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### Australia Searches For ET

From: Stig Agermose <[stig.agermose@get2net.dk](mailto:stig.agermose@get2net.dk)>  
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[http://news.bbc.co.uk/low/english/sci/tech/newsid\\_364000/364833.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/low/english/sci/tech/newsid_364000/364833.stm)

Go to the site for photos of the new detector and the Parkes Telescope!

Stig

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BBC News Online: Sci/Tech

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Published at 16:44 GMT 17:44 UK

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Australia searches for ET

By BBC News Online Science Editor Dr David Whitehouse

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One of the most powerful searches for aliens in space is about to begin from Australia. It will simultaneously listen to 58 million radio channels.

"The instrument is one of the most powerful in the world and it's going to sift the skies to look for artificial signatures from other intelligent civilisations, should they exist," says Dr Frank Stootman, Chairman of Seti (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) Australia and co-director of the Southern Serendip project.

"This is a very significant experiment that will contribute to testing some important scientific paradigms about the origin and development of self-conscious life in the universe," he added.

Right time, right place

The search for ET will be carried out using the Parkes telescope in New South Wales. It is the southern hemisphere's largest radio astronomy telescope.

According to Carol Oliver of Seti Australia, observations made at Parkes are considered to have the best chance of discovering

ET because of its geographical location and the amount of time the Southern Serendip team is able to use the telescope.

The Southern Serendip project runs in parallel with normal radio astronomy at the telescope - it takes the same signal feed as the astronomers working on an all-sky survey, thus making double use of telescope time.

Radio waves travel vast distances through space and are relatively easy to detect. This is why scientists believe they offer the best chance of discovering extra-terrestrials, either by looking for a deliberate beacon or by detecting 'radio leakage' from their internal broadcasts.

#### Multi-channel listening

The Seti centre at the University of Western Sydney Macarthur developed a new electronic analysis system in order to look more closely for any faint ET signals in the Parkes radio data.

The searchers divide the radio data into small frequency bands because the ET signal would probably be very faint.

The Seti centre has increased the number of radio channels it can listen to simultaneously from eight million to a staggering 58 million channels. That's like having 58 million radios, each tuned to a slightly different frequency. It will significantly improve the chances of finding ET.

The increase in channels has been made possible in part by a generous donation from the Seti Institute in California, which had its 56 million channel Project Phoenix experiment located at Parkes in the first half of 1995.

#### Relevant Stories:

- \*Screening for alien life (17 May 99 | Sci/Tech)
- \*A signal from ET? (31 Mar 99 | Sci/Tech)
- \*Anyone out there? (09 Jun 99 | Sci/Tech)

#### Internet Links

- \*SETI Australia
- \*Southern SERENDIP

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