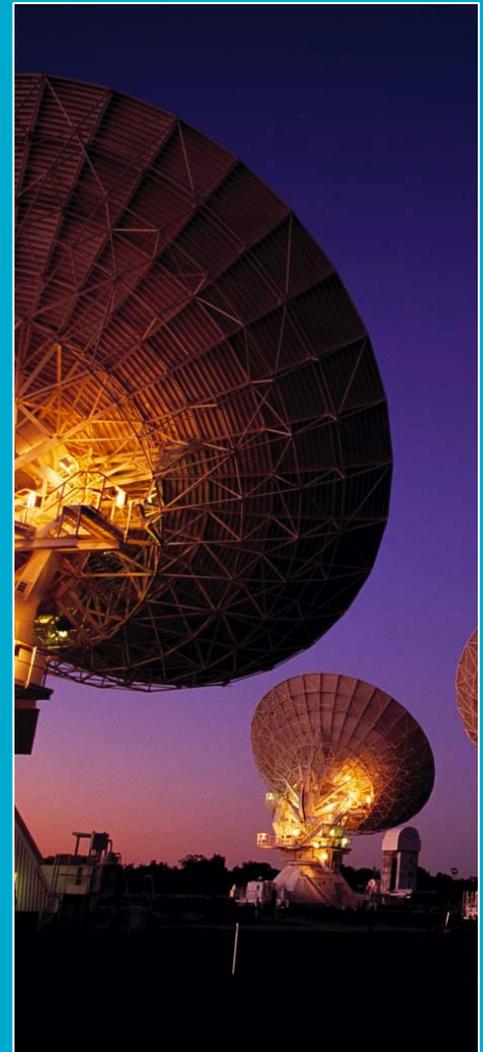




National Facility Support Model Update

Jo Dawson + George Heald | 28/03/2023

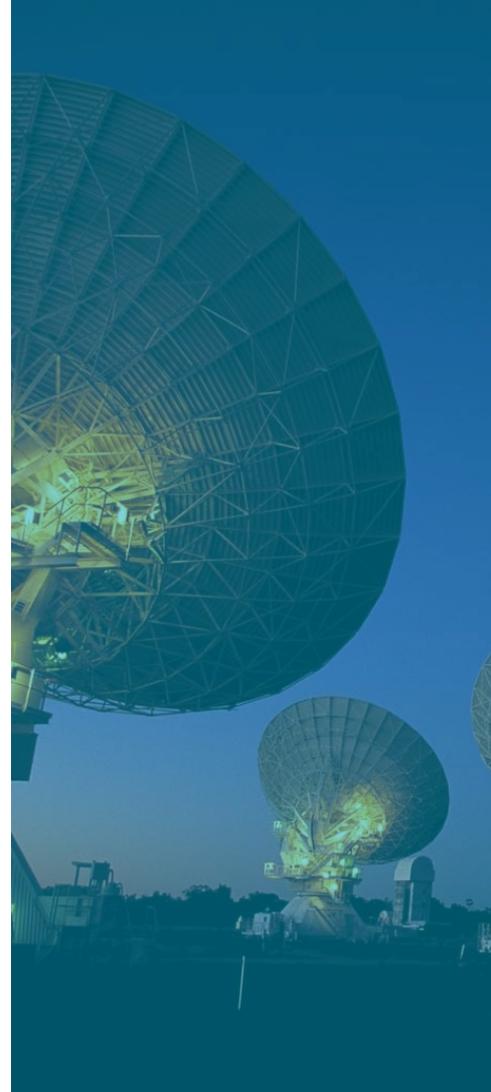
Australia's National Science Agency





Observing Support from APRS2023

- **Project-based** observing support provided by a designated **Observing Expert (OE)** with high-level knowledge of the instrument & project-specific requirements
- Unified system for **ATCA, Parkes** (**LBA** is business as usual this semester).





The Observing Expert (OE) Role

OEs are self-nominated members of project teams OR assigned ATNF staff members

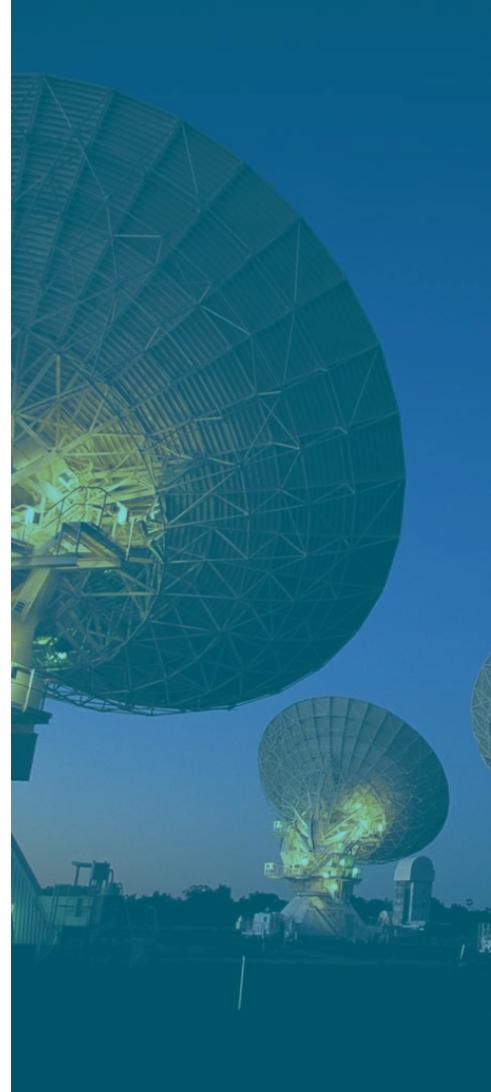
- Part of National Facility support duties for ATNF staff

OEs are experienced observers who have been trained and certified by the National Facility for the role

Project based allocation ensures OEs have experience in the relevant modes/science

Minimum support provided by the scheme is to ensure the telescope is functioning such that it can produce science-ready data

OE role can be undertaken from any location with an internet connection.





Expectations of the OE

<https://www.atnf.csiro.au/content/observing-expert-role-responsibilities>

First point of contact for observing issues, assisting, resolving or escalating as appropriate.

Available and contactable for the duration of the team's observing

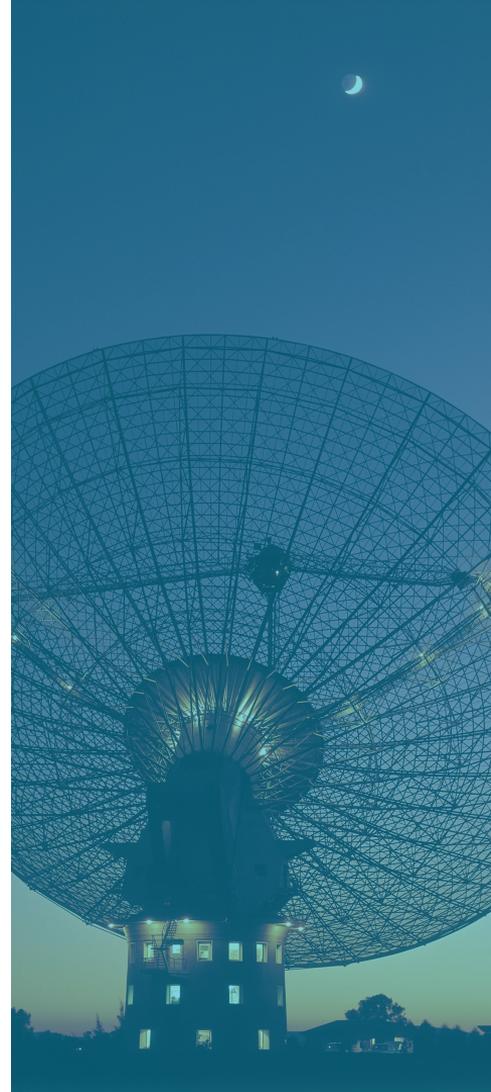
- Exceptions possible for projects with own internal support mechanisms

Discusses project expectations, strategies and requirements with PIs

Assists with planning, scheduling & observing start-up as required

- Some exceptions for LBA, at least initially

Transfers project-specific skills to observers (i.e. advanced, mode-specific aspects not covered in general training)





APRS2023 MVP Rollout

Staged rollout starting with “Minimum Viable Product”

OE replaces DA & Project Expert for all projects

- But LBA mostly “business as usual” this semester

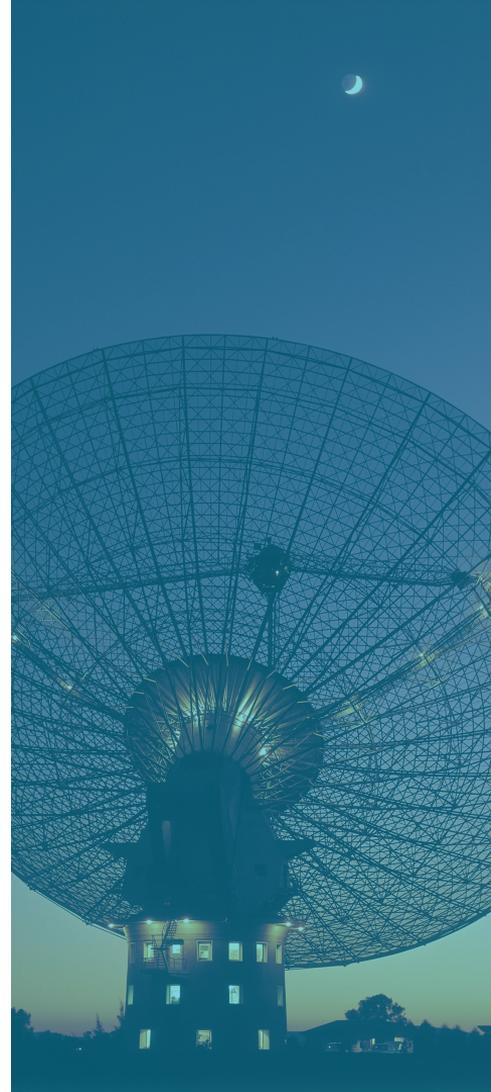
OEs limited to those with existing expert-level knowledge

- Mitigate training burden while programme under development
- Teams self-nominate or request ATNF support in OPAL

ATNF OE allocation performed manually

Information gathering a key aspect of this first run

- Assess demand & resourcing implications
- Prepared to adapt in an agile way





Training & Certification

Basic observer training (e.g. portal usage)

- Provided by observatories
- Development of online training programme → move away from human training

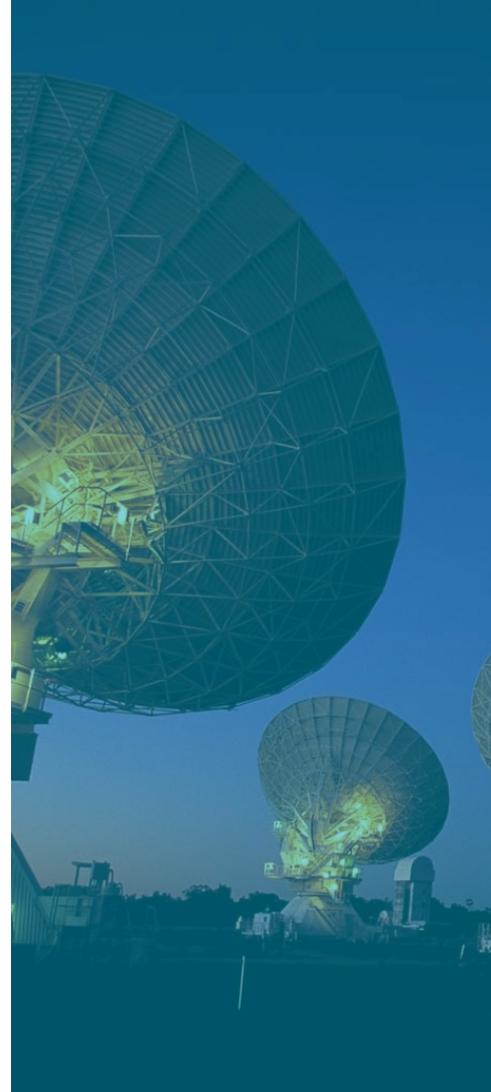
Advanced / mode-specific observer training

- Provided by observatories
- Provided by OEs (expert knowledge transfer)
- Relationship/boundary between these TBD

OE certification & training

- OE training & certification by ATNF
- Details TBD, under active development

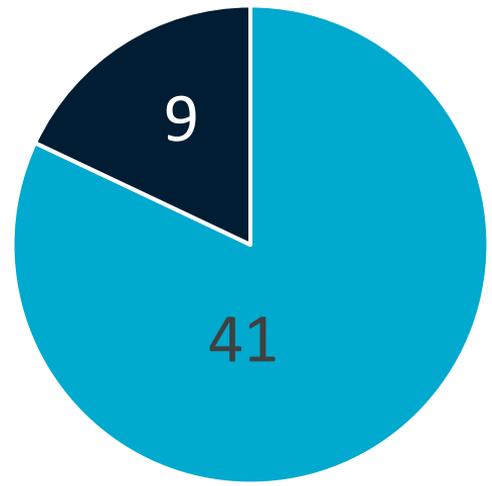
Significant resourcing implications for investment in training programme development → planned allocation of FTE



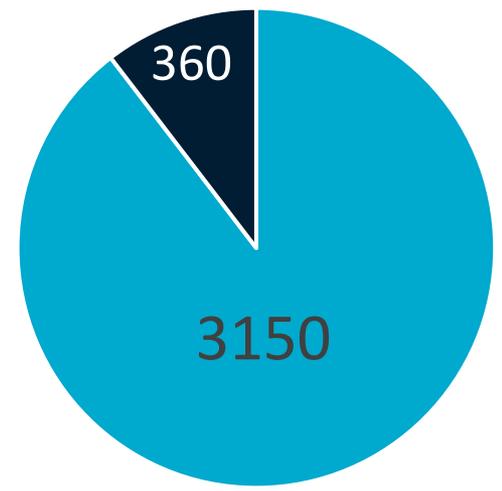


APRS2023: Requests for ATNF OEs

ATCA (by project)



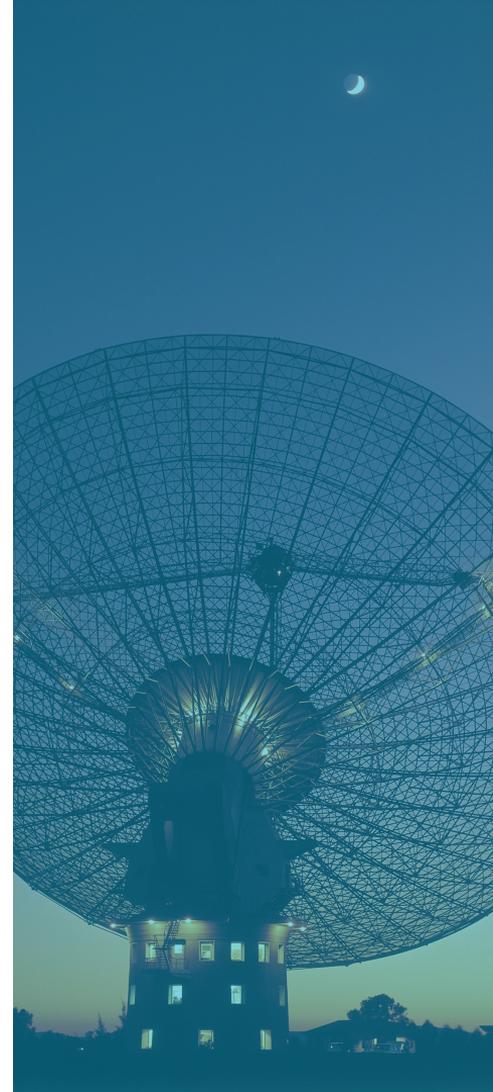
ATCA (by hours)



- Self-supporting
- ATNF OE

* 6/9 projects are NAPAs

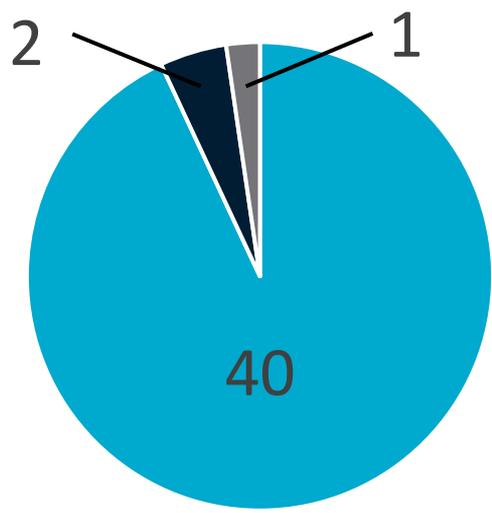
Note: charts only include projects awarded time



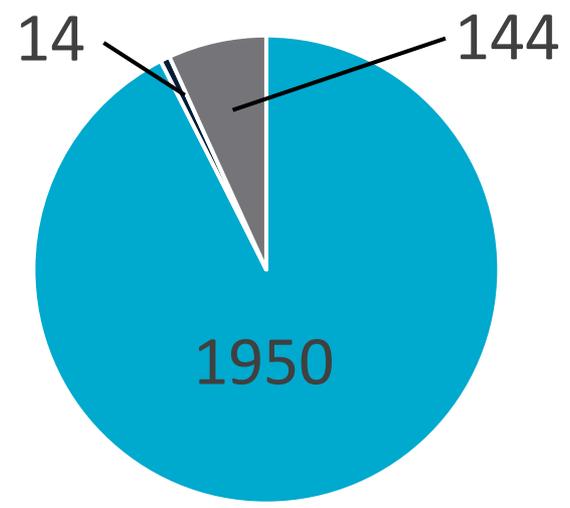


APRS2023: Requests for ATNF OEs

Parkes (by project)

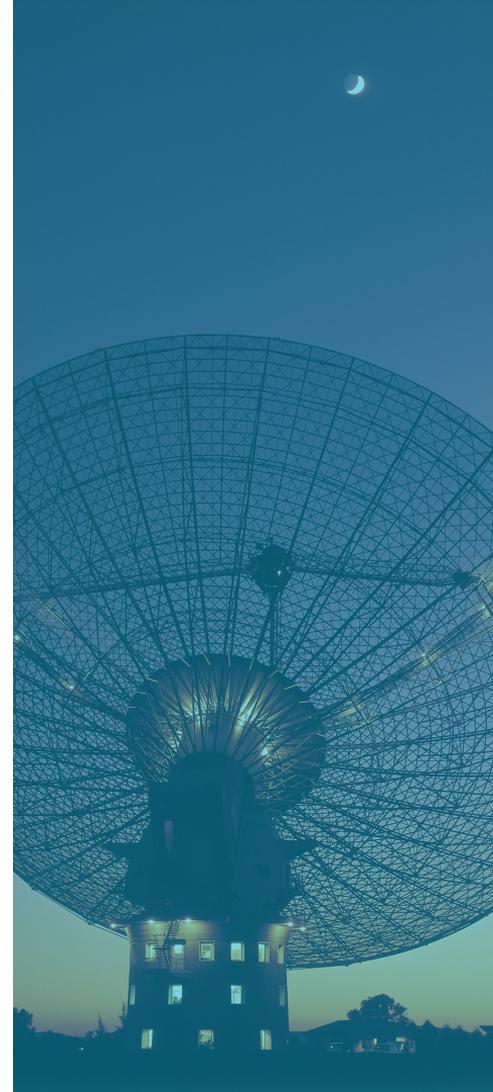


Parkes (by hours)



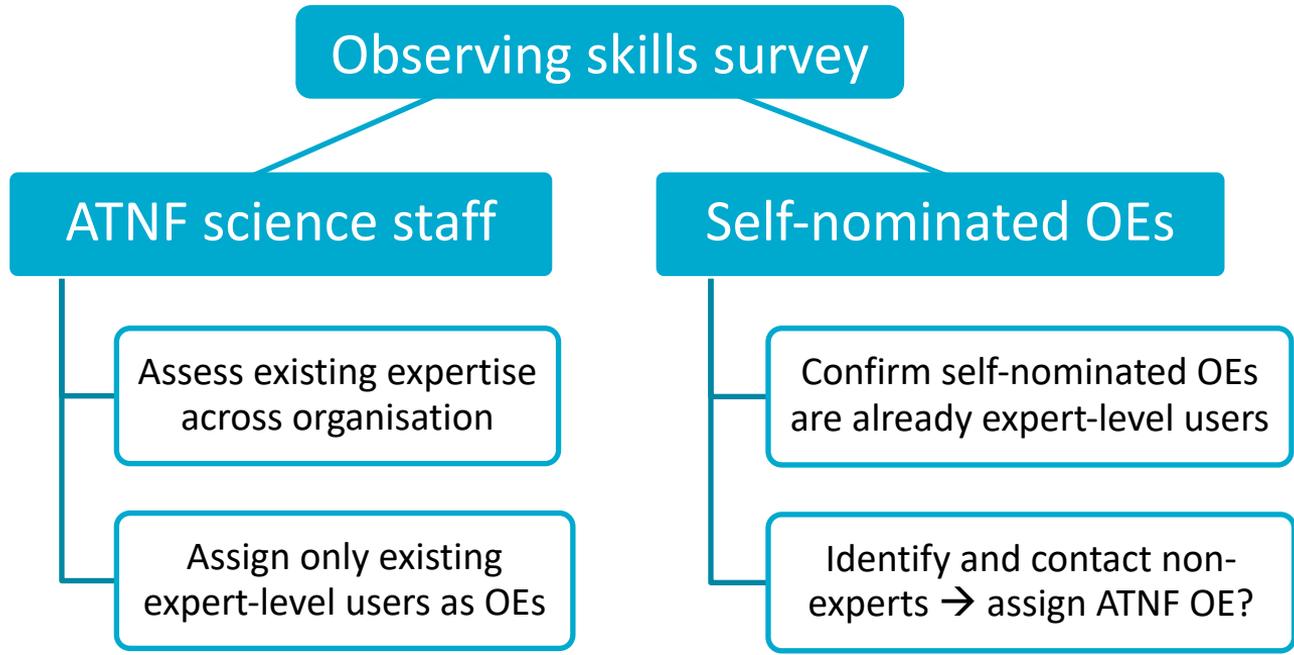
- Self-supporting
- ATNF OE
- Paid time (ATNF OE)

Note: charts only include projects awarded time

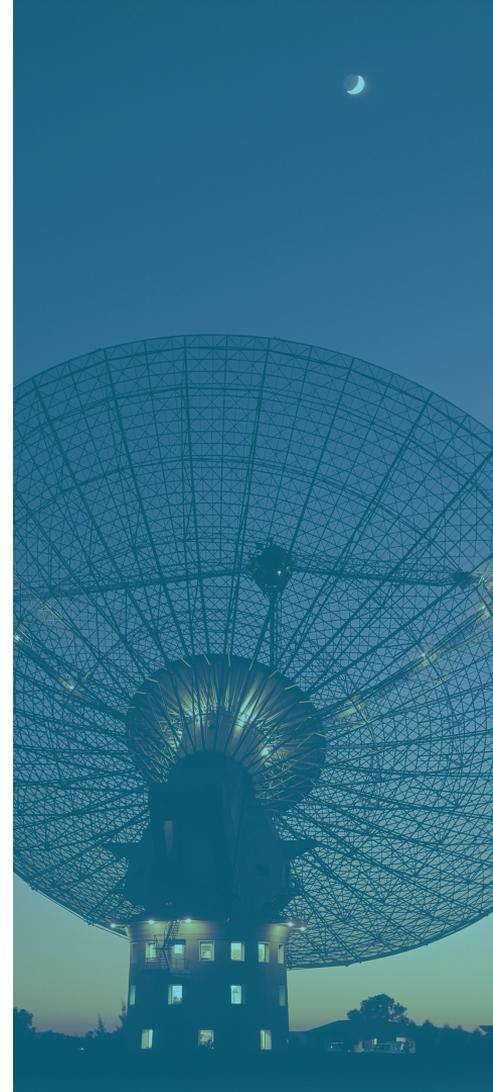




APRS2023: OE skills & refresher training



Findings: OE skill level is generally very high (as required for this semester) → **Minimalist OE refresher training in APRS2023**, administered via short one-to-one call with observatory staff.





APRS2023: Logistics

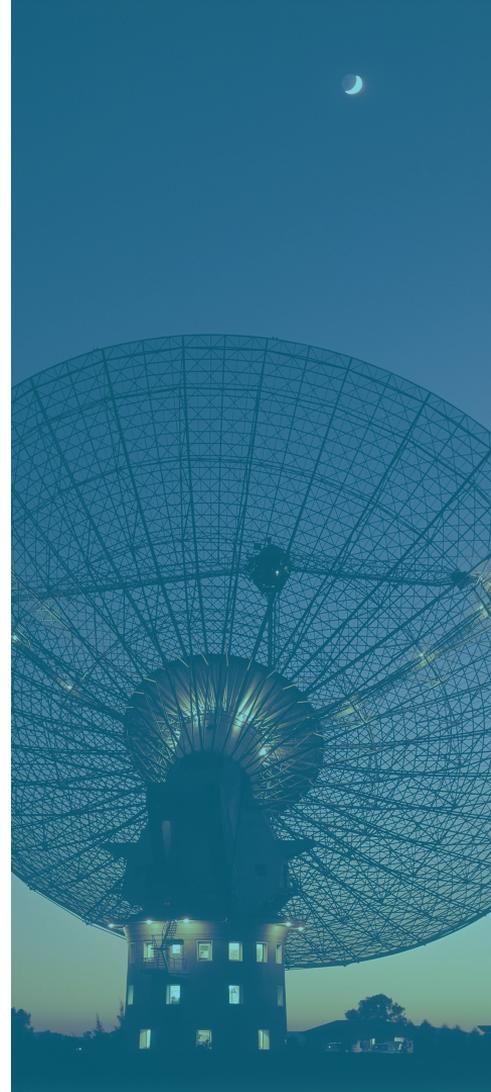
OEs provide up-to-date contact details to PORTAL at start of semester

OEs are auto-registered by the PORTAL on commencement of observing block. (Manual registration can override automatic.)

Call-forwarding enabled to OE's registered phone number

Trial Mattermost for flexible communication in addition to PORTAL

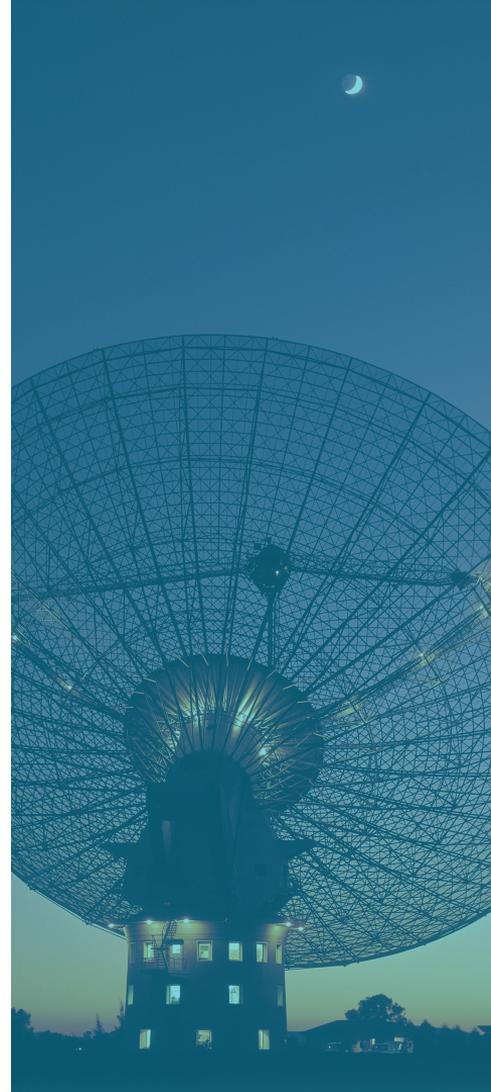
- Facilitates asynchronous messaging between teams/OEs/other projects/telescope staff, DMs, multiple channels...
- May not work well, needs observer buy-in.





APRS2023: NAPA support

- ATNF-supported NAPAs have a lead OE plus backup pool of “on-call” OEs
- Lead OE responsible for all pre-observing support
- Upon NAPA trigger, lead OE is contacted. If they are unable to support the observing block, the back-up OEs are contacted one by one until support is secured.
- Initial rollout will use email (likely fine for all-but rapid-response NAPAs)
- Potential to trial Y/N SMS system.





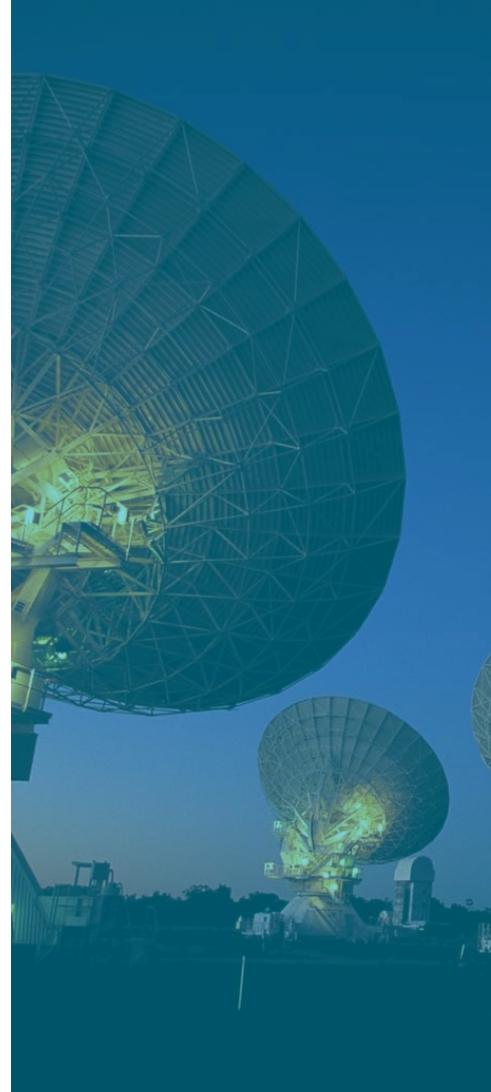
Observer training status

Basic observer training

- Continue movement towards fully-online training
- Interim solution standardised for ATCA + Parkes
- Offline reading + video content followed by live Q&A with observatory staff
- Live sessions 2x per month in different time slots
- Required for new users, optional for previous users

OE certification & training

- Eventually OEs will be able to receive formal training & certification for the role from ATNF
- Details TBD, still under active development





OCTS2023 & Beyond

Nov-Dec
2022

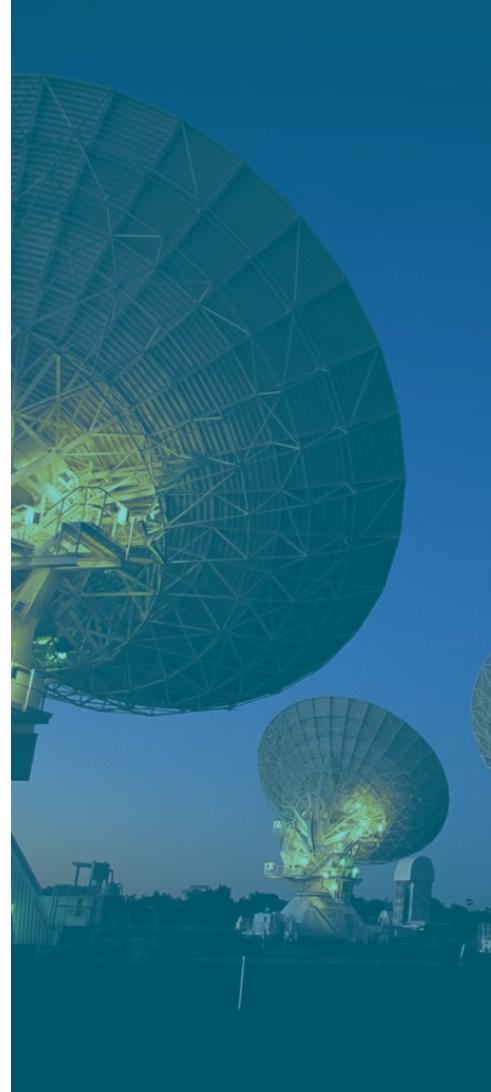
- ✓ OPAL coversheet updates
- ✓ Communication to community + website updates
- ✓ User & staff surveys to assess skills and competencies, identify resourcing gaps

Jan-Apr 2023

- ✓ After TAC outcomes: Assess required resources, identify ATNF OEs
- ✓ PI OE competencies/skills check → potential reallocation
- ✓ Online training materials development (ongoing)
- ✓ OE refresher training & certification (ongoing)

Apr 2023+

- **MVP implementation**
- **Ongoing iteration & assessment – keep improving!**
- **Implement learnings for OCTS2023 call**
- **Focus on observer/OE training programme development**





Thank you

Special thanks to S&A team who have contributed to APRS2023 implementation:

Stacy Mader, Vanessa Moss, Chris Phillips, Jane Kaczmarek, Jamie Stevens, John Sarkissian

Jimi Green, Minh Hunhe, Phil Edwards, George Heald, George Hobbs, Rob Hollow, Aidan Hotan, Liz Mahony, Cormac Reynolds, Elaine Sadler, Nithya Thyagararajan, Matt Whiting, Ivy Wong

