

Director's response to ATUC Report – June 2013

ATUC Recommendation	Director's Response	Traffic Light
Commendations and successes		
<p>ATUC wishes to commend ATNF on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● dramatic progress on ASKAP hardware and software, notably building construction and the first three-field, three-PAF map, ● establishment of the Marsfield Science Operations Centre, ● new opportunities for remote observing with the Parkes Telescope, ● submission of proposals for SKA work packages that put CSIRO in a leadership position internationally on several critical technologies, ● successful resumption of observations with the Mopra telescope after the January 2013 fires, and ● successful negotiation of external funding agreements which enable 30% open-access time for Mopra observations 	<p>Thank you.</p>	
Recommendation and Discussion		
1. External Funding for ATNF Facilities		
<p>a. The ATUC requests that the wider user community be provided with sufficient notice of any decision [to seek external funding from 2015]. We further request that a document outlining CASS management's vision for external funding be circulated.</p>	<p>We do not currently expect to be seeking any additional external funding for the period up to 30 June 2015. During the next year, and in consultation with the community, a longer-term strategy will be developed. The principles CASS proposes to use have already been described at the ASA ATNF community meeting in July and will be further discussed with the community over the coming months. Circulation of a document is not planned at this time.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>

2. ASKAP		
Early Science Proposal		
a. It is particularly important that completion of the Survey Science Projects (SSPs) is not compromised by an external funding agreement for ASKAP. ATUC seeks assurance from CASS that this will not be the case. ATUC suggests that this be included in a more general policy on external funding agreements for ATNF facilities (see previous recommendation)	In circumstances where changes to the open availability of ASKAP is necessary CASS will seek to retain 75% of time for the first 5 years for the Science Survey Projects, and to retain the open membership model for Science Survey Teams. While we cannot guarantee the arrangement until operational funding is in place for the entire period, prospects now look promising.	Yellow
b. The optimum science programme for a 12-antenna ASKAP array may be quite different from that for the 36-antenna array. Consideration should be made of projects that might have great scientific potential for a reduced array, but lie outside Wallaby/Emu science goals.	The early science workshop explored these issues and strong consideration is being given to an observational program that extends the ASKAP-36 science goals.	Green
c. We propose that all antennas (including BETA antennas) should be considered for possible use in the early science (12 MKII PAF) array to maximize science outcomes.	This has been considered carefully. However, ASKAP-12 will not include the BETA antennas. Learning how to form stable beams, calibrate and image using BETA is an absolutely vital part of the ASKAP program. We will not compromise this test-bed for short-term gains in sensitivity and u-v coverage. Rather, we strongly believe that the science outcomes of ASKAP will be predicated on the lessons learned by our team conducting tests with BETA.	Green/ Red
d. Alternative configurations optimised at several declinations should be considered, that would greatly improve UV coverage at both short and intermediate baselines.	When simulating the configuration of ASKAP-12 sources at a wide range of declinations were considered.	Green
Impact of SKA		
e. ATUC recommends that ATNF have a public strategy in place to minimise the disruption to ASKAP completion, commissioning and operations.	Under the current schedule SKA construction is to begin in 2019. Negotiations on SKA hosting are well underway. CSIRO's position is that it should continue to operate ASKAP as a stand-	Green

<p>At the last meeting we asked for more clarity on the SKA timelines with regards to impact on ASKAP – have the timelines become more clear since then?</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>f. [Proposed monthly newsletter]. We strongly encourage such a newsletter to keep all ASKAP scientists informed.</p> <p>g. ATUC suggests that the early science proposal should be more widely distributed to the general astronomy community (e.g. via the ASA exploder).</p> <p>h. [Reliance on communications for PIs]. ATUC requests that the ATNF supply regular communication with the scientific community, of a realistic nature.</p>	<p>alone facility and to maximize its science impact until SKA1-survey offers a substantially improved capability. We will continue to keep ATUC informed.</p> <p>The ‘ASKAP Commissioning Update’ is an informal newsletter update sent to astronomers. For the past two editions we have expanded the distribution of the update, which now goes to over 3000 e-mail addresses, gathered from the OPAL database. The update is also available on the ASKAP commissioning update webpage: http://www.atnf.csiro.au/projects/askap/commissioning_update.html</p> <p>The early science program was released publicly via the ASA exploder and on the ASKAP web page on 15 September 2013.</p> <p>The scientific community receives regular updates at the open ASKAP WG4b meetings (every 8 weeks) and via the ASKAP Commissioning Updates (every 4-6 weeks). CSIRO produces an ASKAP newsletter aimed at a broader audience and PIs of the SSTs also receive updates at the ASKAP co-ordination and management meetings every 3 months. We welcome specific comments on how these could be improved.</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Green</p> <p>Green</p>
<p>3. Parkes</p>		
<p>a. We recommend that the process should begin with straw-man specifications and costings for all three receivers being provided by the ATNF engineering group.</p> <p>b. In parallel, members of the user community with scientific interests in each of the three receiving systems should prepare coordinated whitepaper reports to justify building their preferred receiver first.</p>	<p>CASS will give an update on this work at the December meeting; but has limited resources to devote to the task.</p> <p>We are aware that ATUC has organised this step, and support this initiative.</p>	<p>Yellow</p> <p>Green</p>

<p>c. At a public science-day discussion, coordinated with the next ATUC meeting, each group will present their case.</p>	<p>CASS is supporting the meeting, organised by ATUC.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Remote Observations with the Parkes Telescope</p>		
<p>d. The users request regular updates on the status of the project (and future projects of this nature from all of the ATNF facilities)</p>	<p>Parkes users have been provided with updates by email, and in information provided with the release of the schedule for next semester. We will also continue to provide updates in the ATNF newsletters and at ATUC meetings</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>e. As requested in the October 2012 ATUC report (and promised for the June 2013 meeting), the users would appreciate clarification on the remote observations policy, and observer training and support, as it is fully developed.</p>	<p>Now that the normal place for Parkes observing is the Marsfield SOC, remote observers will remain qualified by observing from the SOC (or Parkes) at least annually. Further information on remote observing policy, training and support is given in the Parkes user guide: http://www.parkes.atnf.csiro.au/observing/documentation/user_guide/</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>f. At future meetings, ATUC would appreciate updates on telescope efficiency in the remote observation era. In the event of a decrease of efficiency, ATUC recommends that discretionary time be allocated to enable re-scheduling of time lost by high-priority projects.</p>	<p>Such a report will be provided at the next meeting; if relevant, mitigations will be considered.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Parkes Spectral-Line Observations</p>		
<p>g. ATUC requests that priority be given to developing high spectral resolution modes on HIPSr as a replacement of MBCORR.</p>	<p>Efforts are underway to identify the resources and expertise required for this task, as the personnel from UWA that made a start on this are no longer available.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>
<p>4. Australia Telescope Compact Array</p>		
<p>a. ATUC requests that the ATNF completes the 4 MHz zoom band modes with CABB.</p>	<p>Operational testing of the 16MHz modes will commence during the first half of 2014. A detailed assessment of the additional work required to deliver the 4MHz zoom modes will then be carried out. A decision on whether to proceed with the 4MHz modes will be made on the basis of that</p>	<p>Yellow</p>

<p>b. [Water vapour radiometers]. The ATUC is concerned that general millimetre observers are not aware of this capability and suggest that the existence of the WVRs and instructions regarding their use be communicated to the millimetre observing community.</p> <p>c. We also see a need for a more rigorous training procedure for DAs. In particular we recommend that there should be a dedicated DA training manual that contains all of the up-to-date information that DAs are required to know.</p>	<p>assessment and the priority of alternative work on improving CABB reliability and implementing other CABB modes such as high-bandwidth tied array, high time resolution. ATUC will be consulted in the making of this decision.</p> <p>Information about the WVRs is available on the ATCA Current Issues web page; a dedicated WVR web page will be in place shortly. Users will also see the system availability when they review the “Current Status” web page that is part of the next call for proposals.</p> <p>The DA web pages include a comprehensive checklist that documents what we expect and links to relevant information that we strive to keep up to date. A lot of this information is dynamic so this web page (combined with the users' guide) is our "manual". We do not believe it would be the best use of resources to duplicate this in a distinct training manual. Our analysis is that people learn best from experience and so we will continue to devote effort to this, and to regularly review and seek to improve our training and documentation.</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Red</p>
--	--	-------------------------