

Report on the JCMT Board meetings, October & November 2005

The JCMT Board held an extraordinary meeting on 13 October 2005, to receive the report of the JCMT Strategic Review, and met again at the JAC, Hilo on 15–16 November 2005. The key items before the Board were the report and recommendations from the JCMT Strategic Review, and the planned shutdown of the telescope to undertake the infrastructure work required for SCUBA-2.

The JCMT Strategic Review Panel, chaired by Martin Harwit, visited the JAC from 19 to 21 September 2005 and the Board was very pleased with the resulting report. It acknowledged that the JCMT had been the world's premier submillimetre observatory for much of the past decade, and that the scientific case for a continuation of operations beyond 2009 was very strong. The Review Panel believed that the basis of this case was the promise of SCUBA-2, and recommended that all efforts should be made to ensure this instrument performs to technical specification and expected sensitivity. The Review Panel fully supported continuation of JCMT operations for at least three years beyond the end of the current tri-partite agreement in 2009. The Board reaffirmed its policy that SCUBA-2 was the highest priority instrument for the JCMT and agreed that an extension of the tri-partite agreement between PPARC, NRC and NWO should be confirmed as soon as possible. The Review Panel Report and a response document from the Board were sent to the three funding agencies by the Board Chair in November.

The JCMT shutdown was postponed by one month, with no impact on the SCUBA-2 schedule, to allow for the commissioning of HARP. The HARP installation and checkout phase commenced on 14th November as planned and the current objective is to complete the HARP commissioning prior to the shutdown commencing on 13th February 2006. The Board was pleased to note that ACSIS integration phase was virtually complete at the time of the November meeting.

It was proposed that an eSMA cross-community workshop be held in the Netherlands in 2006, to promote the development of joint science programmes for the eSMA pilot programme. The Board hoped that this workshop would prove helpful in determining community interest and raising awareness.

The Board received an update on the JCMT science archive: PPARC had agreed to provide funding for a programmer, and the CADC had obtained initial funding to provide the data archive and VO integration functions capable of handling the high data volumes which will be produced by SCUBA-2 and HARP/ACISIS. The Board acknowledged that the science archive would play a vital role in future operations of the JCMT.

The Board discussed and approved the formation of a JCMT Survey Oversight Committee (JSOC) which would provide oversight of the legacy survey programme on behalf of the Board. The members and chair of the Committee will be formally appointed in January 2006.

At the end of the November meeting, Professor Tom Millar was elected the new Chair of the JCMT Board and Dr Wilfried Boland was thanked for many years of service to

the Board. The next ordinary meeting of the JCMT Board will be held in the Netherlands on 16–17 May 2006.