



Project Support Astronomer Concept

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Background and Motivation

Different modes of observing support for National Facilities

- Parkes – project expert
- ATCA – Duty Astronomer
- LBA – mostly S&A staff led, observers do basic monitoring

Reviews and feedback -> need to change

- Increased remote observing and support
- Decrease in DA, Parkes project expert pool



Refresh of National Facility Observing Support

- Part of ATNF Science Strategy, recommended by ATSC
- Discussions have been ongoing for several years
- Gained momentum this year
 - SWOT analysis, May 2021
 - Focus groups, May+
 - Input from many S&A staff, postdocs and students
 - Opportunities for ATUC to contribute
- Led to **Project Support Astronomer model**



Project Support Astronomer Concept

Common scheme for
Parkes, ATCA and LBA

Project based, instead
of time based (DA)

The individual acts as
support similar to DA

Students, postdocs and
staff (inc. external) can
be involved

- Must be trained and certified



Project Support Astronomer Concept

- Individuals will be trained to be added to the database of Project Support Scientists
- Projects/proposals have the option to nominate someone from within their team (who has or will attend training prior to the semester) **or** request an observatory Project Support Astronomer at the time of proposal submission.
- The observatory Project Support Astronomer is allocated after the TAC process, for successful projects.
- In the short term, expected level of support is like current project expert and DA. (For LBA expect basic troubleshooting only)



Project Support Astronomer Trial Implementation



A few projects in 2021OCT semester (say in Feb or Mar 2022)



A longer period, e.g. month in 2022APR



Switchover in 2022OCT (?)



Test handover and interactions between staff and observers, refine the model



Summary

- Project based observing support to be rolled out over next year
- Single model for Parkes, ATCA and LBA
- Now looking at implementation, the actual how and details

- Feedback and comments from ATUC crucial