

VICE PRESIDENT WIRUNA 2015 REPORT.

By Joe Cauchi.

The biggest project this year for Wiruna has been the new outdoor kitchen building. After much discussion a separate building adjacent to the existing kitchen, 9x7 metres and with a gable roof and awnings on the 2 long sides, which will be open (no walls) was agreed upon. A 1.5metre concrete slab will be poured between the 2 buildings with a substantial drain running down the middle and along one side of each building to drain water away from the buildings. At present the plan is to use the old kitchen for cooking and preparations, and new kitchen will be for relaxing in.

A four burner BBQ has already been donated by Alex Comino for this project.

The updated 24 volt solar system power supply using 12 new deep cycle 450 amp hours batteries has been installed and all wiring has been completed. This system is more efficient and is supplying all the extra power that is needed during the busy new moon weekends. The old batteries have been installed in the storage shed for a future charging station.

A new water heater for the existing outdoor kitchen has been purchased and installed. A solar panel has been installed near the pit toilets to supply lighting and power to the fans.

A lot of work has been carried out on the 17 1/2" and the 25" telescopes throughout the year to update and make these scopes more user friendly. These scopes are used during new moon weekends for sky tours, weather permitting.

A new galvanised trailer with caged sides has been purchased for work on the property and replaces the old, rusted out units. This new trailer was first used during the Star Party clean up patrol.

A 4 x 3 metre carport/charging station has been installed on the west wall of the meeting hall. A concrete slab has been laid. This charging station will be used during Star Parties and throughout the year for the ever increasing need to charge batteries.

During the April new moon weekend the usual preparations took place for the upcoming Star Party, including constant lawn mowing, cleaning up the meeting hall, cleaning camp sites and cutting firewood.

This year's Star Party was another successful event, made even more enjoyable with clear skies. The regulars and visitors took advantage of these great conditions as the observing field and imaging areas were buzzing with activity. There was a fantastic range of guest speakers this year as well as the usual range of Star Party activities throughout the event. As in past years, the Kandos Scouts provided hot meals during the day and hot donuts into the night. To cap it off the chefs and helpers of the society served up a delicious roast dinner on the Saturday night.

The Star Party could not function without this dedicated group of hard working volunteers.

There is constant maintenance carried out through the year at Wiruna, including cutting enough firewood for the cold months. This year the society purchased a good quality chain saw for this purpose. I have completed a 2 day certificate course for the use of a chain saw and wood cutting. I encourage any regular at Wiruna to do this course, so the wood cutting doesn't fall to just a couple of people.

With the sad passing of Barry Gerdes, a much loved and long time member of the Society, a plaque was made and Trevor, his son, installed it on the wall of the house that Barry used and helped maintained during his visits to Wiruna. The house is now known as the "Barry Gerdes Lodge".

During January we were treated to naked eye Comet Lovejoy. This comet resembled Omega Cent. naked eye, but showed a few degrees of tail through binoculars. It was the centre of attention for observers and imagers alike.

These last 12 months we have had our share of extreme weather at Wiruna, starting with some very hot weather in November to the other extreme of having snow in July that made Wiruna look a winter wonderland. The road closures made it impossible for members driving up on the Friday, but for the few who arrived before the snow, it was pure magic.

Attendance was slightly lower than last year with 29.5 people per month. Income was also lower from camping, bunk house and house fees, totalling \$3,684.00. As I don't personally collect fees for on-site caravans and tents, income for these is not included.

The number of all clear Friday and Saturday nights was down on the previous year, to 13. Many other nights were partly cloudy but were usable in between clouds. This seems to be tied in with attendance figures as some people rely on long distance weather forecasting before making the trip.

The upcoming projects for this year will be finishing off the kitchen with shade cloth and some landscaping around the area. New furniture, shelving and cooking appliances, heating and lighting will have to be bought and arranged so that the kitchen will be well used.

Some minor maintenance needs to be carried out on the outside of the bunk house. We need to purchase a new battery charger to suit the new battery bank, so power issues that happened during the Star Party don't happen again.

Throughout the year we have had a number of overseas visitors joining us for observing and astro imaging.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has helped with projects, ongoing maintenance and Star Party preparations throughout the year to make Wiruna a pleasant and enjoyable place to be at.