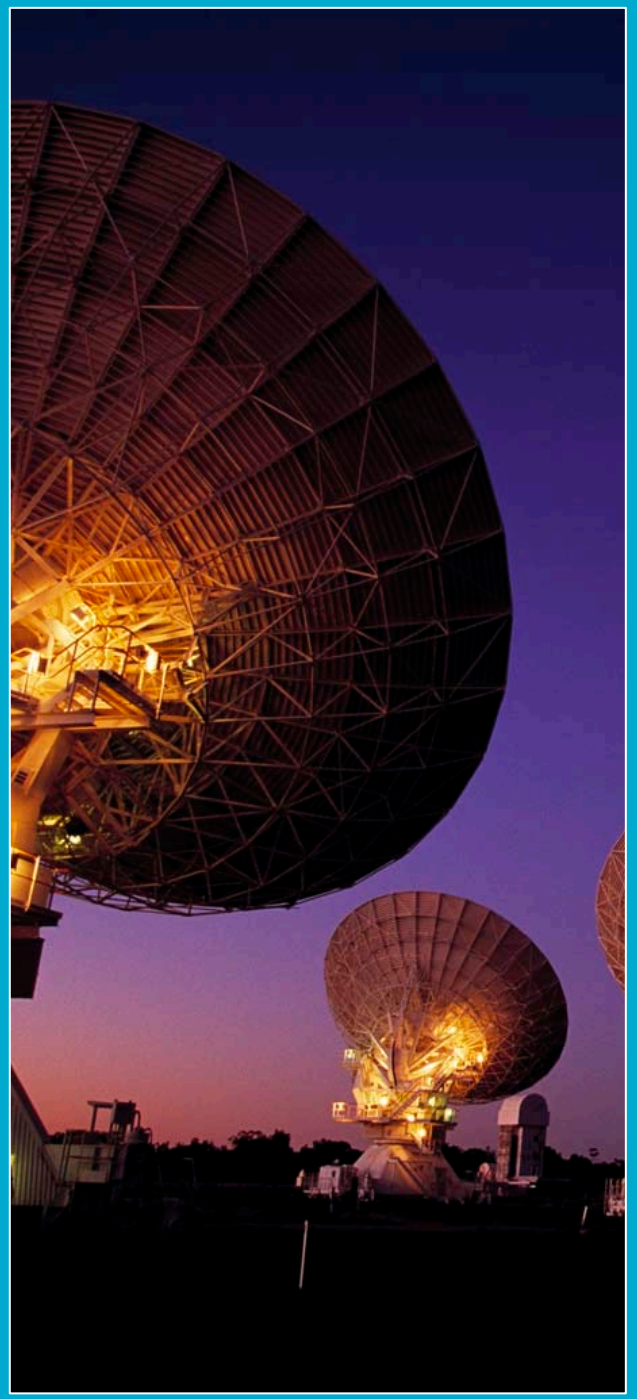
National Facility Support Model Update

Jo Dawson | 23/10/2023



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** requires more intensive ATNF staff support still, outside of the OE system).

The Vision for the OE Role

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

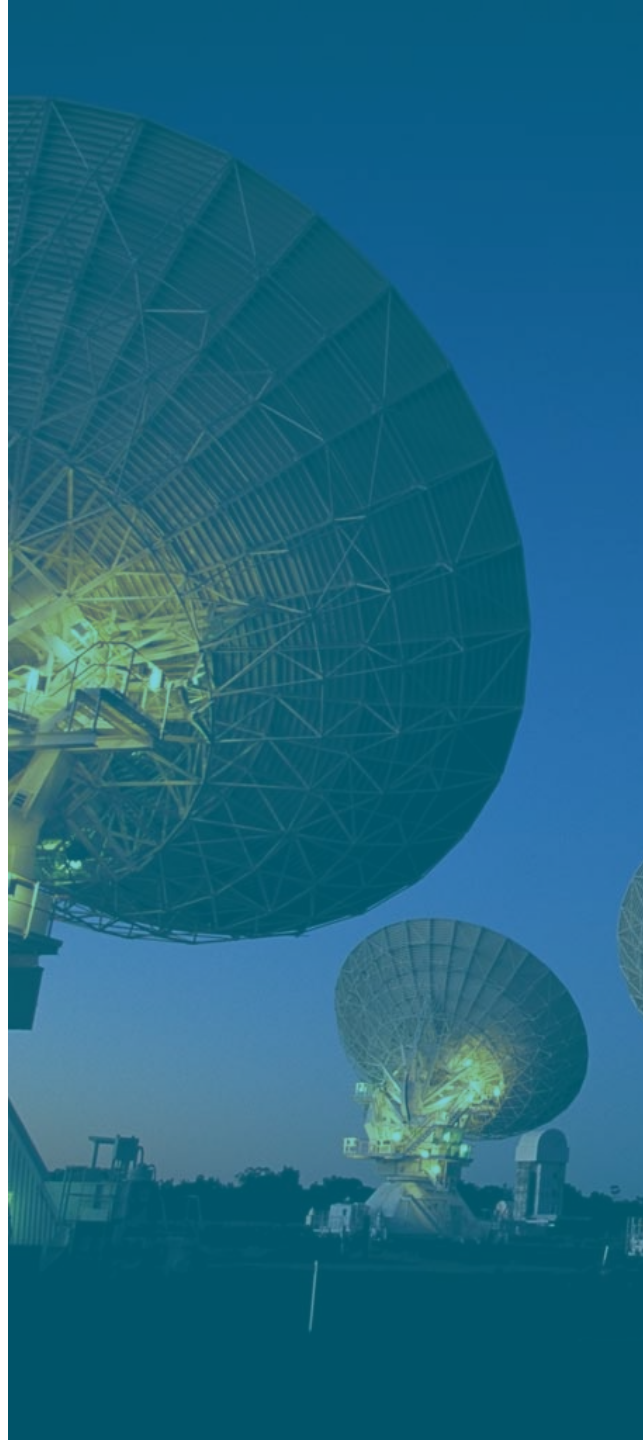
- Part of National Facility support duties for ATNF staff

OEs are trained and certified by the National Facility

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

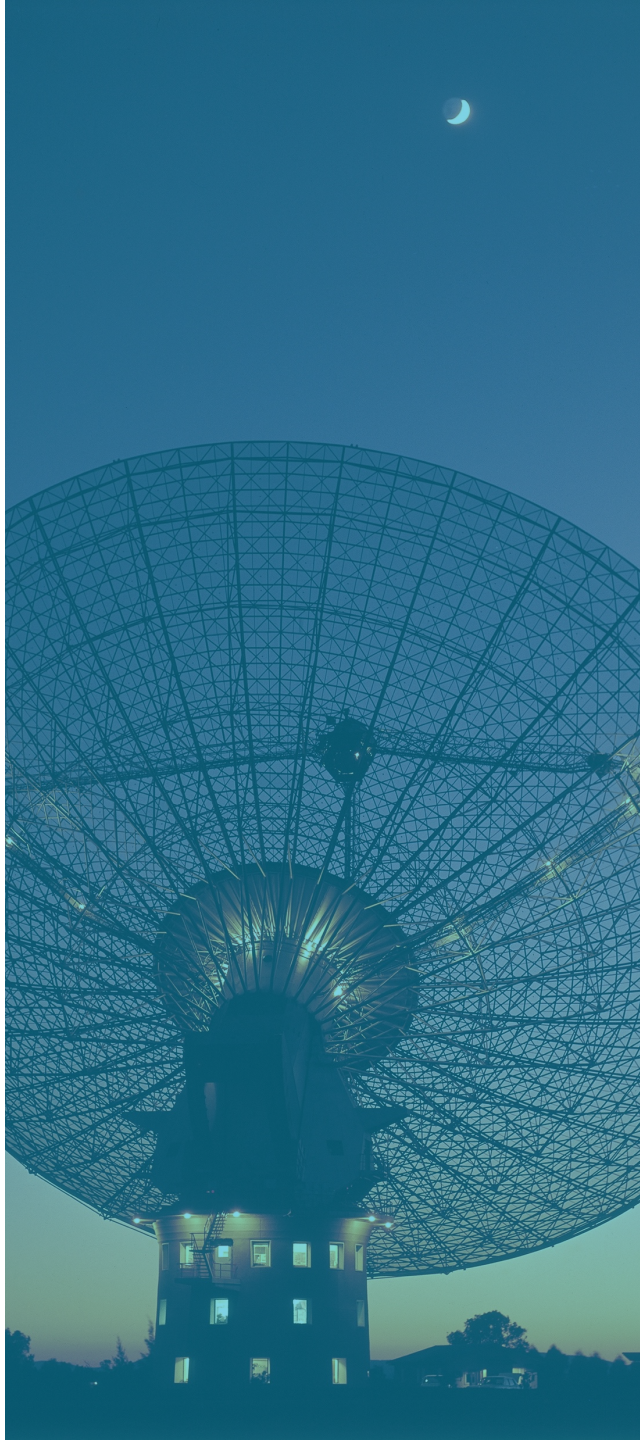
OE role can be undertaken from any location with an internet connection.



Expectations of the OE

- First point of contact for observing issues, assisting, resolving or escalating as appropriate.
- Available and contactable for the duration of the team's observing
- Discusses project expectations, strategies and requirements with PIs
- Assists with planning, scheduling & observing start-up as required
- Transfers project-specific skills to observers (i.e. advanced, mode-specific aspects not covered in general training)

Detailed role outline: https://www.atnf.csiro.au/content/observing-expert-role-responsibilities



Initial Rollout (APRS2023+)

Staged rollout starting with “Minimum Viable Product”

OE replaces DA/Project Expert for all ATCA/Parkes projects

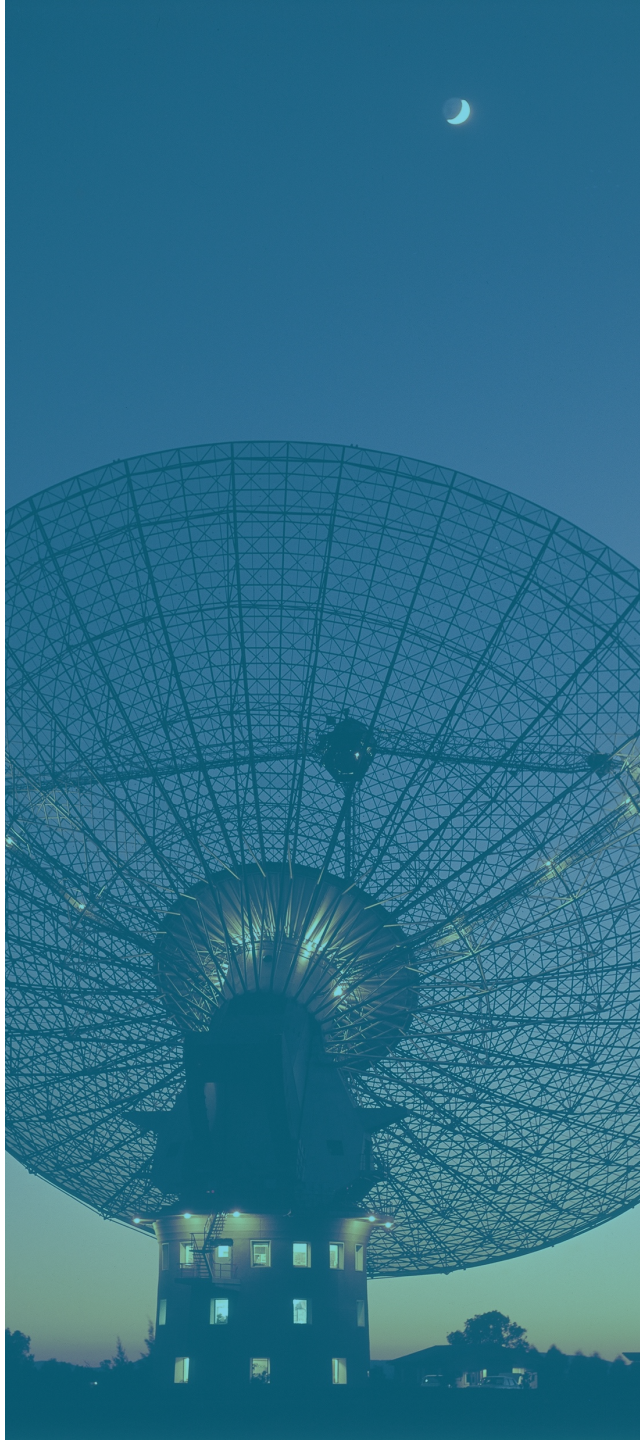
OEs limited to those with existing expert-level knowledge

- 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 year

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



Oct 2023 Status Summary

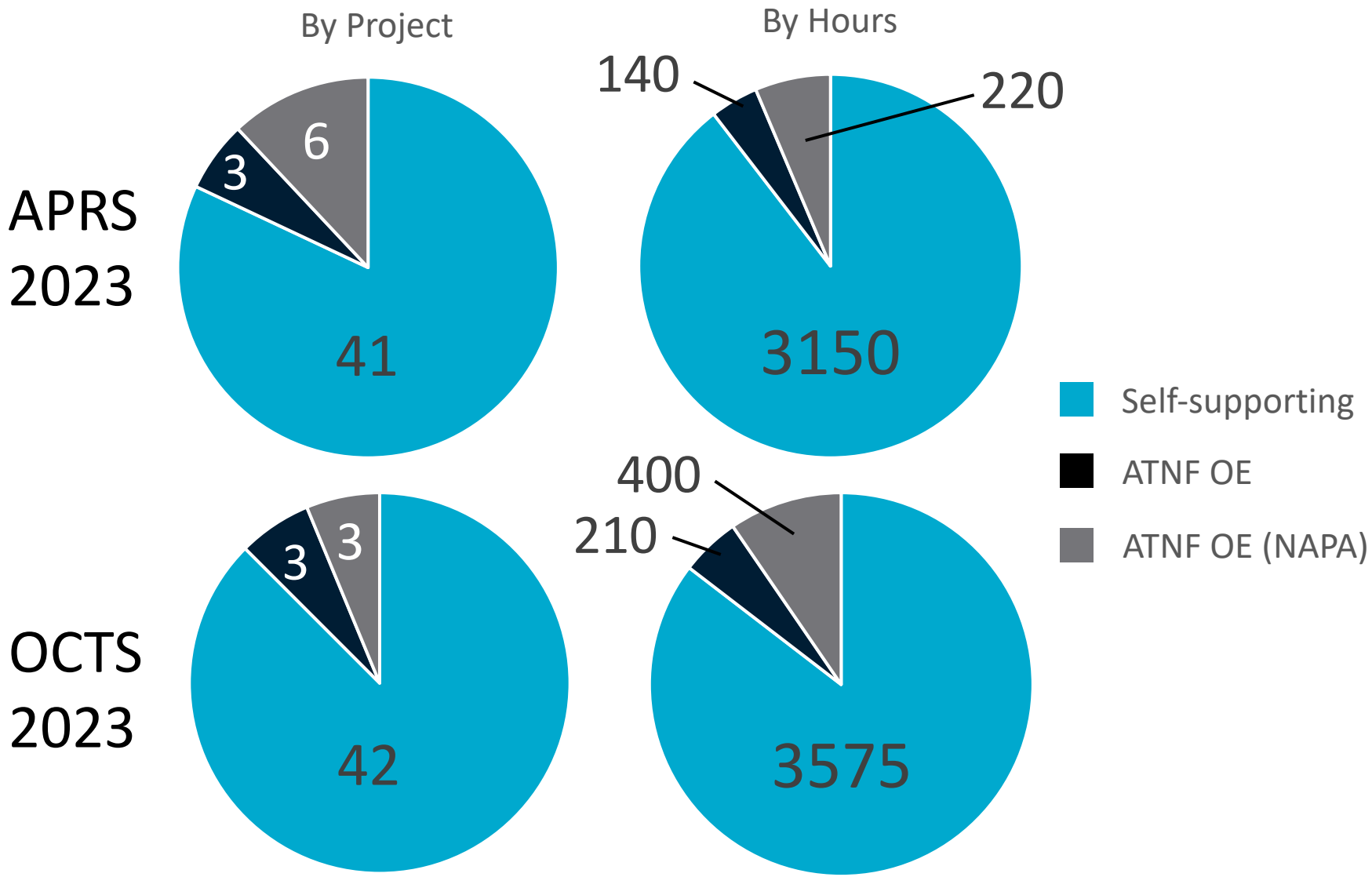
In place:

- ✓ OPAL functionality for OE selection
- ✓ Basic PORTAL functionality (OE registration, reminders, call forwarding…)
- ✓ Manual assigning of ATNF OEs to projects
- ✓ Documentation developed and on public-facing webpages
- ✓ Email communications to OEs and observers
- ✓ Regular surveys: OE skills survey, observer & OE feedback surveys

Yet to properly think about:

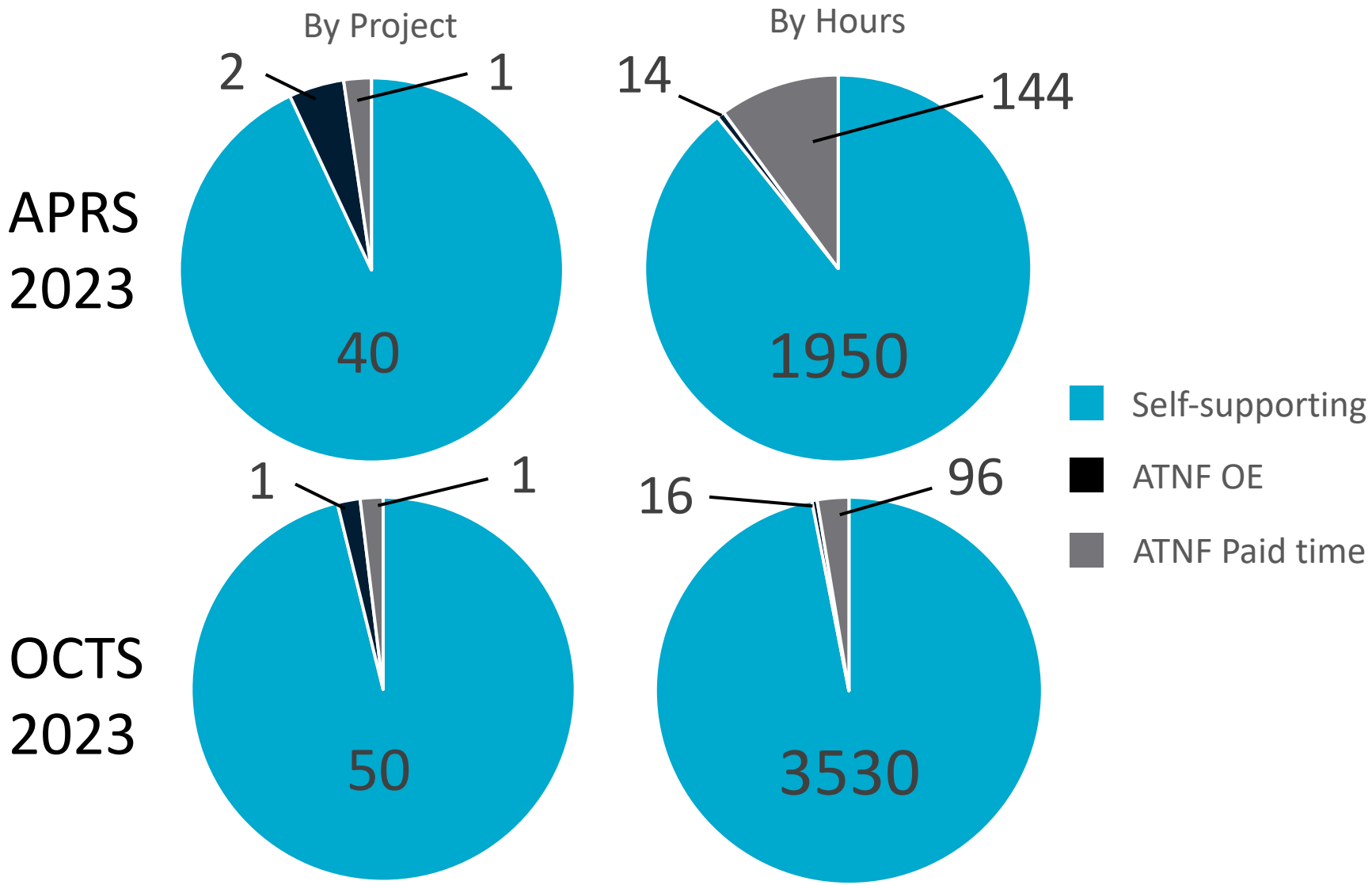
- How to integrate LBA properly
- Certification/training of new OEs

Requests for ATNF OEs (ATCA)



* Charts only include projects awarded time

Requests for ATNF OEs (Parkes)



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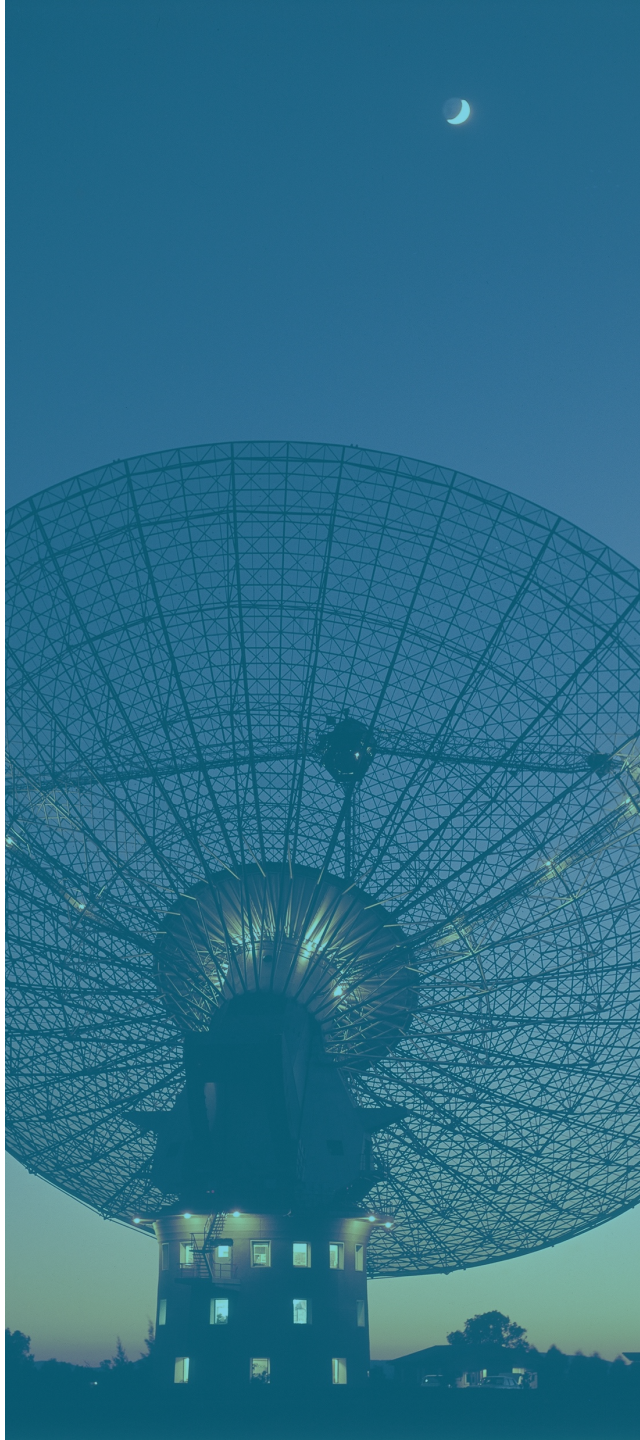

Training & Certification

Basic observer training	• Provided by observatories • Fully online training programme under development
Advanced / mode-specific observer training	• Some provided by observatories • Provided by OEs (expert knowledge transfer)
OE certification & training	• OE training & certification by ATNF • Details TBD

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

Training: Current Status

Basic observer training

- **ATCA interim solution:** offline reading + video content followed by live Q&A with observatory staff
- **Parkes interim solution:** live training but aiming to match ATCA soon.
- Live sessions 2x per month in different time slots
- Required for new users, optional for previous users
- Development of online modules progressing slowly (FTE limited)

Advanced observer training

- OEs are disseminating advanced knowledge

OE Training & Certification

OE certification & training

- OEs to receive formal training & certification from ATNF
- Details TBD
- OE training pathway must allow for developing new OEs within the community

March 2023 ATUC report:

"ATNF to create a transparent training pathway/structured body of training materials for developing new OEs within the community."

Thank you

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

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