via a Project Expert system similar to that adopted at Parkes.	We are reviewing the DA system, and training in general, and are expecting to implement a new coherent scheme across the telescopes. We aim to have specific proposals for discussion at the November ATUC meeting.	
15. Synthesis School		
CASS should continue to run the biennial radio school at Narrabri, and explore partnership options with other institutions.	CASS plans to continue the biennial school, and to contribute (teaching) resources to any school initiated by WA-based institutions to be held in Perth in the odd years.	
16. Planned site move to Lindfield		
That efforts be made to continue to provide and maintain on-site accommodation for students, observers,	A detailed proposal and business case to provide on-site accommodation for visitors and	

and visitors following any move to the new Lindfield site.	observers at Lindfield, of a similar type and quantity to that currently provided at Marsfield, has been submitted to the CSIRO Executive for consideration.	