



December 2006

Kia ora,

Just a quick update on some new developments following the short listing of Australia and South Africa for the SKA. If anyone else has any news please let me know, but first a special welcome to:

- CREST ENERGY LIMITED
- SUN Microsystems
- Rodney District Council and
- Rodney Economic Development Trust

who have joined the SKANZ Industry Working Group.

Our website address is www.skanz.org Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone who may be interested.

1. Sergei attended the meeting of the Executive Board of ASKAC in Australia soon after the short listing Australia and S.Africa by the ISSC - the mood is very positive.
2. The Research program AUScop (A\$15.8 million Funding) has been approved by Australian Government (NCRIS Committee) for the development of National Geospatial Infrastructure, including building three 12 metre dishes for joint geodetic and astrophysical research.
3. The CSIRO's Australian Telescope National Facility has offered New Zealand >\$0.5 million in-kind material support for the establishment of a NZ national facility including a hydrogen maser clock and other equipment.
4. Sergei had a positive meeting with the Minister of Communications, David Cunliffe who is very supportive.
5. The NZ Supercomputing Centre is processing the results of VLBI experiments between Australia, NZ and Japan for the first time.
6. A funding submission has been made to KAREN Capability Build Fund (RIAG) for an eVLBI SKA demonstrator project. The first stage is to establish a National RA facility and the second stage upgrades the 11 metre dish at Awarua in Southland operational with AUT for NZ eVLBI. There's a strong educational component. (I have a separate mailing list for school teachers – please let me know of anyone who should be added to it.)
7. Awarua is going from strength to strength with Venture Southland, CNES, and the European Space Agency, finishing the planning of the ESA rocket-tracking project - work is starting January 2007. The first Ariane 5 ATV launch is scheduled for around

July 2007. A draft arrangement between the ESA and the NZ Govt which will include research cooperation and understanding between the two has been negotiated and is anticipated to be formalised early in the New Year.

8. KAREN (the Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network) is virtually up and running.

9. Press release (below) by Paul Hutchinson, National Party spokesperson for Research, Science and Technology supporting the SKA. Great to have cross Party support.

Dr Paul Hutchinson
National Party Research, Science & Technology Spokesman
04 December 2006

Giant telescope should be supported

New Zealand must grasp the opportunity to support Australia and reap the awards of the world's largest telescope, says National's Science spokesman, Dr Paul Hutchison.

Australia is one of the countries short-listed to host 'The Square Kilometre Array,' a next-generation giant radio telescope.

"A successful bid by Australia could see two dishes located in New Zealand, a huge benefit for our scientists," says Dr Hutchison.

The telescope will be 50 times more sensitive than the most powerful radio telescopes now in use and will be used to search for new planets as well as research the evolution of galaxies, cosmology, dark matter, energy and other phenomenon.

"This is a great opportunity for New Zealand scientists and academics to take advantage of modern technology never seen before. It's an investment we should be behind 100 percent."

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