



Peer Review for the Australia Telescope National Facility

Elizabeth Mahony, Philip Edwards
and George Heald

Peer Review Under Review | 10 February 2023

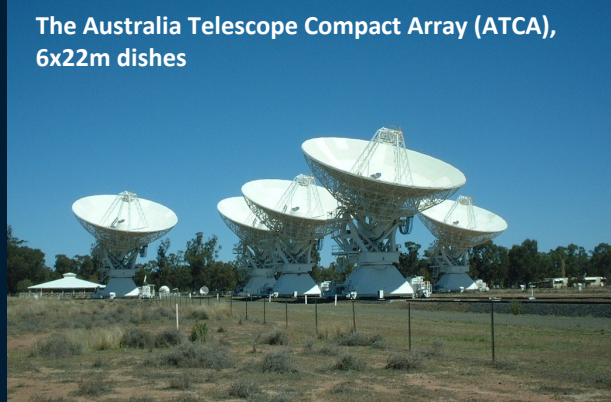


We acknowledge all the traditional owners of the lands in which we live and work across Australia, including the Wallumattagal people as the traditional owners of the land I am speaking from today. We pay our respect to their Elders past & present

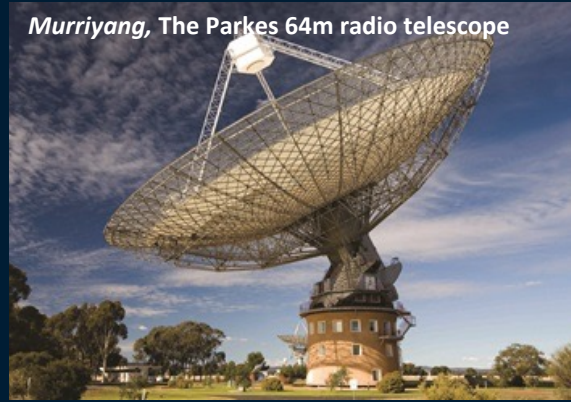
The Australia Telescope National Facility (ATNF)

Government funded national facility. Provide open access to radio telescopes in Australia through peer review process.

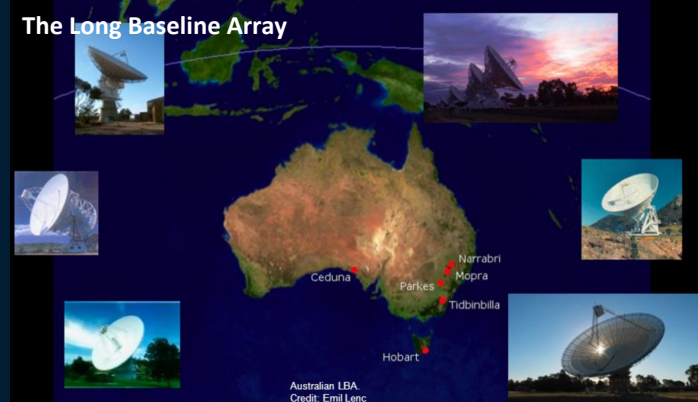
The Australia Telescope Compact Array (ATCA),
6x22m dishes



Murriyang, The Parkes 64m radio telescope



The Long Baseline Array



Mopra 22m (until 2012)



Host country access to
telescopes of NASA's Canberra
DSN



The Australian SKA Pathfinder, 36 x 12m (open access from late 2023)



The ATNF Time Assignment Committee (TAC)

- The ATNF TAC now has 9 members drawn from the Australian astronomical community, supplemented by a pool of ~12 external readers drawn from the international community
 - Plus ATNF program director, TAC executive officer, and telescope senior system scientists as non-voting members
- Proposals are generally reviewed by 2 TAC members and 2 TAC readers, with workloads balanced across each group.
- Proposal submission and reviewer assignments done via OPAL (ATNF Online Proposal Applications & Links): opal.atnf.csiro.au
 - Reviewer assignments semi-automated using keywords, but checked manually by TAC XO

The ATNF Time Assignment Committee (TAC)

- The TAC members meet over 2-3 days (formerly, in person; now, on-line) to finalise grades based on pre-grades and comments submitted by TAC members and readers
- The TAC grades and a single set of comments synthesized from all comments and subsequent discussion are provided back to proposal teams
- Single panel assesses science and technical feasibility
- Schedule released for the entire observing semester 1 month in advance (i.e. 1st March for April-Oct semester)

ATNF Daily Astronomy Picture

1st of August 2016



Time Assignment Committee at work

Shifting to dual anonymous reviews

- As a result of evidence of unconscious bias in other TAC processes (e.g., HST, Reid, 2014, PASP, 126, 923), ATNF proposal outcomes for 2018OCT were examined for any evidence of gender bias, with none found
- Nonetheless TAC endorsed anonymising proposals
 - Started with semi-anonymization from 2020OCTS (moved authors to back of proposal, removed affiliations, randomized author list)
 - Fully anonymous from 2022OCTS onwards
- Biggest challenge was the technology change required (updating OPAL)
- ATNF TAC agreed to participate in a study led by the University of New South Wales investigating the effects of anonymised review of research proposals: results of this study not released yet.

Thank you

CSIRO Space and Astronomy

Elizabeth Mahony (<https://people-my.csiro.au/M/E/elizabeth-mahony>)

TAC Executive Officer

Phil Edwards (<https://people.csiro.au/E/P/Philip-Edwards>)

George Heald (<https://people.csiro.au/H/G/george-heald>)

ATNF Science Program Director