



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

Managing Organisational Change: a case study of the Australian Astronomical Observatory transition

Clare McLaughlin

12 November 2018

Mental Health Community of Practice

Organisational Change and its Impact on Mental Health

AAO Transition case study - Outline

- What led to this change?
- Who was affected?
- What did we do to support staff in the transition?
- Did it work?

What led to this change?

The Anglo-Australian Telescope (AAT) at Siding Spring Observatory near Coonabarabran is a fantastic 4m-class telescope. It's been operating since 1974.



What led to this change?

The best telescopes in the world right now are 8m-class. Particularly the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope, at Paranal, in the Atacama Desert in Chile.



Who was affected?

76 AAO staff

- 51 at North Ryde
- 25 at Siding Spring Observatory near Coonabarabran

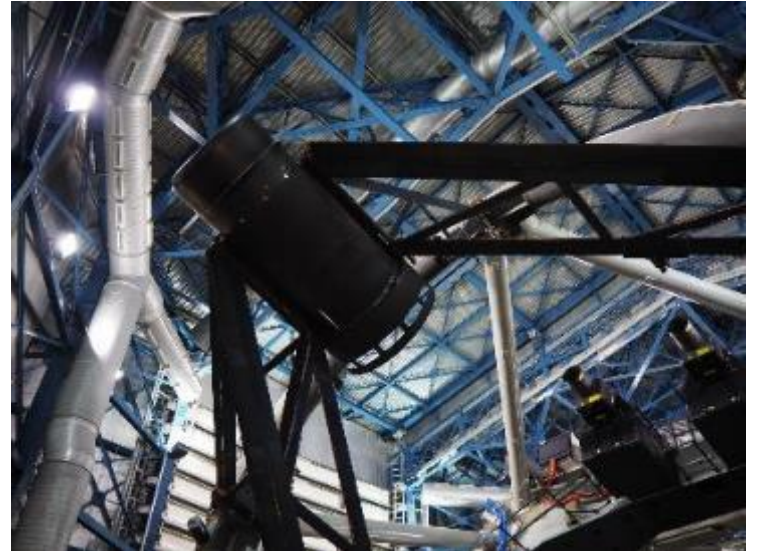
Of the 76

- 46 ongoing
- 22 on non-ongoing contracts
- 8 on irregular/ casual contracts



What did we do to support staff in the transition?

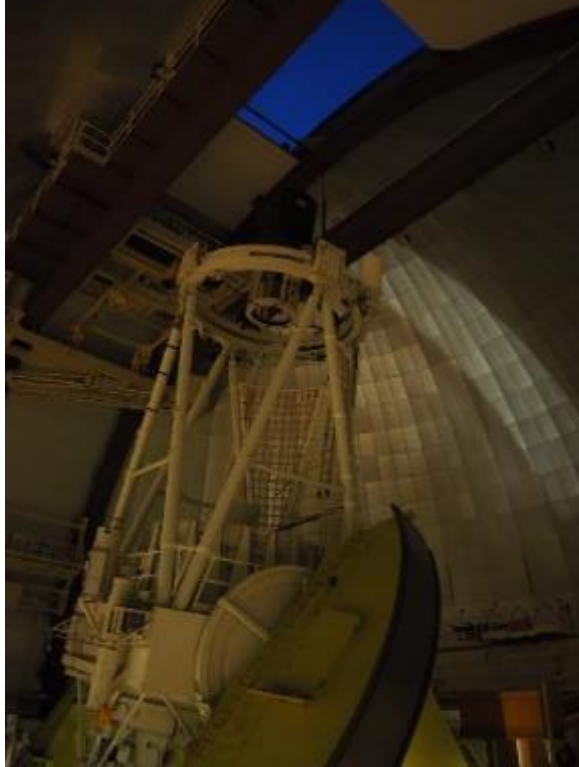
- Communication – in person, by email, newsletters/ weekly updates
- Individualised support
- Access to counselling – including on-site
- Training for EOIs
- Engagement with the community



Did it work?

- Telescope kept operating throughout
- Instrumentation work progressed
- Praise for the department's handling of the transition
- New structures already bearing fruit
 - Astronomers getting time on ESO
 - National Instrumentation Capability has already submitted a proposal for an instrument for ESO
- People in roles in new organisations, doing their jobs

Feedback



“ I know it’s all been said before, but I would just like to thank you all again for the hard work, dedication, commitment and professionalism you have all shown in managing the transition. It hasn’t been an easy ride, but without people like you, it could have potentially been far worse. Even the unfortunate people that weren’t successful in being kept on, all commended the way the process was handled by the Department. ”

(Operations Manager, AAT)

On Wednesday afternoon we said our farewells to the Department of Innovation. I am sure that we all want to thank Jane and her team for all the help they have given us the past few weeks. While we are all sad to say farewell to the department, we are also excited to see what the future holds for us. We wish all the best for those of us who are moving on to new and better futures.





Australian Government

**Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science**

Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

Industry House
10 Binara Street
Canberra City, ACT 2601, Australia
Telephone +61 2 6213 6000