



Decadal plan for Australian astronomy 2026–2035



NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
ASTRONOMY

Overview

- The Australian astronomical community carries out a formal strategic planning process on a ten-year timeframe; with reviews as/when appropriate.
- This process is run by the National Committee for Astronomy (NCA) of Australian Academy of Science
- It provides the opportunity for Australian astronomy to
 - carry out a stock take of its capabilities, assess its impact both nationally and internationally,
 - provide a vision for the future and to set priorities and
 - develop strategies on how that vision might be implemented.
- AAL distributes funds according to the decadal plan





Purpose and status

- The decadal plan can be used as a highly influential document to present our vision to key stakeholders outside the research sector.
- This includes Australian Astronomy's key stakeholder, the Commonwealth Government, as well as industrial/research partners both nationally and internationally.
- The currency of the last decadal planning process ran from 2016 and will conclude in 2025. A midterm review was published in 2020.

It is now time to consider the next decadal planning process for the period 2026-2035.

Planning steps

- Set up the planning process and receive community input
- Form working groups + chairs
- Agree on consultation process with each of the WGs
- Hold town hall meetings and other collaboration opportunities for community input into each WG
- WGs deliver white papers to NCA
- Editorial committee will write the first draft of the plan - circulate for community feedback
- Second draft and then editing by Academy of Science
- Plan Launch in mid-2025



TIMELINE

2023	
JUNE	Launch decadal plan public website Finalise timeline and budget Set terms of reference for working groups and decadal plan Propose working group structure
JULY	Present structure and timeline at ASA conference Solicit feedback on structure of working groups and process Solicit interest in working group membership
SEPTEMBER	Deadline for feedback on structure and expressions of interest in WG
OCTOBER	Select working group chairs and members Publish membership of working groups
DECEMBER	Working groups present work plan to NCA Establish editorial committee
2024	
FEBRUARY-MAY	Working groups conduct town-hall meetings
JULY	National workshop reporting on outcomes of working groups
SEPTEMBER	Working group reports provided to the NCA Incorporation into first draft of decadal plan by editorial committee
OCTOBER	Review of first draft by NCA
NOVEMBER	First draft submitted to Academy Council for comment
DECEMBER	Review of final draft by NCA at annual meeting
2025	
JANUARY	Release exposure draft to Australian community Roadshow to present major findings and recommendations of the plan
MARCH	Submission of Decadal Plan to Academy Council for endorsement
MARCH-JUNE	Prepublication activities
JULY	Launch of decadal plan at ASA conference

Science questions in current decadal plan

1. How did the first stars and galaxies transform the Universe?
2. What is the nature of dark matter and dark energy?
3. How do galaxies form and evolve across cosmic time?
4. How do stars and planets form?
5. How are elements produced by stars and recycled through galaxies?
6. What is the nature of matter and gravity at extreme densities?



WORKING GROUPS

Working Group	Notes
1.1 Galaxies and Cosmology	
1.2 Stars and the galaxy	
1.3 Star formation and Planets	Solar system?
1.4 Theoretical and Computational Astrophysics**	Keep? Incorporate computational?
2.1 International scale facilities	
2.2 National and university scale facilities	
2.3 Computational astrophysics**	Separate section? Combine with 1.4?
3.1 Demographics and Societal impact	
3.2 Education and Training	
3.3 Industry and Translation	
3.4 Research funding	
4.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Astronomy	New working group?



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FEEDBACK

- Please send feedback to Virginia vkilborn@swin.edu.au and the Academy nc@science.org.au by 13 July

Website will be: www.science.org.au/astro2035 (will be online soon!)

Centre of Excellence – White papers

- White papers are welcomed from anyone, especially those who seek to lead a Centre;
- All white papers are expected to be treated following the ASA's code of conduct (please respect researcher's IP);
- A virtual town hall discussion will follow for those who are participating in the process, to bring people together for discussions and development;
- This process aims to help facilitate discussions amongst interested parties - neither the NCA nor ASA will be ranking or otherwise deciding on outcomes.

Please send white papers, comments or questions through to John Lattanzio (john.lattanzio@monash.edu) and myself (vkilborn@swin.edu.au).

Due date 13 July