

Outline of NCRIS Investment Plan Process

The National Collaboration Research Infrastructure Strategy will provide \$542m for research infrastructure until 2010-11. A committee was established to develop a strategic roadmap that was released in February 2006.

Optical and radio astronomy has been identified as one of eight high priority capabilities to develop an investment proposal over the period March-October 2006. The Australian Astronomy Decadal Plan has been highly influential in setting the infrastructure priorities identified by the NCRIS committee that include:

- Additional support for the Anglo-Australian Observatory (AAT optical/infrared telescope);
- Delivery of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) *Phase 1* radio telescope facility; and
- Access to the equivalent of 20% of an 8m-class telescope through the existing Gemini partnership and through new telescope and instrument agreements.

The success of the Decadal Plan is also reflected NCRIS committee's recommendation that the National Committee for Astronomy take lead responsibility for

- prioritising the infrastructure requirements and provide a range of cost options;
- providing a clear timetable for the investments; and
- recommending governance arrangements whereby the investments can be managed effectively and appropriately on behalf of the astronomy community.

The Chair of the NCA has been appointed to the role of facilitator for the optical and radio astronomy capability. The role of the facilitator is to work closely with the stakeholders in their capability area to collaboratively develop a proposal that meets the NCRIS programme objectives.

To assist the development of the astronomy investment proposal, Matthew Colless (AAO Director), Warrick Couch (Australian Gemini Board member) and Michelle Storey (Australian SKA Planning Office Leader) will co-ordinate the development of the components of the investment proposal relating to the AAO, Gemini and SKA Phase 1 infrastructures respectively.

As facilitator, I have indicated to DEST that I would plan on having a draft of the investment proposal by June 30, with a final version submitted by July 31. This is earlier than the deadline in the Strategic Roadmap, but it is also clear that early proposals will be welcome.

An indicative time line for the NCRIS proposal development is as follows:

- Early Apr: Indicative NCRIS funding envelope from DEST
- April 21: Community Meeting to discuss outline of investment proposal
- April 30: NCA provide response to DEST funding envelope
- May 31: First draft of investment proposals for individual infrastructures from co-ordinators to facilitator/NCA.
- June 15: NCA release draft of full investment proposal, including proposed Governance model to community
- June 22: Feedback received from community
- June 30: Feedback integrated and draft submitted to DEST
- July 31: Final Proposal submitted to DEST.