ATNF ATUC Memorandum

To: ATUC
From: Dave McConnell
Date: 8 June 2005
Subject   **ATNF Scientific Computing Group review**

Late in 2004 the ATNF Director requested a review of the ATNF Scientific Computing Group (SCG). At its 2004 December meeting ATUC agreed to participate in the review.

The review panellists were: Erwin de Blok (RSAA, ATUC); Tim Cornwell (ATNF), Naomi McClure-Griffiths (ATNF); Lister Staveley-Smith (ATNF, chair); Steven Tingay (Swinburne, ATUC). The review was conducted on 2005 May 3, at Marsfield.

 In its executive summary the panel recommended:

- That the SCG is a valuable part of the ATNF and should be maintained with critical mass.
- The core business of the SCG should be:
    o Maintaining and developing existing data reduction packages.
    o Acting as a coordinating body for ATNF software standards and data archiving.
    o Strategic algorithmic (for xNTD, SKA, etc) and standards (e.g. WCS) development.
- That the development activities of the SCG should be better defined and, where possible, better aligned with the core activities of the ATNF, via the now established ATNF project management structures.
- That the level of strategic development of software for large projects such as the xNTD be increased significantly over the next 12 months.

The full report is available at
http://www.atnf.csiro.au/management/reports/2005-05-31_SCG_Review.html.

The ATNF has considered the report's recommendations and over the coming months will form a detailed plan for managing the Group and setting its priorities. The plan will aim to distribute effort amongst the main work areas as follows:
      60% strategic software development;
      20% maintenance of existing packages;
      10% consultative work for ATNF scientific software development outside the Group;
      10% visitor support.

To achieve this, we will need to review the level of visitor support provided at the Marsfield site and transfer a number of IT support tasks to CSIRO IT.

Advice sought

ATUC's advice is sought on the following issues/questions:

- What level of visitor support is appropriate for the Marsfield site? For example -
    o Are visitor workstations needed?
    o Would visitor workrooms with network access be enough?