

Canberra Midwinters Dinner - 24 June 2016

Canberra Midwinter's Dinner was held on Friday 24th June, 2016 at the Belconnen Labor Club.

This year's dinner was attended by 30 expeditioners, partners and friends, down from last year as there were no reunion groups this year.

Once the technical issues associated with getting the audio-visual system working were resolved the night's program commenced. There were 20 apologies noted and mention was made of the passing of local expeditioners Bob Wyers, Patrick Moonie and Peter Ormay. The loyal toast was then proposed by ANARE Past President Joe Johnson.

After the entre the special DVD produced by the Australian Antarctic Division was screened. As there was a delay before the main course the DVD from two years ago was also screened and reminded us of the progress being made in airborne and shipborne support. The Division's staff are to be congratulated on producing another excellent presentation of last summer's operations and getting a copy to us at short notice.

After the main course Chris Carson, who has been down for nine summer seasons, gave an overview of the Geoscience Australia activities in Antarctica, Past, Present and Future.

Chris illustrated his talk with many maps and photos. Of particular interest was the one showing the fact that Antarctica is so much larger than Australia that the latter can fit totally within the icy continent.

Chris discussed the high-resolution bathymetric work his team has been involved in the last few years using multi-beam sonar methods mounted in an AAD supplied work-boat (the RV *Howard Burton*) in the shallow water near-shore areas around Davis and Casey. The results give resolution of objects in these areas down to chair size to depths of about 200m, enabling the geologists to "see" what is on the bottom and understand the seafloor topography. Chris also discussed recent bathymetric surveys conducted in the Mertz Glacier region off the east Antarctic coast that highlighted the link between seafloor topography and marine habitats, information useful for marine environmental management. Mention was also made of Australia's proposal for a number of offshore Marine Protected Areas along the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Chris also mentioned the Geoscience Australia citizen science project where interested members of the public can help transcribe the hand-written field notes from the early year's expeditions into a searchable format to help researchers access them. He invited anyone interested in participating or finding out more to visit the transcription web portal at <https://volunteer.ala.org.au/institution/index/12601095> or contact Geoscience Australia Library via ref.library@ga.gov.au

After dessert the years were called, the attendee first to go down being Ian McLeod who wintered at Mawson in 1958. Apart from Chris Carson no one was in attendance from the last ten years of voyages.

The evening finished with coffee and the last stragglers left around 11 pm.