

## ADVANCE INFORMATION

# *Searching African Skies* *The Square Kilometre Array and South Africa's quest to hear the songs of the stars*

Sarah Wild

with guest chapters by Temba Matomela and Toby Shapshak

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### NEW TITLE

*After nine-years of work by the South African and Australian SKA site bid teams, the independent SKA Site Advisory Committee (SSAC), composed of world-renowned experts, carried out an objective technical and scientific assessment of the sites in South Africa and Australia, and identified by consensus Africa as the preferred site. However, in order to be inclusive, the SKA Organisation has agreed to consider constructing one of the three SKA receiver components in Australia. The decision by the SKA Organisation to build the majority of the SKA in Africa coincides with our celebrations for Africa Day. It also fits in well with the African agenda as we celebrate the 49th anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity and the 10th anniversary of the African Union.*

–Minister of Science and Technology Naledi Pandor: 25 May 2012

In the era of technological advancement astronomers want to build the most powerful telescope ever, to see back to before the first stars and galaxies formed. The SKA will be a radio telescope – instead of seeing light waves, it will make pictures from radio waves.

Sarah Wild's *Searching African Skies* is the story of South African radio astronomy and the quest to hear the songs of the stars. What, exactly, is the Square Kilometre Array? How did South Africa end up bidding against Australia to host the largest scientific instrument on Earth? What does it hope to find in outer space? Are we alone in the universe? Will we be able to see as far back as the big bang? And can a developing country justify building a massive radio telescope at the expense of housing, healthcare and meeting basic needs? Jacana presents the book that shall answer these questions.

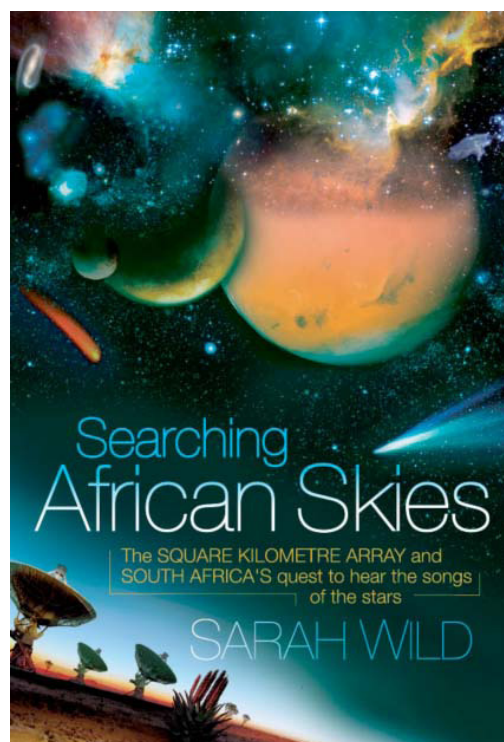
Award-winning science columnist **Sarah Wild** is currently the Science and Technology Editor at *Business Day*. She has a Bachelor of Science in Physics, Electronics and English Literature, specialising in radio astronomy. This is her first full-length African science book.

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