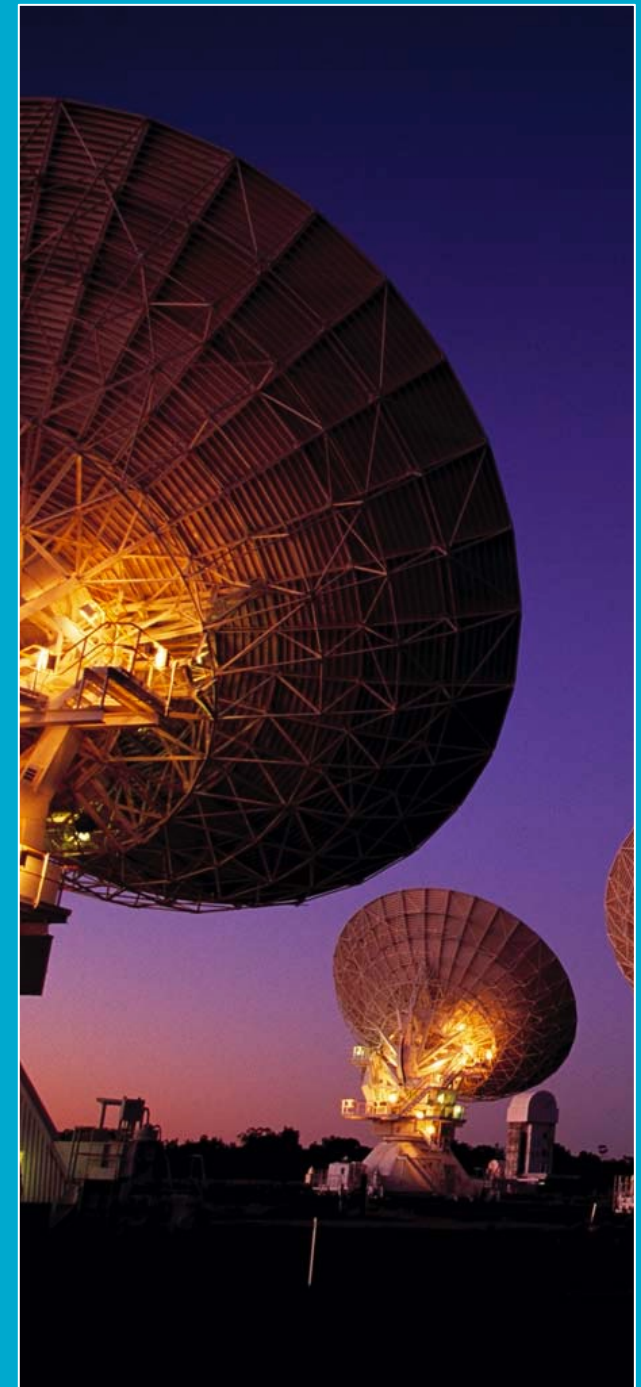




# National Facility Support Model Update

Jo Dawson | 10/04/2024

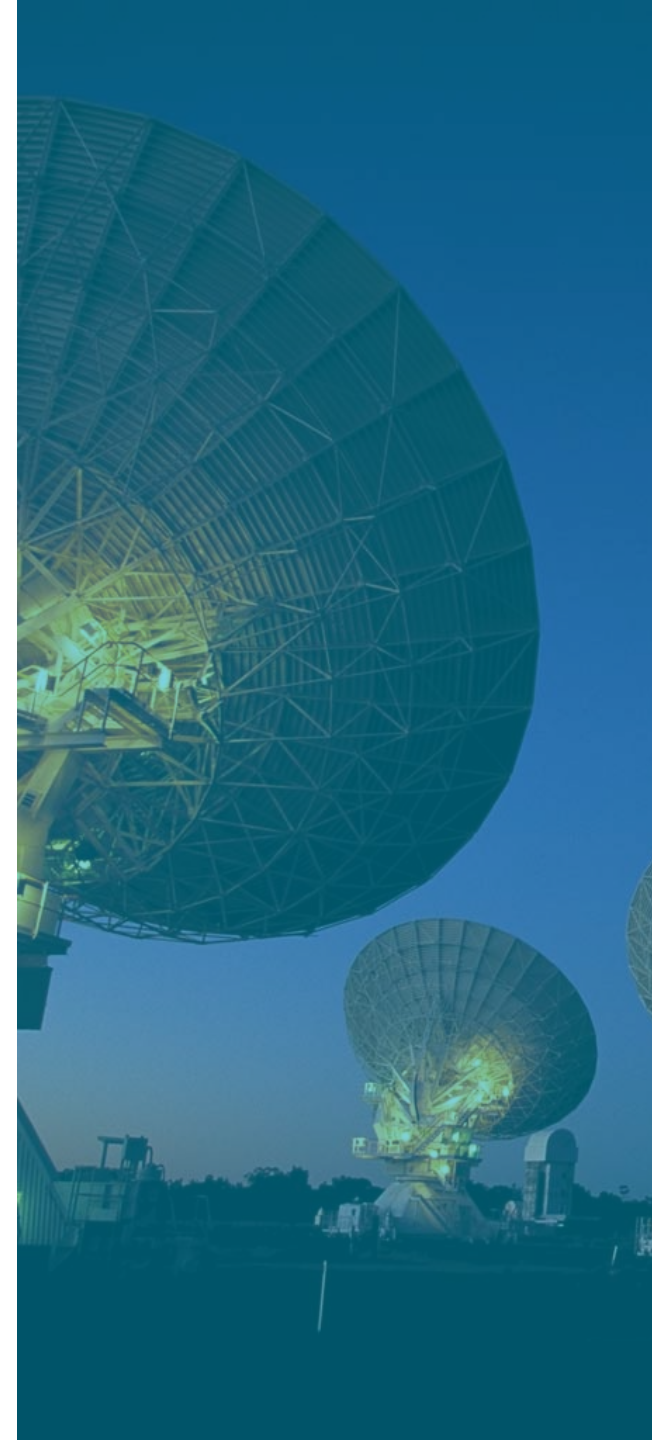
Australia's National Science Agency





# Observing Support from 2023APRS

- **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** uses different observing model, so OE role differs somewhat).





# Overview of 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 & 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

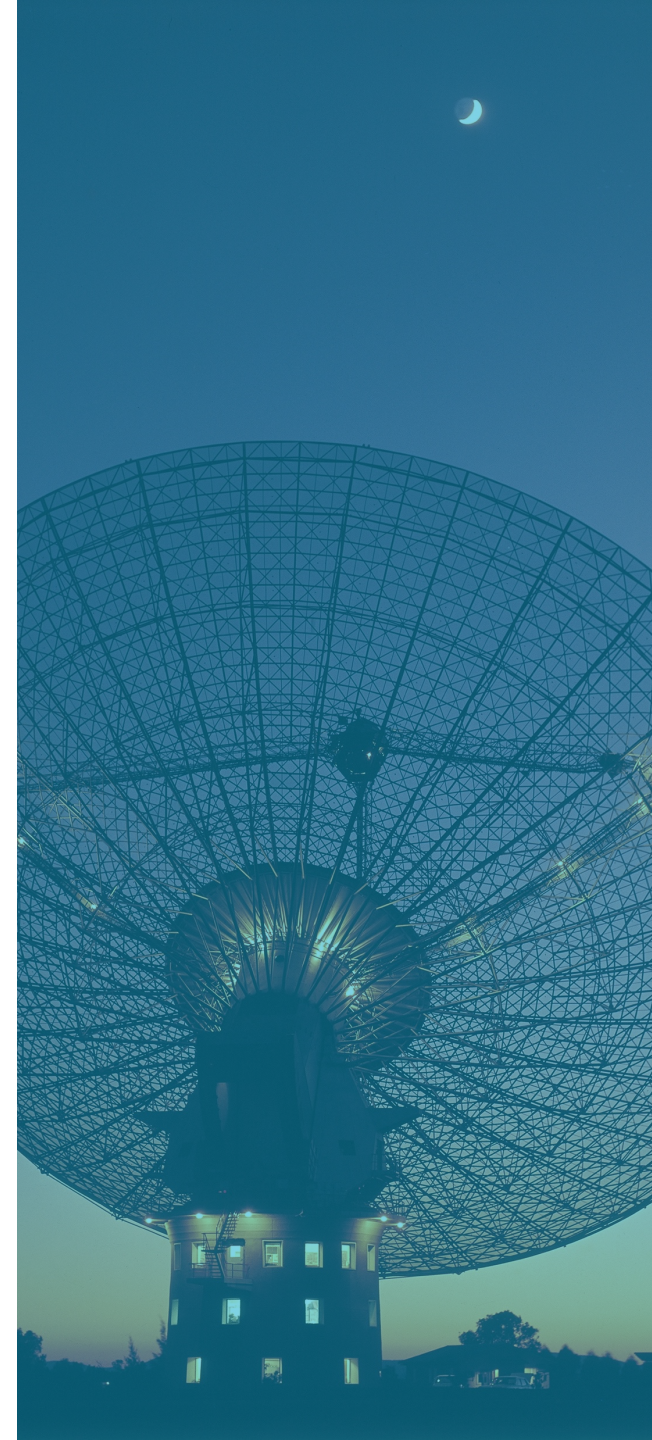
First point of contact for observing issues, assisting, resolving or escalating as appropriate.

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)





# Apr 2024 Status Summary

## In place:

- ✓ OEs are existing expert users (no formal training programme yet)
- ✓ OPAL functionality for OE nomination
- ✓ **NEW: PORTAL calendar booking system for OEs**
- ✓ **NEW: PORTAL can auto-book OE from previous registrants**
- ✓ **NEW: Improved email reminders to OEs, PIs**
- ✓ Manual assigning of ATNF OEs to projects
- ✓ Documentation on public-facing webpages
- ✓ Email communications to OEs and observers
- ✓ Regular surveys: OE skills survey, observer & OE feedback surveys

## In progress:

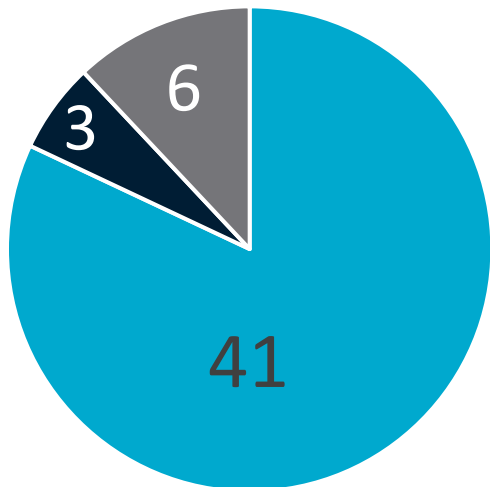
- How to fully integrate LBA
- Certification/training of new OEs





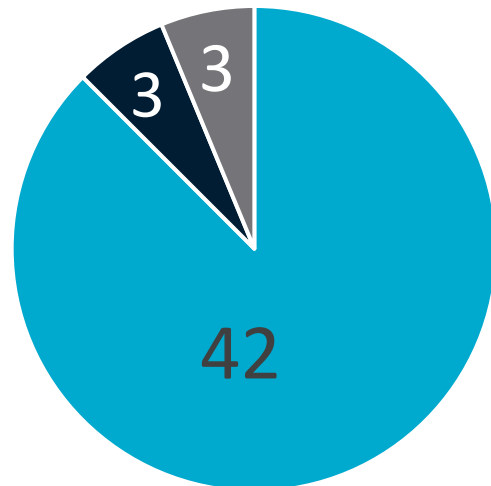
# Requests for ATNF OEs (ATCA)

2023APRS

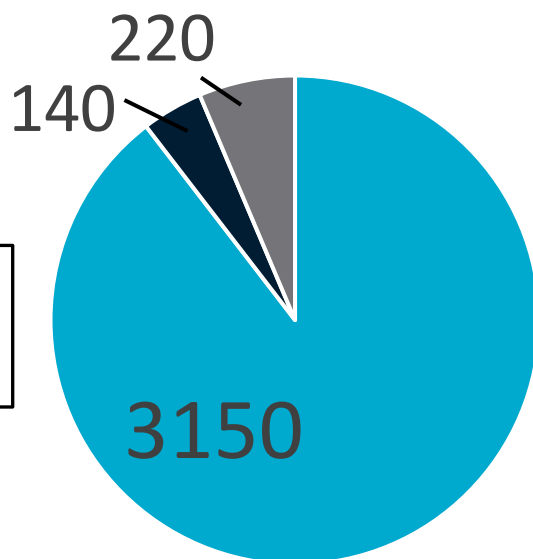
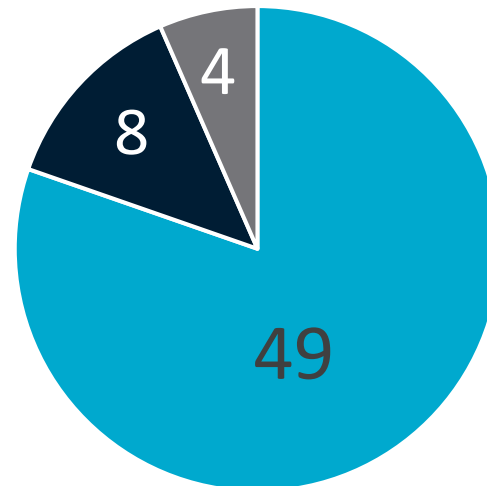


By Project

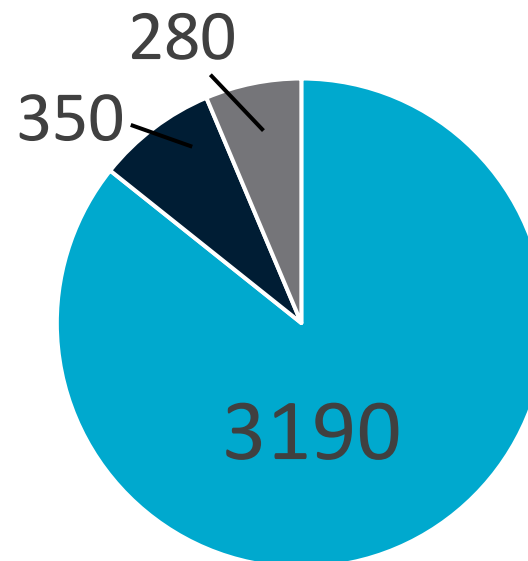
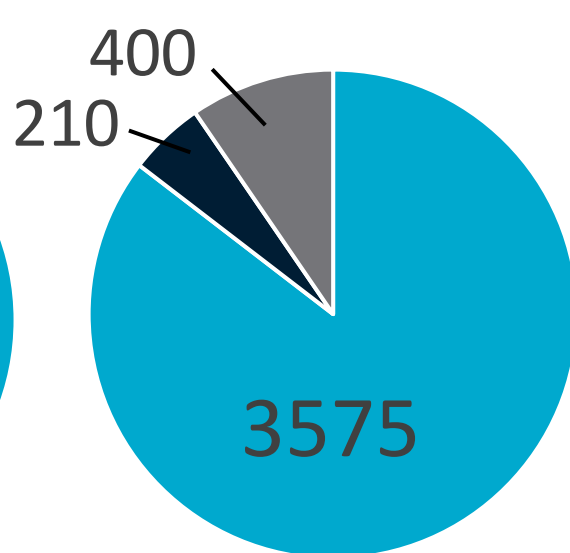
2023APRS



2024APRS



By Hours



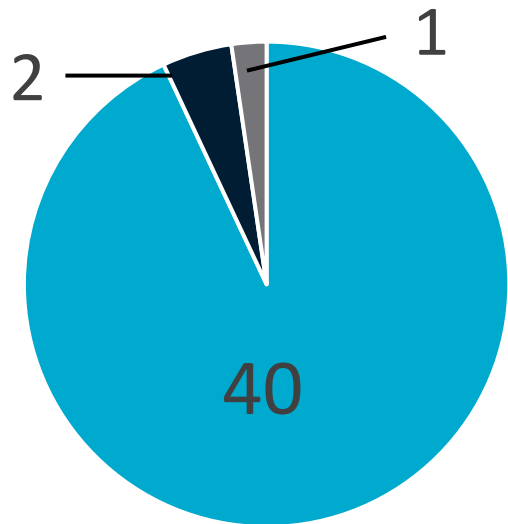
- Self-supporting
- ATNF OE
- ATNF OE (NAPA)

\* Charts only include projects awarded time



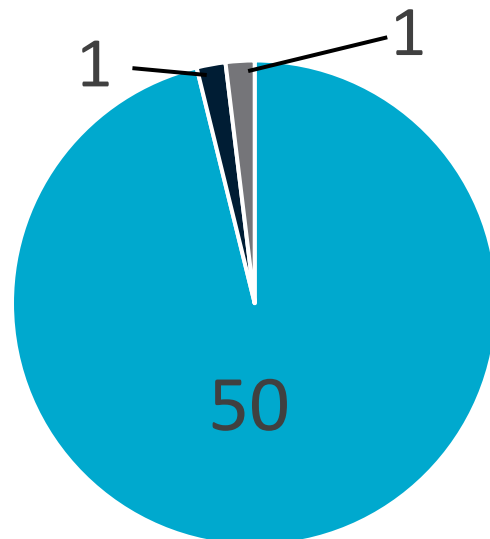
# Requests for ATNF OEs (Parke)

2023APRS

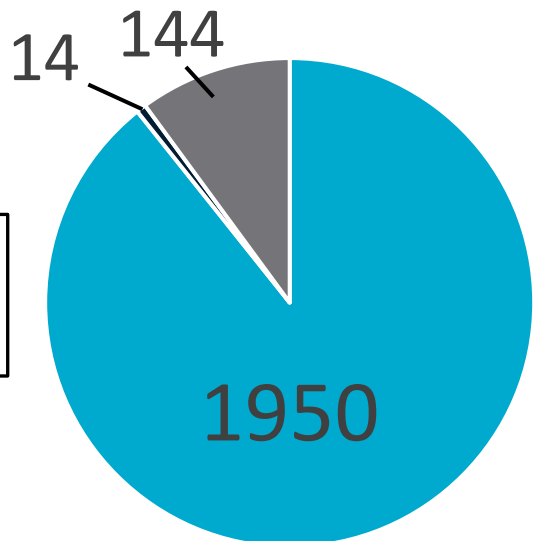
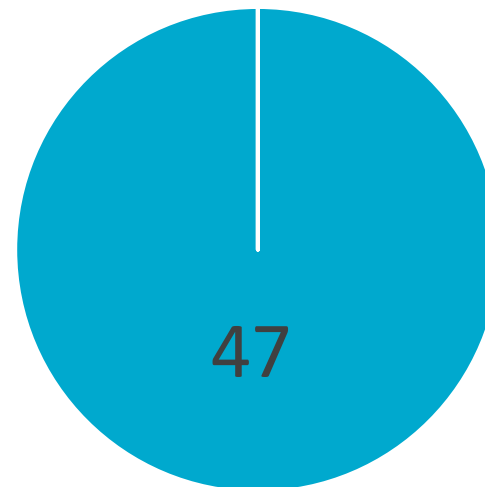


By Project

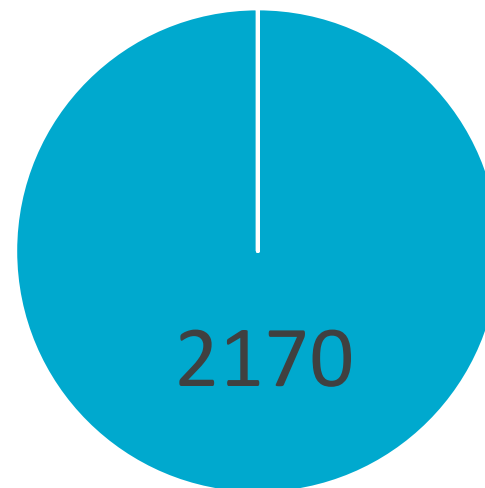
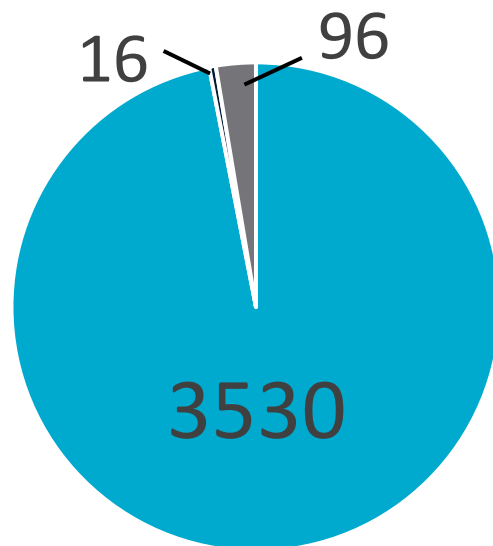
2023APRS



2024APRS



By Hours



- Self-supporting
- ATNF OE
- ATNF paid time

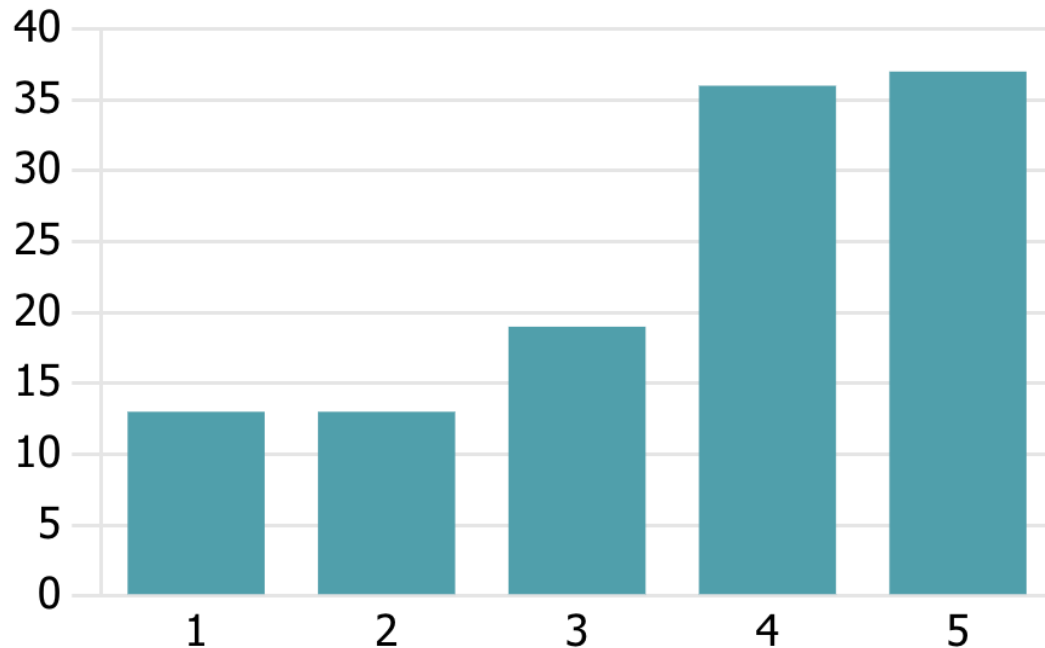
\* Charts only include projects awarded time



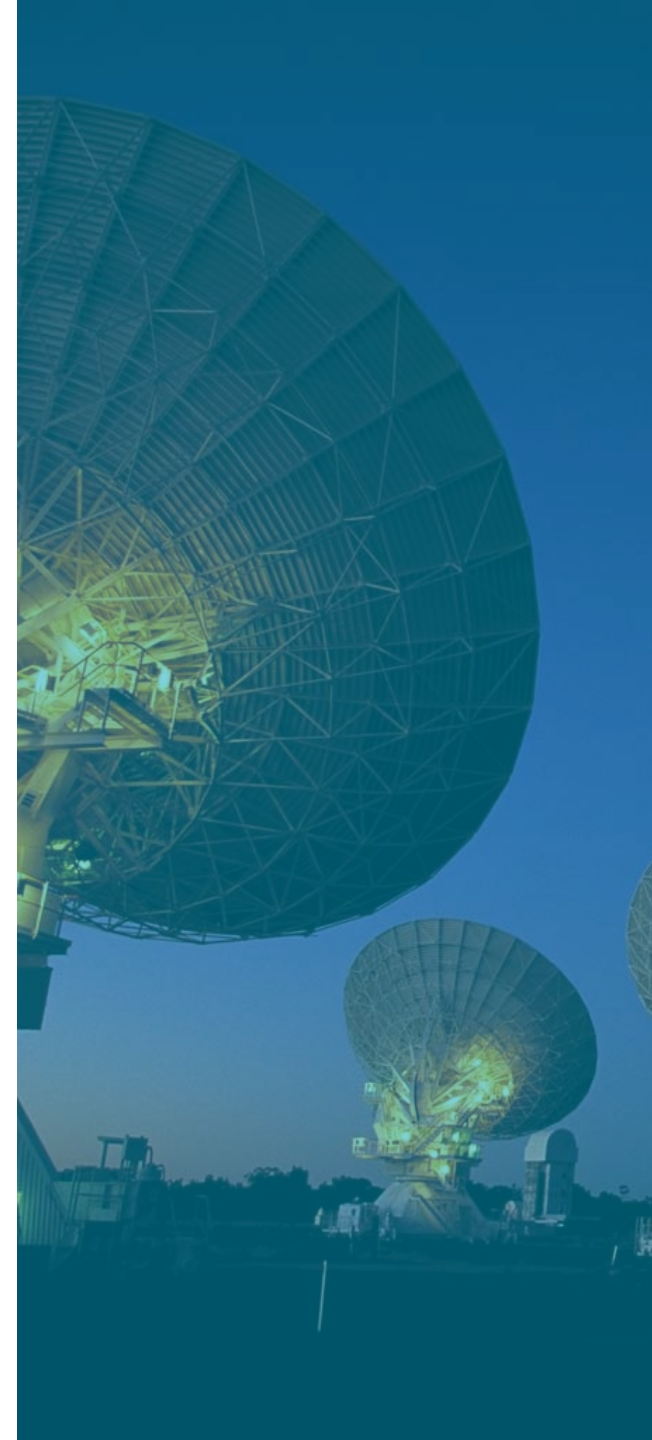
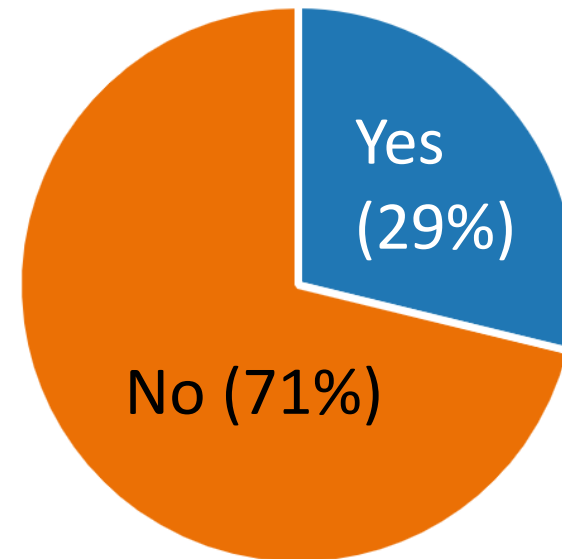
# Observer Feedback

- 118 responses
  - 40 in 2022 (pre-OE), 78 in 2023/2024 (OEs)

Self-assessed competence  
(1= complete beginner, 5=expert)



Accessed observing support  
(DA, Project Expert, OE)

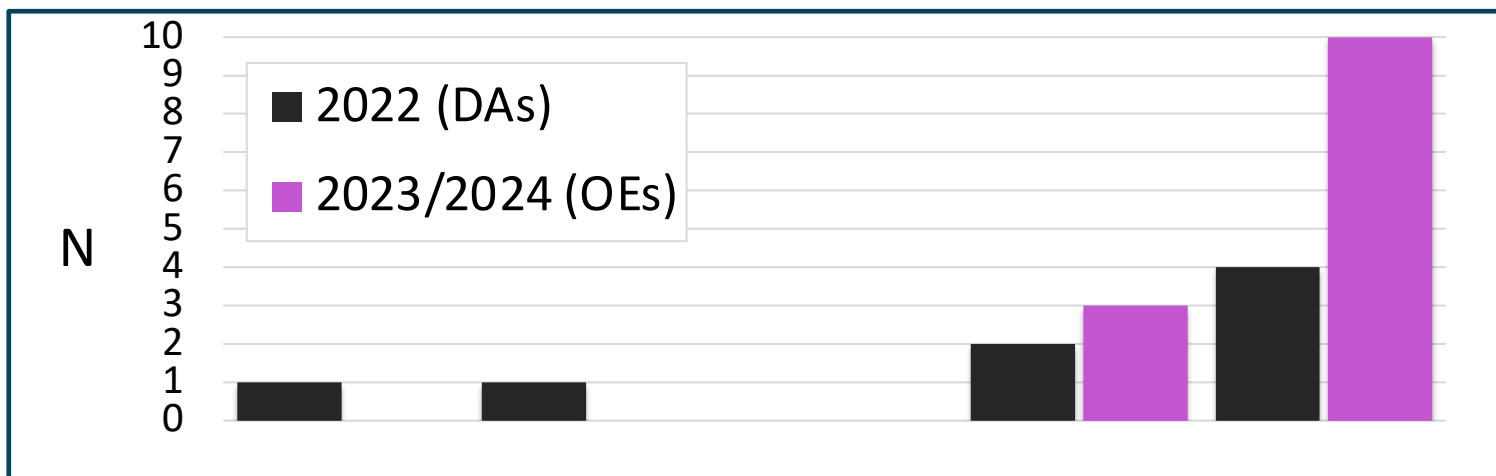




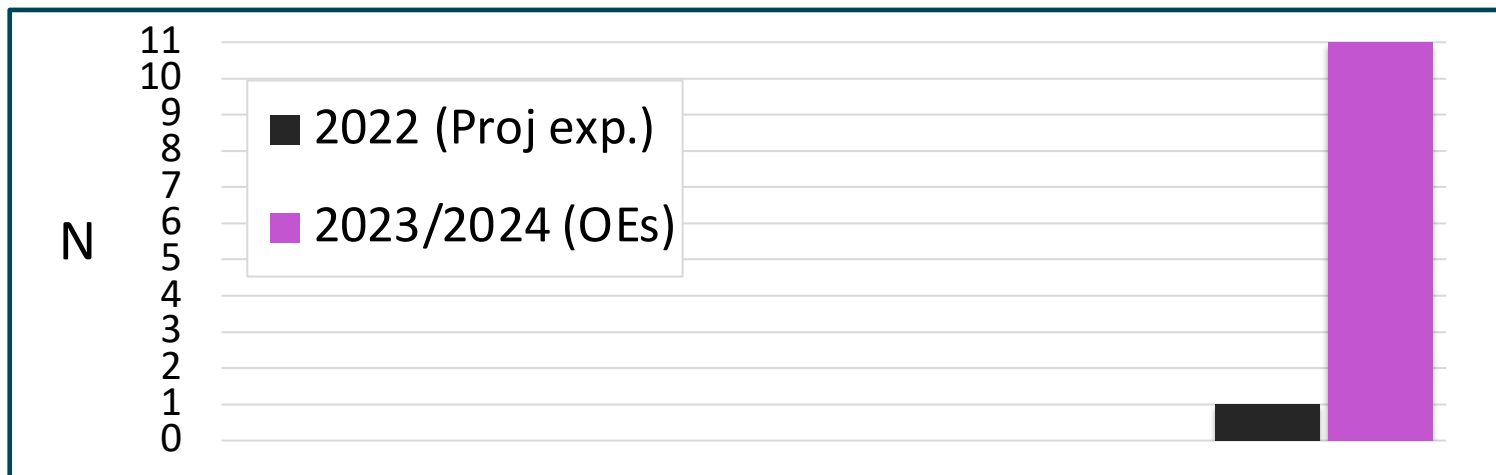


# Observer Feedback

*“How knowledgeable was your DA, Project Expert or Observing Expert?”*



**ATCA**

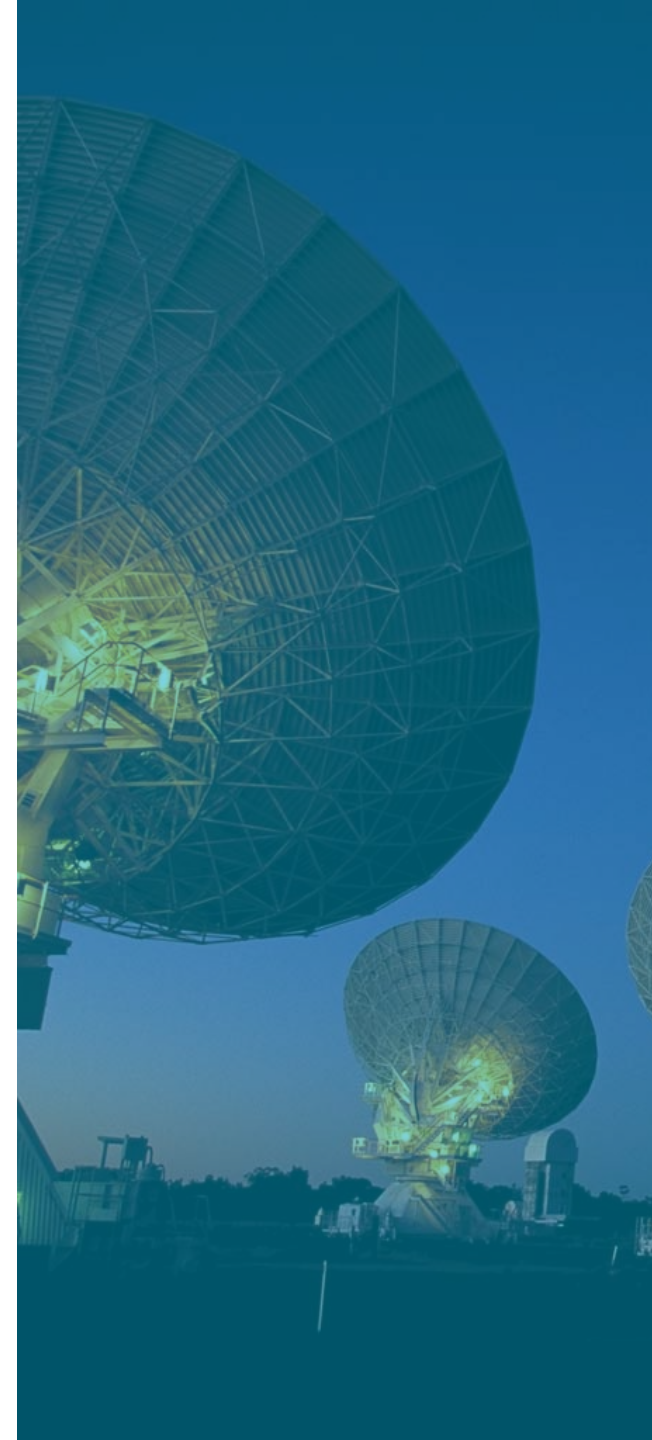


**Parkes**

Less knowledgeable



More knowledgeable





# OE Feedback

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree N/A

The expectations of the OE role were clear to me.



The expectations of the OE role were clear to the observers.



The procedural aspects of the OE role were clear to me (e.g. PORTAL registration, call-...



I felt technically competent to support my project.



The OE refresher training I received filled the necessary gaps in my knowledge.



100%

0%

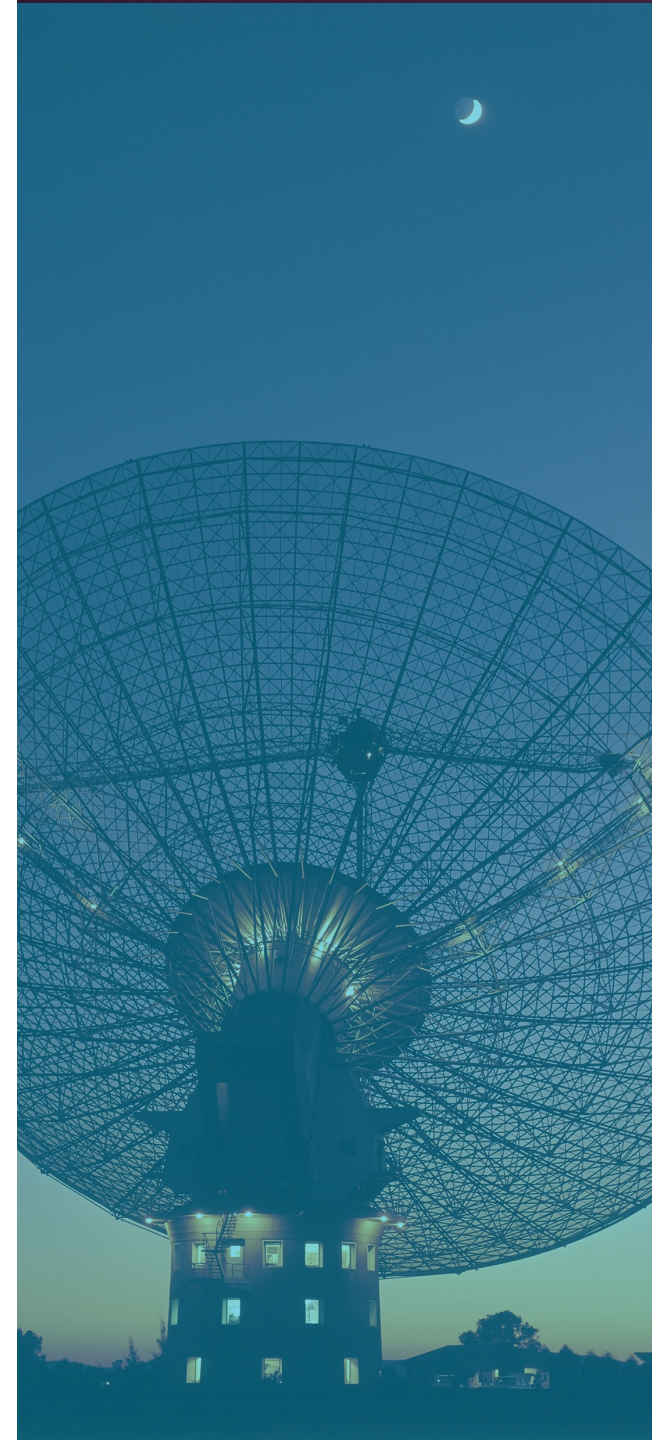
100%

\* 35 responses



# Known Issues & Solutions

- Failure of some OEs to register in the PORTAL  
→ Calendar booking implemented, auto-registration of past project OEs, email reminders to PI, OE and Jo Dawson.
- NAPA support needs finessing  
**No foolproof system for ensuring an assigned ATNF OE is available upon trigger (email is slow)**
- Lack of buy-in from large, self-managing projects  
→ Auto-registration from project OE list ensures project is formally supported from ATNF's perspective.
- Poor understanding of OE responsibilities from some ATNF staff; did not achieve level of support desired  
→ Communications/oversight improved for 2024APRS





# Training & Certification

## Basic observer training

- Provided by observatories
- Upgraded 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:** offline reading + video content followed by live Q&A with observatory staff
- **Parkes:** live training sessions.
- **LBA:** documentation, videos, training before & during LBA session
- Required for new users
- **Development of upgraded online training paused pending BIGCAT / CryoPAF deployment.**

## Advanced observer training

- OEs disseminate some advanced knowledge





# Observer Training Upgrades

- ATNF have been committed to upgrading the existing training system, but have so-far been FTE-limited.
- Working plan has been to develop **online training modules** to **cover basic through to advanced** observing modes, with some form of **embedded assessment**.
- In the pause before BIGCAT/CryoPAF it may be timely to revisit this.

## QUESTIONS FOR ATUC:

What would ATUC like to see in observer training? Is the above proposal consistent with community needs?





# OE Training & Certification

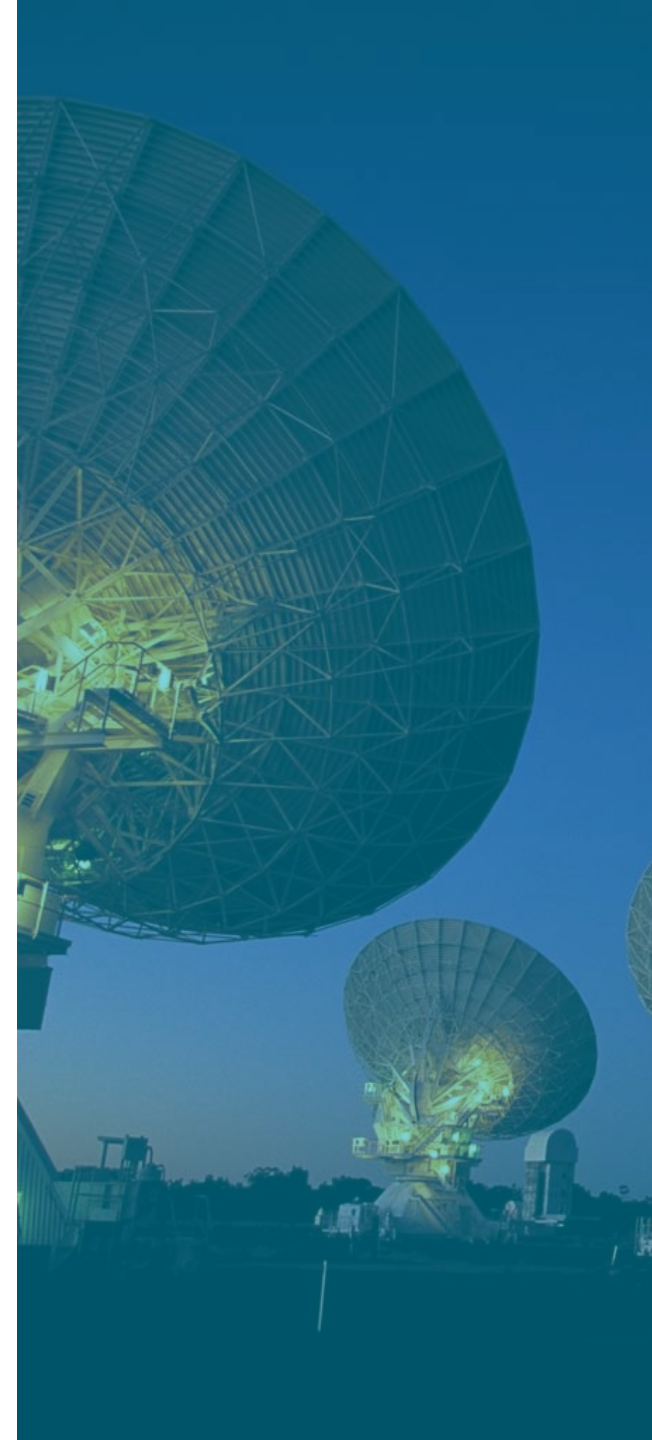
## October 2023 ATUC report:

*“ATUC supports ATNF in developing a robust program for training new OEs, and encourages continuing engagement by the ATNF with the community.”*

*“**Recommendation:** ATNF develop procedures to ensure that each team has sufficient, current expertise to deliver projects.”*

### OE certification & training

- Development / assessment of community demand to begin now in 2024APRS.
- Call to be emailed to all past observers.
- Require **N** hours observing experience to participate in OE certification.
- Assess needs of respondents and tailor pilot training programme accordingly.





Thank you

