

A section of the Community and Public Sector Union

**Dr Douglas Bock**  
**Acting Director, CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science**

PO Box 76  
Epping NSW 1710

[Douglas.Bock@csiro.au](mailto:Douglas.Bock@csiro.au)

cc: [Larry.Marshall@csiro.au](mailto:Larry.Marshall@csiro.au); [Craig.Roy@csiro.au](mailto:Craig.Roy@csiro.au); [Trevor.Heldt@csiro.au](mailto:Trevor.Heldt@csiro.au)

Friday 3 June 2016

## **Funding for CASS / ANTF observatories**

**Dear Douglas,**

It has come to the Staff Association's attention that the Australia Telescope Users Committee (ATUC) has recently discussed funding availability for the CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science (CASS) and Australia Telescope National Facility (ANTF) observatories in the coming years.

In an email dated 25 May 2016, ATUC Chair Virginia Kilborn alerted the ANTF user community to an 'important message' regarding the telescopes given the release of the draft budget for Astronomy Australia Limited (AAL) and expected allocation of funds from the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme (NCRIS) for financial years 2016-17 and beyond.

Dr Kilborn states that 'the (AAL) budget proposes a significant reduction of funding for Australia Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) operations in FY16-17 compared to the previous two years.

'AAL further indicates that funding for maintenance and operations of ASKAP or other ATNF telescopes is not likely to be available at all from FY17-18.'

The Staff Association also notes your email to CASS staff dated 6 May where the draft funding allocation is described as 'somewhat lower than we had requested, and lower than our actual allocation in the previous two years.'

'AAL further indicates that funding for maintenance and operations of ASKAP or other ATNF telescopes is not likely to be available from FY17-18.'

Dr Kilborn states that 'CASS is committed to commissioning ASKAP and supporting the Survey Science Projects (SSP), so it is likely that significant savings must be found elsewhere.'

'Options being considered include winding back or ceasing operations completely at the Australia Telescope Compact Array (ATCA) and/or Parkes.'

The Staff Association is gravely concerned regarding the future of Australia's astronomical observatory capacity and the security of employment for CASS staff.

As per the requirements of *CSIRO Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014*, the Staff Association is seeking consultation on the implications for staff and on the research and work that is performed by CASS.

We also seek the provision of the following information to staff and the Staff Association to facilitate thorough consultation:

- Copies of the FY16-17 and FY17-18 budget for AAL
- Copies of the Business plan for the following five years
- An explanation on the funding shortfall including reasons for the reduction
- The exact budget breakdown and dollar amount of the shortfall
- Measures CSIRO is taking to mitigate the impact of the shortfall
- Future timelines including further staff consultation and discussions.

Please provide a written response to this letter no later than 5pm, Tuesday 7 June 2016. Thank you.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Popovski'.

**Sam Popovski**  
Secretary  
CSIRO Staff Association