

**ATNF Director's Response
ATUC meeting 6 and 7 June 2006**

| ATUC Recommendations | Director's Response | Traffic Light |
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| ATNF response requested | | |
| Matters arising from Director's Response to the December 2005 ATUC Report | | |
| <p>1. We urge the ATNF to continue improving the reliability and documentation of the new ATCA observing system as a high priority. Several users have expressed concern at last time due to the control computer Ellen crashing at the ATCA.</p> | <p>A new version of the ATCA Users' Guide is in production and should be available for the next observing term, commencing in October. As an interim, the page http://www.narrabri.atnf.csiro.au/observing/CurrentIssues.htm has been updated to give essential information on the new observing system. The <i>Ellen</i> crash happened at 4am, but by 8am observing had resumed on NOEL. Two of the intervening hours were green time. <i>Ellen</i> has since been replaced by two new servers, <i>skull</i> and <i>xbones</i>, with the VMS system still retained as an extra back-up.</p> | green |
| <p>2. The need for ATNF to review and rationalise the existing ATCA 3mm documentation and reduction scripts remains urgent. Users identified a number of issues related to 3mm documentation and calibration which are impacting seriously on productivity of the ATCA. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dantpos files, which provide improved antenna positions, are not readily available and cannot be updated by a user without updating MIRIAD. Regular monitoring of a set of 3mm flux calibrators is needed, and Director's time should be assigned to this if necessary. Doppler tracking should be implemented automatically in CAOBS to take account of the motion of the Earth. This is critical at 3 and 12mm because of the smaller velocity bandwidth. <p>ATUC would be happy to provide more detail if necessary and have nominated Kate Brooks as contact person.</p> | <p>With the recent and coming departure of several staff, the ATNF is facing a shortage of mm observing experience. This is reflected in the difficulty in maintaining comprehensive documentation. However, the specific issues have been addressed as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Solutions to the baseline solutions that give corrections to antenna positions are now available on the internet from the ATCA Observers' page (follow "Updated baseline solution" link): http://www.narrabri.atnf.csiro.au/observing/antpos/ Agreed. For the next term (06OCTS) the calibrator monitoring project C007 has been scheduled for this purpose. A more extensive monitoring program will be scheduled in the next mm season. It is inadvisable to implement such a system because in general it leads to the target source and calibrator being observed with different LO settings. The problem will be overcome with the wide bandwidths provided by CABB. | yellow |
| New Recommendations | | |
| <p>3. ATUC commend the authors of the mm Astronomy White Paper and support its recommendations. In particular, we strongly support the ATNF's work to develop FPAs at high frequencies. In light of recent developments ATUC are happy to revisit the ATCA 115 GHz upgrade project and prioritise it together with other development projects.</p> | <p>All current ATNF engineering resources are committed to existing projects. However, we await results from our FPA research at low frequencies and recognise the possibility of future applicability at frequencies of 20GHz or higher. No resources exist at present to contemplate a 115GHz upgrade to the ATCA.</p> | red |
| <p>4. ATUC recommend that an annual one-day ATNF Science Symposium be reinstated from 2007, in conjunction with the first ATUC meeting of each year. These symposia, at which users present</p> | <p>Agreed. The ATNF will work with the ATUC Chair to set a format for the Symposium and associated ATUC meeting.</p> | green |

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| <p>science results from the national facility telescopes, were held regularly until 2004 (often as a joint symposium with the Anglo-Australian Observatory) and are seen as an extremely valuable showcase for ATNF science.</p> | | |
| <p>5. ATUC were enthusiastic about having a one-day LBA/e-VLBI 'New Capabilities' workshop in conjunction with our next (late 2006) meeting. This should concentrate on science opportunities, and be aimed at non-experts and possible new users. It would be excellent to have an invited speaker from Europe to present recent EVN results, and also to include an introduction to VLBI techniques. ATUC nominate Stuart Ryder to sit on the SOC to advise on the science program. An important goal would be to identify the likely number of new users. If there is a significant increase in LBA/VLBI usage, additional resources would obviously be needed to provide documentation and user support.</p> | <p>Agreed. Tasso Tzioumis will convene an SOC for a VLBI workshop to emphasize and publicise new VLBI capabilities.</p> | <p>green</p> |
| <p>6. As part of the eVLBI initiative, we also suggest that the ATNF could provide two sets of demonstration data (one extragalactic/continuum, one Galactic/spectral-line) which would be taken at an early stage, calibrated, imaged and made publicly available. This would help users assess and appreciate the capabilities of the new system.</p> | <p>Agreed. The ATNF will (in collaboration with Swinburne University) investigate the feasibility of providing demonstration VLBI datasets.</p> | <p>green</p> |
| <p>7. Although ATUC are happy with the current process of allocating Director's Time at Narrabri and Mopra, we would like to see an improvement in response times at Parkes, where several users report that recent requests for Director's Time have, on occasion, not been acknowledged.</p> | <p>In general accessing observatory functions through individual's email address is prone to failure because of absence or overload. Those wishing to contact the observatories should use email addresses parkes-operations@csiro.au or Narrabri-operations@csiro.au for enquiries related to telescope usage.</p> | <p>green</p> |
| <p>ATNF Response Optional</p> | | |
| <p>Items arising from Director's Response to the December 2005 ATUC Report</p> | | |
| <p>Following on from Director's Response item 6e: Joint ATNF/University appointments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This issue was to be raised at the recent ATSC meeting and possible models for CSIRO/University partnerships were to be discussed. ATUC would be interested to see a summary of these discussions. ○ ATUC are concerned that despite the good number of jointly supervised students and some joint ATNF/university appointments, the fraction of university PIs and first-author publications are still low. Several possible causes were suggested, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulties in applying for time ▪ Ease of data reduction ▪ No synthesis workshop recently ○ ATUC have formed a sub-committee comprising Elaine Sadler, Melanie Johnston-Hollitt and Chris | <p>The ATSC endorsed a proposal by the ATNF to pursue partnerships with Universities primarily through contracts to provide clear national facility research or operational outcomes. Examples of possible contracts for operating a software VLBI correlator and for operating the Hobart and Ceduna telescopes for VLBI were briefly discussed</p> | |

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| Wright to investigate the causes further and report back. | | |
| Director's Response, item 17. ATNF made a commitment to update the positions database before the next proposal deadline. However at time of writing, this has not been done. Please could the database be updated as soon as possible? | The positions database has been updated to December 2005. The positions database will not be updated beyond December 2005 and will instead be replaced with a new facility in the ATOA. See response on ATOA below. | |
| New Items | | |
| Computing | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATUC request that the ATCA users' guides (including remote observing) be updated to reflect changes since the migration from VMS to Linux observing software. | (see item 1 above) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users outside ATNF would like access to the at_meetings mailing list to continue. ATUC suggest that some sort of registration system be put in place to allow this. | To prevent junk mail being posted to this page, access has been restricted. Mail sent from CSIRO and Australian university addresses will be allowed through. This measure has already substantially reduced the problem. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vince McIntyre raised the issue that outside users with ATNF accounts can appear as CSIRO staff members when sending email and that this needs to be stopped without serious impact on users. ATUC suggest that most outside users do not need (or want) a CSIRO email account (as distinct from a user account). If removing access to email for outside user solves the problem, then ATUC do not see the need to make any additional changes. | At present there are no plans to stop creating mailboxes for visiting scientists. Details of new CSIRO administrative systems are being established for introduction in December 2006. We will advise ATNF users once the final details are known. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding IM, PT/VC (Skype, google talk) access for visitors. These are important tools for users and ATUC would like to see them available on the pink cables. Visitors use a variety of software types and versions (and configurations) so access from personal laptops would be preferable. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On which Narrabri computers is AIPS fully installed? ATUC would like to see this information documented. | AIPS should be available from the startup script /usr/local/bin/aips. It is working on: kaputar, pilliga-cj. Documentation for the Narrabri AIPS installation will be improved. | |
| Astrophysics | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A request was made for more information about the process for the establishment of jointly supervised PhD projects. In the past ATNF sent out a list of potential projects and supervisors to heads of university departments. It seems that this no longer happens or if it does the coverage is not as wide and the projects are now listed on a website: http://www.atnf.csiro.au/education/graduate/research.html. People did not know of the existence of this website so it needs to be better publicised. Will ATNF review the process of publicising jointly supervised PhD positions? | The ATNF approach to advertising PhD projects will be addressed by the new incoming Head of the ATNF Astrophysics Group. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ATCA on-the-fly mapping project looks interesting. ATUC would like to see a more | | |

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| <p>detailed proposal including required resources and a more detailed science case.</p> | | |
| <p>AT Time Assignment Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATUC received a number of comments regarding feedback from the TAC and although it seems the community are generally happy with the detailed feedback there are some issues about the pro-forma material. We will forward these comments to the TAC chair. | <p>The TAC considered the comments sent to the chair and the email letters sent out to users were modified to take account of these.</p> | |
| <p>National Facility Support</p> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATUC have received a number of comments and requests on the ATOA which we forward to ATNF for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I'd like to suggest that we get the ATCA data into ATOA more quickly than currently. atoa.atnf.csiro.au states that only data up to Sep 21 2005 is available. Furthermore it isn't possible to select a year in the window "observation date" which is later than 2004." "Will data be posted on ATOA immediately once the fast link is operational? I think this would be useful." "Could it be made easier to access one's own data using ATOA during the proprietary period?" "Can data from the calibrators project (C007) be made public immediately? Can other projects choose to do this voluntarily at the proposal stage, and have this propagate through the system?" | <p>The ATOA is now updated to April 2006 and the problem with the year fields has been fixed. To replace the Positions Database, effort is now being put into the ATOA to provide a summary listing from the ATOA records and to improve the data loading procedures with a view to making this more reliable and more automated. It is not yet clear whether it will be possible to fully automate the data loading but this is a worthwhile goal which will be investigated. Upgrades to the ATOA will include making it easier to access own data and some projects such as C007.</p> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ATUC member noted that he was no longer receiving a paper copy of the ATNF Newsletter. How are ATNF Newsletter subscriptions organised? Is it possible to find out if you're on the mailing list? Does an email go out announcing the new edition and if so, who is it sent to? An overseas user requested that ATNF provide information on how to travel to the observatories from parts of the country other than Sydney. Directions from Melbourne were specifically requested. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ATNF maintains an extensive contacts database and distributes each newsletter to around 800 individuals and institutions. There is no subscription fee and anyone who wishes to check whether they are listed, or be added to the list can do this by sending an email to newsletter@atnf.csiro.au. An email is sent out to a fairly local distribution list when the newsletter web version is ready. In future this will be sent to a broader user-based list. Additional travel information will be added to the web. | |
| <p>Parkes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A user requested that new bicycles be provided for users at Parkes, perhaps similar to those at Narrabri, and that the location of bicycle pumps be made obvious. | | |
| <p>Narrabri</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A user made the following request, which several ATUC members supported: "It would be great to have an air conditioning system at the Narrabri lodge which allows temperature regulation for every room separately." | <p>Plans for a new system providing a more energy efficient system and with individual room control have been drawn up but funds to implement them have not yet been identified.</p> | |