

SCUBA-2 Community Update

Dear colleagues,

As many of you will already have heard, PPARC Council decided today to commit additional funds to the SCUBA-2 project to enable it to proceed to completion. This is a major milestone in the history of the JCMT: the scientific promise of SCUBA-2 will keep the JCMT at the forefront of submm astronomy for several years to come.

As I indicated in my message of 4 February, I am required to find substantial financial savings from the JCMT operations budget as part of the package to bring SCUBA-2 to fruition. The positive funding decision from PPARC means that we will proceed with our plan to reduce normal observing hours at the JCMT from 16 hours per night to 12. To be specific, we will operate one 12-hour shift per night beginning in semester 05B. It is my belief that the science loss in so doing will be less than the 25% loss of observing time, because the four hours to be given up are statistically the worst four hours of the night. Moreover, we will retain the capacity to carry out limited extended observing on occasions when the weather so warrants.

This decision brings an end to the uncertainty which has plagued the project for the last year or more. It is also the culmination of a long and difficult process, and I am grateful to those members of the community who provided me with assistance and support.

*Professor Gary Davis
Director JCMT
22 February 2005*