SKA news for Australian Industry: 5 March 08

1. ASKAP Fibre Optic project: Announcing the design study for the data transmission link

The Australian SKA Pathfinder (ASKAP) radio telescope project requires a new optical-fibre network connection from the Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory (MRO) in the Mid-west of WA to a site in Geraldton. As the MRO is Australia's candidate site for the SKA, we plan to have sufficient fibre installed to meet the estimated needs of the SKA.

CSIRO has contracted AARNet to conduct a design study to define technical options for the project, make cost-benefit analyses for different options, design the fibre route, produce a detailed costing of the entire project, and analyse project risks. The study will be carried out during March-June 2008.

Before the study is completed we will be inviting expressions of interest for the implementation phase of the data transmission link. More information, and a brief on the requirements for the data transmission link can be found at:

http://www.atnf.csiro.au/projects/askap/data_transport.html

Please note that this document is not an invitation to tender a solution. The procurement process will strictly follow the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines.

2. Latest "auSKA" News

The latest auSKA newsletter (no.17) is now available from http://www.atnf.csiro.au/news/auska-newsletter/ or www.ska.gov.au

This issue includes:

- ASKAP Updates
- Successful CONRAD collaboration comes to an end
- Source finding
- New ASKAP Geraldton Office
- Collaborator Projects, PAPER, CoRE and MWA
- ASCC Update
- Meeting: Deep Surveys of the Radio Universe with SKA Pathfinders
- SSEC Update

3. New WA Government related SKA funding announced

On 29 February 2008, the Western Australian Premier, Alan Carpenter announced funding of $20 million to establish an International Radio Astronomy Research Centre in Western Australia.

The funding will contribute towards:

- the employment of up to 100 scientists and technicians to undertake radio astronomy research and development;
- purchasing and developing new software and technologies;
- developing radio astronomy-related industry capability in WA through employing scientists and engineers to work with local industry to design, develop and manufacture engineering solutions for SKA;
- undertaking public outreach and education programs; and
- creating domestic and international linkages and partnerships on SKA.

Mr Carpenter said the State Government would ask research institutions and industry to work together to put forward proposals for the centre.
"We would expect to see final proposals by July this year, with the centre up and running in 2009," he said.