

Director's response to ATUC Report – February 2012

ATUC recommendation	Director's response	Traffic light
Commendations and successes		
<p>The ATUC gives its congratulations and applause to the ATNF staff for their successful hardware development projects at Parkes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Matrix (backend switch) • Master Control Panel • Control and Monitoring • Site UPS essential bus • standby generator replacement • high voltage infrastructure • new maser hut • HIPSR UWA/Swinburne/Oxford&CSIRO • RFI analyser <p>All these developments will strengthen the overall Parkes facility, and they will make operations more reliable and robust. This is a prerequisite for the remote observing model that is a major part of the new Parkes operations paper.</p>	Noted and thanks	
Recommendations		
1. At a future ATUC meeting an overview from engineers, perhaps in the context of a report on a design study, will be presented.	CASS is considering the feasibility of a number of receivers including those mentioned in the recommendation. ATUC will be briefed and consulted on the discussions and proposed engineering studies at the July meeting. We expect the dialog to be ongoing.	Green
2. New receivers are tested and commissioned before completely decommissioning the existing receivers.	If receivers are not scheduled for a period they will be stored. It is not our intention to completely decommission receivers until a replacement is available.	Green
3. Careful consideration is placed on the "mothballing" procedure so reviving mothballed receivers is practical.	Careful consideration will be given to storage/mothballing. However, it is possible that over time incompatibilities or maintenance difficulties may arise. We cannot guarantee that reviving any given receiver will be possible with available resources.	Yellow
4. ATNF more carefully reviews the process for deciding which receivers to mothball.	CASS will not mothball receivers at this point. For the 2012 OCT semester we have advised proposers that three receivers (HI multibeam, 10/50cm, H-OH) will be available. Other receivers will be available based on the number of receiver changes needed, support resources available, and TAC evaluation. This process will lead to some uncertainty in which receivers will be scheduled in future. Therefore, we have advised students that it may be preferable to use other facilities above 3.4 GHz for ongoing programs.	Green
5. ATNF operations will review the new Parkes receiver change policy after two semesters to determine the total savings that have resulted and update the policy accordingly.	The new arrangements at Parkes will be reviewed annually to determine whether they are an appropriate match to the available resources.	Green
6. ATNF should explore the tradeoffs between Tidbinbilla and Parkes for spectroscopy above 20 GHz	The Tidbinbilla 70m is more sensitive, but single dish time is scarce, with no control over LST ranges available. Furthermore, the 70m will be offline for 7 months' maintenance work later this year so there is a need for ongoing 20 GHz Parkes capability. However, there is a precedent for moving a Parkes proposal to Tidbinbilla in response to	Green

	receiver availability issues, and we can consider that in the future. The tradeoffs between the two instruments will be evaluated as the Tidbinbilla upgrade progresses.	
7. ATNF will request scientific evaluation of the tradeoff between different cadences for the PTA, given the same total telescope time.	We have adopted this recommendation.	Green
8. (no recommendation 8)		
9. Highly ranked Parkes proposals should have 12 month validity in case a receiver does not get on the telescope in one semester.	We have adopted this recommendation.	Green
10. To reduce the load on SO staff in the short to medium term, ATUC suggests that users with special requirements are encouraged to ensure that skilled observers are available to take responsibility for system testing and supporting their own observations as much as possible.	Teams with special requirements (e.g. LunaSKA, GMIMS) commonly already bring instrumentalists and experienced observers and we expect this to continue. We will continue to encourage this for projects requiring science and/or engineering support beyond that we can provide.	Green