



## LARGE OBSERVING PROGRAMS ON THE AAT Call for Expressions of Interest

The Anglo-Australian Observatory aims to provide opportunities for Australian and British astronomers to make effective use of the Anglo-Australian Telescope's unique capabilities to address major scientific questions through large observing programs. These opportunities will be available using any instrument, or combination of instruments, on the AAT, although the community's particular attention is drawn to the AAOmega spectrograph (<http://www.aao.gov.au/local/www/aaomega>). AAOmega is expected to be available on the AAT from early 2006, and will be the world's most efficient instrument for large-scale survey spectroscopy for some years thereafter.

The AAT Board therefore proposes to issue a *Request for Proposals* in April 2005 for major new observing programs to start in semester 06A (February to July 2006). To prepare the way for the *Request for Proposals (RfP)*, interested parties are now invited to submit an *Expression of Interest (Eoi)* in specific large observing programs. The following guidelines should inform the deliberations of collaborations considering the preparation of an *Eoi*:

1. A major, compelling and feasible scientific program should be proposed. The program should focus on key questions that the proposed data sets would address, but should also outline anticipated secondary uses of the dataset by the broader AAO community. 'Major' in this context could potentially mean proposals requiring up to 100 nights per year and extending over several years. The *Eoi* should describe the science program in less than one page.
2. A management plan should be prepared which will outline the collaboration involved in the program, the sharing of responsibilities for scientific management, the planning of observations, the carrying out of observations, data reduction, quality control at each of these stages, data release to the AAO community and the International Virtual Observatory, data analysis, exploitation and publication by the proposing team, and an outline of the overall funding strategy for the program. The *Eoi* should describe the management plan in less than one page.
3. A project timeline should be proposed, including the observational and analysis aspects of the program, and with milestones and regular reviews by the AATB or its designate during the course of the program. The proposing team should plan for significant public outreach, and the proposal should explain the broader impacts of the project. The *Eoi* should describe the project timeline and outreach in less than half a page.

*Expressions of Interest* should be submitted by email to the Director of the AAO ([director@ao.gov.au](mailto:director@ao.gov.au)) by **28 February 2005**. People intending to submit *Eoi* are encouraged to contact the Director to discuss their plans beforehand. The *Eoi* will be reviewed by the AAT Board and the AAT time allocation committees, and used to inform the *Request for Proposals* which will be issued in April 2005. Feedback will be provided to the proposers. The *RfP* will have a likely proposal deadline of August 2005. Those proposals will be evaluated by the joint time allocation committee mandated under the new AAT Agreement to operate from semester 06A, bearing in mind a set of guidelines, similar to those outlined above, specified by the AAT Board.

*Matthew Colless, AAO Director, 1 November 2004*