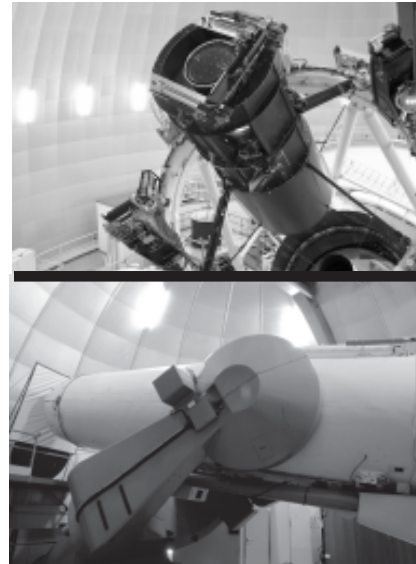


# 1 About the AAO

## Statement of purpose

The Anglo-Australian Observatory (AAO) provides world-class optical and infrared observing facilities enabling Australian and British astronomers to do excellent science. The AAO is a world leader in astronomical research and in the development of innovative telescope instrumentation. It also takes a leading role in the formulation of long-term plans for astronomy in Australia.



*Top, 2 degree Field fibre positioner on the Anglo-Australian Telescope. Photo Jonathan Pogson. Above, UK Schmidt Telescope. Photo Shaun Amy*

## History and governing legislation


In 1969 the governments of Britain and Australia decided to establish and operate a large optical telescope in Australia for use by Australian and British astronomers. The *Anglo-Australian Telescope Agreement Act 1970*, which commenced in February 1971, gave effect to this decision. The Act established the Anglo-Australian Telescope Board (AATB) as the independent bi-national entity that owns and operates the telescope, with funding provided equally by the Governments of Australia and the United Kingdom.

The 3.9-metre Anglo-Australian Telescope (AAT) was opened in 1974 on Siding Spring Mountain near Coonabarabran in north-west NSW. In 1988, the operation of another telescope on the same site, the 1.2-metre UK Schmidt Telescope (UKST), was transferred to the AATB. These two telescopes, together with the Epping headquarters facility and instrumentation laboratory, collectively form the Anglo-Australian Observatory (AAO).



*The AAO laboratory, Epping. Photo Urs Klauser*

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The United Kingdom government has indicated its intention to withdraw from the AAT Agreement with effect from 1 July 2010. This notice period allows for an orderly withdrawal by the UK Government and sufficient time for the Australian Government to plan for the future of the AAO. Arrangements to give effect to this and related matters were encapsulated in the form of a 'Supplementary Agreement' signed by the two Governments and followed by legislative and diplomatic processes. The Anglo-Australian Telescope Agreement Amendment Act 2006 was passed and the treaty amendment is now in effect.

## Ministers responsible



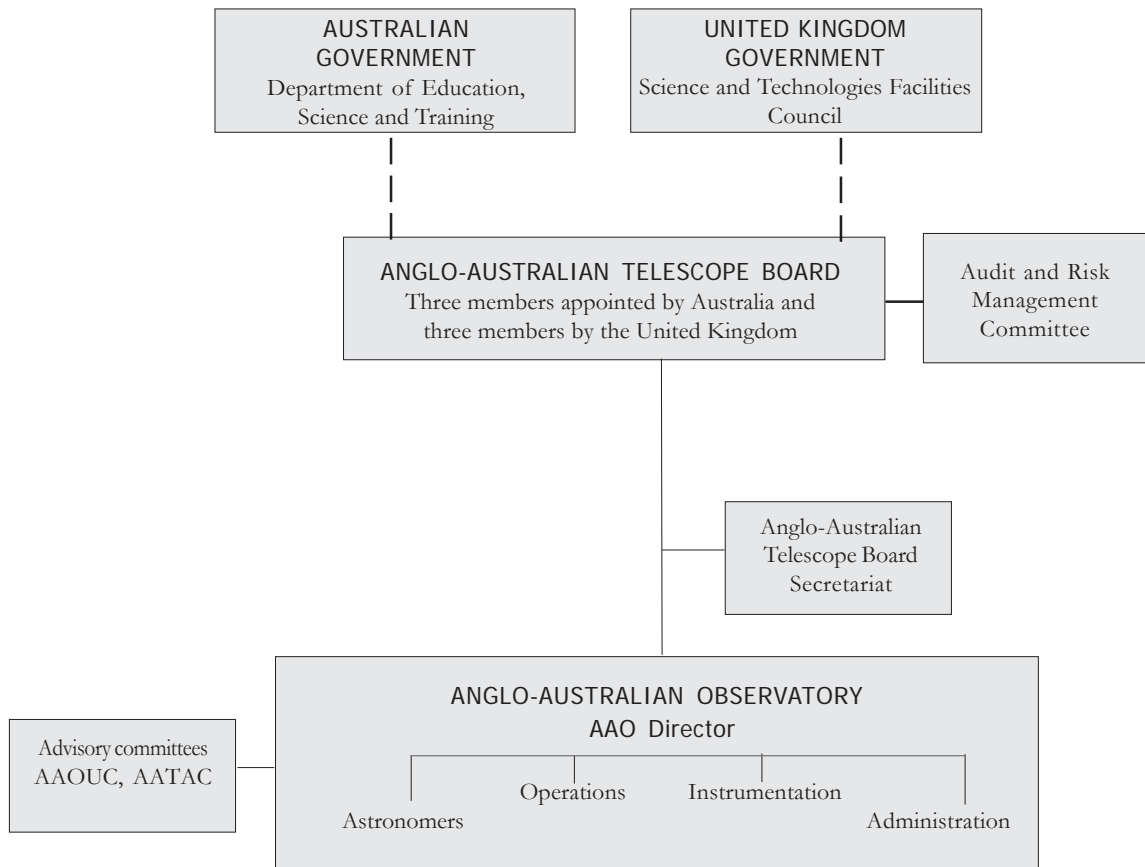
The Minister responsible in Australia is The Hon. Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Education, Science and Training.

The Minister responsible for the AAT Board in the United Kingdom is Ian Pearson MP, Minister of State for Science and Innovation.

## Structure of the AAO

The AAT Board oversees the operations of the AAO. The Observatory has active and internationally recognised research, instrument science and instrumentation groups. Figure 1.1 shows the structure of the AAO. These groups are critical to the maintenance and the day-to-day operations of the two telescopes and to the development of state-of-the-art instrumentation. A small administration group supports the operations of the Observatory.

Figure 1.1 General structure of the AAO



## Designated agencies

Pursuant to Article 1 (2) of the Anglo-Australian Telescope Agreement, each Government acts through an agency designated for the purpose. These Designated Agencies are the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and the Science and Technologies Facilities Council (STFC) which replaced PPARC, of the United Kingdom. The STFC formally took over the duties of PPARC from 1 April 2007. These agencies are jointly responsible for implementing the Agreement. One Board member from each country has been nominated to represent their respective Designated Agency on matters relating to the Agreement.

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## AAO Director

The AAO Director, Professor Matthew Colless, is responsible for the successful operation of the telescopes, for providing the best possible facilities for all telescope users and for ensuring that the Observatory maintains its high standing in the international scientific community. The Director also actively pursues his own scientific research. Prof Colless is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science. In 2005 he became Adjunct Professor at the School of Physics, University of Sydney.

## Audit and Risk Management Committee

The AAT Board has an Audit and Risk Management Committee to improve its corporate governance. Details of the Committee are included in Appendix D.



*Mr Greg Harper, FAICD, FCPA; Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee*



*AATAC meets by video-conference, 1 November 2006. Sitting around the table are the Australian members (L to R) Peter Tuthill, Rachel Webster, Erwin de Blok, and Martin Asplund. On the screen are the UK members at the University of Sussex (L to R) Seb Oliver, Yvonne Unruh and Gaitee Hussain (sitting in for Jacco van Loon). Photo Stuart Ryder*

## Advisory Committees

The Anglo-Australian Observatory Users' Committee (AAOUC) advises the Director on aspects of the Observatory's operation.

Prior to November 2005, observing time on the AAT was allocated by two national committees: the Australian Time Assignment Committee (ATAC) and the UK Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time (PATT). Subsequently, observing time on the AAT is now allocated by a single bi-national panel, the Anglo-Australian Time Allocation Committee, details of which are included in Appendix E.