

VICE PRESIDENT WIRUNA 2016 REPORT.

By Joe Cauchi.

The new kitchen at Wiruna which has been years in the planning is finally completed. This 9 x 7 metre modern, strong structure with insulation in the ceiling has been made the place of choice for relaxing during the summer months as it is noticeably cooler than the old kitchen.

Planning the drainage system for the two kitchens was also a lengthy process, finally a concrete precast system with a galvanised mesh top was chosen and installed in concrete in between and along the eastern side of the two buildings. This system has proven very successful, especially during heavy rain, channelling water away.

Roll-up mesh blinds are planned for the east and west windows of the kitchen, also a different design for new benches providing easy access to all the eskies. Some form of heating has to be worked out for comfort for those using this area during the cold months. A special thanks to those members who have donated quality furniture for the new building.

Substantial landscaping and several trips to the tip removing the two old trailers and accumulated junk around the building gives the area a finished look.

A new hot water heater has been installed at the house, along with 4 extra large solar panels, which will keep the bank of batteries fully charged from month to month. I am in the process of hiring a handyman to do maintenance work on the house, which will make staying there more enjoyable, and also maintenance work around the bunkhouse, which also needs attention.

Throughout the year, maintenance work was carried out on the Club's telescopes and the amenities block. A new battery charger has been fitted on the inside wall of the bunk room, mainly for topping up our large battery bank during Star Parties. I would like to thank Chris Ross and the team of members who contributed to this project and all electrical work throughout the year.

As in previous years the months leading up to the Star Party saw a hive of activity in preparation. The mowing of the observing and camping fields was carried out over several months. Cutting and collecting firewood is a never ending job. The large pile of earth fill that the kitchen builders had left over was spread out in front of the breezeway leading to the amenities block.

This year's Star Party was quite successful, starting with 3 clear nights. The forecast rain didn't arrive until late Sunday, when most of the attendees has left for home. This year's guest speakers, Renee James and Richard McDermit, gave very interesting talks to full houses. Our numbers were a touch higher than last year, and there was a fantastic variety of equipment on the field. The usual range of Star Party activities was well patronised this year. As always, the Kandos Scouts provided hot meals and hot donuts during the night for a sugar fix. To cap it off, the chefs and their helpers from the Society served up a delicious roast dinner on the Saturday evening. The Star

Party could not function without the Club's dedicated group of hard working volunteers.

The battery charging station which was finished just in time for the Star Party has proved very functional for charging batteries out of the weather.

Apart from the normal observation sessions through out the year, during the October new moon weekend 2 spectacular, bright fireballs lit up the night sky during one of the nights and observations of the Geminids in December coincided with a Wiruna observing weekend. It has been interesting watching the slow changing triangle of Mars, Saturn and Antares over the past few months.

Throughout most of the year, Wiruna went through a period of drought with very low rainfall, however the clouds didn't go away and we ended up with less clear nights than the previous year. There were 2 lots of snow dumps at Wiruna this winter, though they were not as heavy as in previous years.

In December a communal dinner was prepared and eaten in comfort by those in attendance in the recently finished new outdoor kitchen. Being cloudy on the Saturday night meant we could have a great time with interesting company without having to finish early for the astronomy.

Attendance was slightly up on last year with an average of 31 people per month. Income was also higher for camping, bunkhouse and house fees totalling \$4190.00. As I don't collect annual fees for on-site caravans and tents, income for these is not included.

Throughout the year we had a number of overseas visitors, including a Korean amateur who enjoyed 3 clear nights of Southern sky observations.

For clarity for members with infrastructure at Wiruna, a new Wiruna Policy is finished and sent out to members.

I would like to 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.