

Submission No.14

(Australian SKA Pathfinder Radio Telescope)

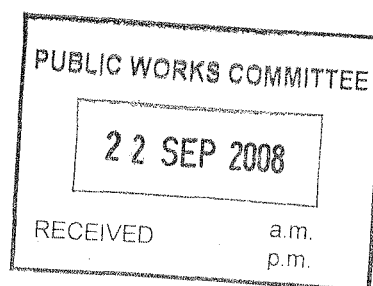
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SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

PROPOSED AUSTRALIAN SKA PATHFINDER (ASKAP) RADIO TELESCOPE

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



By A. A. Brooker

5 September, 2008

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Submission by Anthony (Tony) Ashley Brooker (Mid West community member) in support of the placing, in the Mid West, of servicing institutions such as the Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory, Support Facility (MSF).

1. I am a retired Headmaster. My formal qualifications include B Sc Honours – Physics (1960, University of Cape Town) and Master of Educational Management (1994, University of Western Australia). I have served on the Boards of both the Mid West Development Commission (MWDC) between 2002 and 2007 and the Geraldton University Centre (GUC) from 2002 to 2008 and in both capacities have acted as a champion of the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) and related projects. However it is a member of the community of the Mid West that this submission is made.
2. It is my understanding that the overwhelming majority of this community welcomes the opportunities that the activities associated with the Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory (MRO) can bring. This has been exemplified by the many hours of active support given to the concept by the Indigenous Communities, by MWDC and by GUC. This positive response was widely expressed at the Science Forum held in Geraldton in mid-August.
3. With my educational background, I am in a position to celebrate the educational inspiration made available to our young people by the existence in the region of scientific projects such as ASKAP, SKA and the Murchison Wide-field Array (MWA). I applaud the start made by the CSIRO in ensuring that local students are included in these exciting developments.
4. Along with many members of the Mid West, I rejoice in the important first steps of creating the MRO and bringing ASKAP to this region. We unequivocally welcome the stated intention to place the MSF with its supercomputer adjacent to the GUC. We look forward to being able to contribute further to SKA related projects. These may include the Western Australian Government's International Radio Astronomy Research Centre (IRARC), the Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) Laboratory and a network access facility for high speed data transmission.
5. Such projects will deliver major regional development opportunities for this region. These benefits include:
 - Attracting highly skilled specialists to Geraldton
 - Providing opportunities for locals to develop their expertise
 - Encouraging participation in further education at both TAFE and University levels
 - Attracting other support industries to the Mid West
 - Increasing the ongoing diversification of our economic base from primary industries to other sophisticated specialist areas.
5. It was noted at the SKA April Forum in Perth that the South African input, mentioning initiatives such as publishing a comic, was strong at the people level. However, we believe that the Australian SKA bid could differentiate itself from the Southern African bid by its firm commitment and active support of regional development outcomes from hosting SKA. The placing of the MSF (and similar SKA service institutions such as IRARC and RFI) in the Mid West would be a significant step in showing real awareness of the potential value of SKA to the region.

A. A. Brooker
5th September, 2008

