



Information Pack

Northern Star Party - Dark Sky Weekend

Waharau Outdoor Education Centre

Waharau Regional Park

April 17th, 18th & 19th of 2026

What you **must** bring:

- Your own food. There is a kitchen and walk in fridge to store perishables. The AAS will provide morning and afternoon tea as well as milk but otherwise it is BYO for food and drink. With over 40 people in attendance, keeping it simple will be the best way to ensure there's not a mad rush in the kitchen at meal times.
- Bedding, sleeping bag, pillow, toiletries, towel etc. The dormitories have bunk beds and mattresses.
- Your telescope, binoculars etc or just your eyes and, if required, power supply, preferably battery powered. Solar scopes for Saturday
- Warm clothes in keeping with the weather forecast!!!
- Red torch or red headlamp. Once it's dark, white lights need to be eliminated as much as possible.
- **Please bring a tea towel!!!!**
- A cooperative attitude and willingness to lend a hand to keep the venue clean and tidy.

What will be provided:

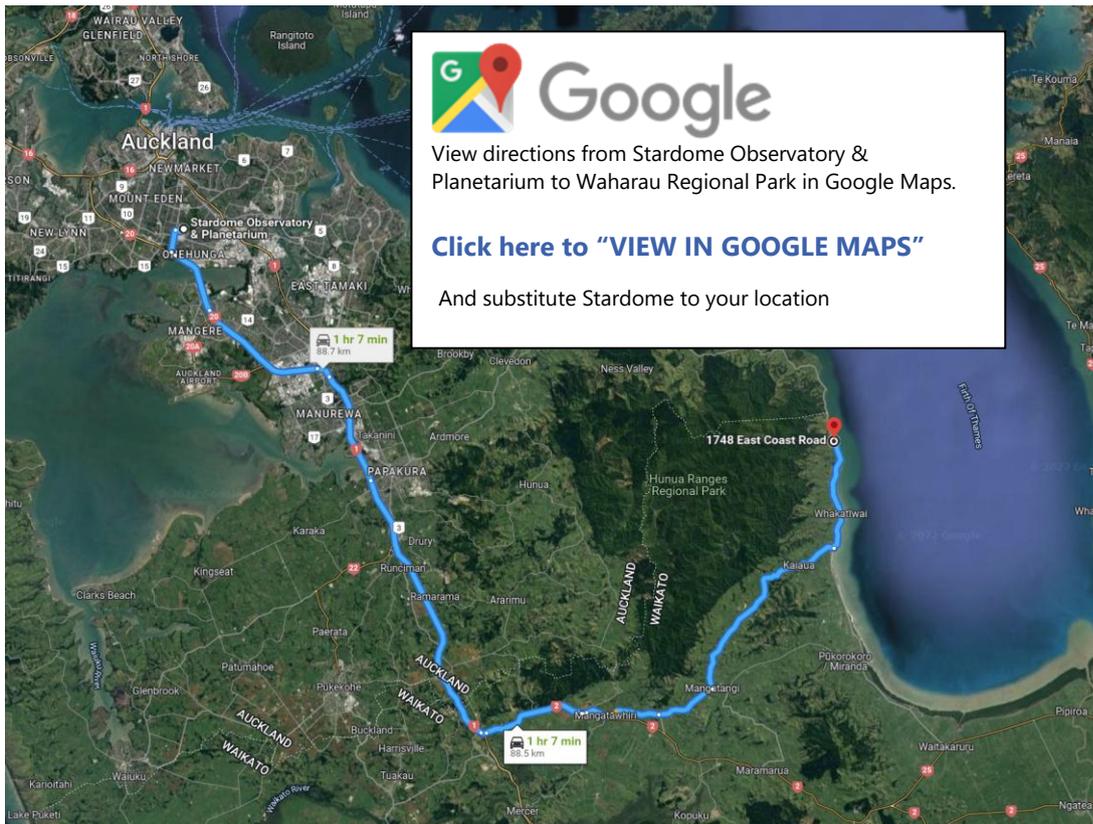
- The AAS will provide morning and afternoon tea and milk.
- Cooking utensils, pots and pans, crockery and cutlery.
- Cleaning equipment, toilet paper and rubbish bags.
- First Aid equipment.

Auckland Astronomical Society



Getting there:

Follow the below maps or enter the address into your GPS (1748 East Coast Road, Whakatiwai). Travelling the coastal route through Kawakawa Bay is a pleasant drive with plenty of views. Once you enter the Regional Park, drive up past the information centre on the left and the entrance to the Outdoor Education Centre is on the right through a gate with a “No Entry” sign adjacent to it.





Access hours: Access to the facility will be **from 4:00 pm to 9:00pm on Friday** and then **7:00am to 9:00 pm on Sunday** as the gate automatically locks over night. Access after this time is by PIN code only. Contact Robert if you intend to arrive later than this on Friday night if you require the PIN. **It may pay to ring as I do not always hear message alerts.** To minimise disruption to viewing, we request that people are on site by **8:00 pm Friday night**. If you are late, please dip your lights as you come down the final part of the drive. If you are only coming on the Saturday, please arrive before sunset. Please check in with Robert Patterson (021 732 873) on arrival to receive your name badge. We encourage the name badges be worn over the weekend to help everyone get to know everyone else.

The centre must be cleaned and vacated by **10:30 am on Sunday**. Help on the Sunday morning to tidy up will be most appreciated.

Arrival Procedures:

Parking will be managed as the main viewing area is normally the parking area. On arrival, please unload your equipment and supplies and then park as directed.

- (a) All vehicles must keep to the drives and parking spaces designated.
- (b) Vehicle use in the park should be kept to the minimum and speed restrictions observed and stock not disturbed.
- (c) On arrival the Group Leader, Robert Patterson, will acquaint you with the restrictions and rules, including fire safety information.
- (d) Once unloading is completed, vehicles should be parked away from buildings as directed.
- (e) If you arrive late the automatic gate may have closed. If the gate is closed, please contact Robert Patterson (021 732 873) for the code. **It may pay to ring as I do not always hear message alerts.**



Programme:

Evenings are dedicated to star gazing, weather permitting.

	Sunrise	Solar Noon (Meridian)	Sunset	Astronomical Twilight End	Moon rise	%
Friday 17 th	6:47 am	12:20 pm	5:52 pm	6:49 pm	-	0.4%
Saturday 18 th	6:48 am	12:20 pm	5:51 pm	6:48 pm	-	0.6%
Sunday 19 th	6:49 am	12:20 pm	5:50 pm	6:46 pm	-	3.8%

[Sunrise/Set Calendar](#) [Moon Calendar](#)

Saturday afternoon there are a series of talks/displays.

	Time	Activity	Details
Friday 17 th	4:30 pm	Facility open for arrival, setting up	
	7:00 pm	Observing when dark	If Observing is not available we will run a couple of films
Saturday 18 th	Program to be Confirmed		
	4:30 pm to 6:00 pm	Telescope trail	Walk around and view of the various telescope set ups of the night. A good chance to meet the people operating the equipment and ask questions.
	7:00 pm	Observing when dark	If Observing is not available we will run a couple of films
Sunday 19 th	Before 10:30am or earlier however no rush	Clean facility, pack up & leave	Clean is basic and quick if all help. Please sweep the floor in your chalet and stand the mattress on their sides

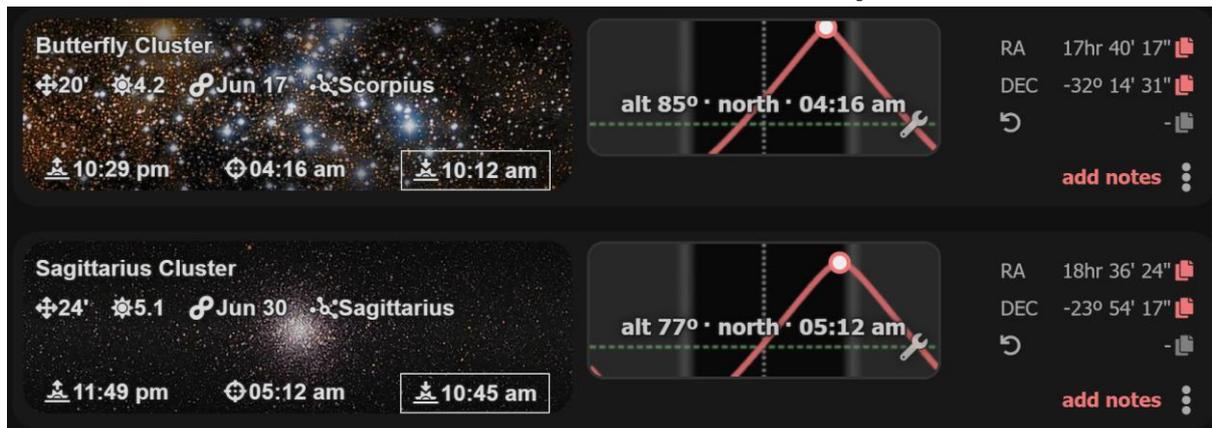
Possible Visual Observations (Through a small telescope):

Object Name	Altitude	Direction	Time	RA	DEC
Orion Nebula	alt 59°	north	04:13 pm	05hr 35' 17"	-05° 23' 24"
Beehive Cluster	alt 34°	north	07:17 pm	08hr 40' 13"	19° 37' 16"
Tarantula Nebula	alt 58°	south	04:16 pm	05hr 38' 42"	-69° 06' 00"

Auckland Astronomical Society



<p>[St.] Katherine's Wheel $\oplus 5.1'$ $\odot 9.9$ ♃ Mar 27 ♌ Coma Berenices</p> <p>☾ 07:37 pm ☀ 10:55 pm ☀ 02:21 am</p>	<p>alt 39° · north · 10:55 pm</p>	<p>RA 12hr 18' 50" DEC 14° 24' 59" add notes </p>
<p>Sombrero Galaxy $\oplus 8.5'$ $\odot 8$ ♃ Apr 1 ♌ Virgo</p> <p>☾ 06:27 pm ☀ 11:17 pm ☀ 04:14 am</p>	<p>alt 55° · az 308° (NW) · 01:09 am</p>	<p>RA 12hr 39' 59" DEC -11° 37' 23" add notes </p>
<p>Eta Carinae Nebula $\oplus 2^\circ$ \odot N/A ♃ Mar 1 ♌ Carina</p> <p>☾ 01:43 pm ☀ 09:22 pm ☀ 05:08 am</p>	<p>alt 67° · south · 09:22 pm</p>	<p>RA 10hr 45' 02" DEC -59° 42' 00" add notes </p>
<p>Wishing Well Cluster $\oplus 1.1^\circ$ $\odot 3$ ♃ Mar 7 ♌ Carina</p> <p>☾ 02:10 pm ☀ 09:42 pm ☀ 05:22 am</p>	<p>alt 68° · south · 09:42 pm</p>	<p>RA 11hr 05' 40" DEC -58° 42' 25" add notes </p>
<p>Southern Pinwheel Galaxy $\oplus 14'$ $\odot 7.5$ ♃ Apr 16 ♌ Hydra</p> <p>☾ 06:33 pm ☀ 12:13 am ☀ 06:02 am</p>	<p>alt 83° · az 1° (N) · 12:13 am</p>	<p>RA 13hr 37' 01" DEC -29° 51' 57" add notes </p>
<p>Centaurus A $\oplus 26'$ $\odot 6.8$ ♃ Apr 13 ♌ Centaurus</p> <p>☾ 05:41 pm ☀ 12:02 am ☀ 06:31 am</p>	<p>alt 84° · south · 12:02 am</p>	<p>RA 13hr 25' 28" DEC -43° 01' 09" add notes </p>
<p>Omega Centauri $\oplus 36'$ $\odot 5.3$ ♃ Apr 13 ♌ Centaurus</p> <p>☾ 05:26 pm ☀ 12:03 am ☀ 06:49 am</p>	<p>alt 79° · south · 12:03 am</p>	<p>RA 13hr 26' 47" DEC -47° 28' 46" add notes </p>
<p>Omega Nebula $\oplus 1.6'$ $\odot 6$ ♃ Jun 27 ♌ Sagittarius</p> <p>☾ 11:55 pm ☀ 04:56 am ☀ 10:08 am</p>	<p>alt 69° · north · 04:56 am</p>	<p>RA 18hr 20' 47" DEC -16° 10' 18" add notes </p>



Refer to [AAS Website Events](#) for more detail

Accommodation and facilities:

Chalets: There are four divided huts able to sleep 2 x 10 people. These will be filled on a first-served basis. With nearly 50 people booked, there will be limited scope for relocating people.

Lodge: Fully equipped kitchen plus tables and chairs to seat 100 for meals. As you are all self-catering, space will be at a premium so simplicity of preparation will be important. I believe there is only one microwave in the kitchen! **Bring your own tea towel for drying dishes.**

Ablution block: This contains toilets, showers and hand basins.

Cleaning: As we need to clean the site before we leave, please leave the huts clean and tidy on the Sunday. Please have someone in your group sweep out your hut on the Sunday, and mop if necessary.

Restrictions:

- No matches or candles in the chalets.
- No smoking in any building.
- Rope Course is **OUT OF BOUNDS**

Camping: A camping permit is required for use of other camp sites in the interior of the Park and ARC land in the eastern Hunua Ranges. Permits can be obtained from the Parks Information Centre (09-303-1530). A map of the Parks is posted in the Lodge outlining walking tracks, other facilities and park boundaries. For tent camping please contact Parksline on (09) 303-1530 to obtain permission for the use of these. This is to prevent double bookings of Park facilities with other groups using the Park and to inform groups of any restrictions or changes in conditions of use in the Park.

Boundaries: The Waharau Outdoor Education Centre is located within the Waharau Regional Park. The park is presently approximately 170 hectares and boundary fences are marked. Please keep to tracks when walking about the park and water catchment fringe land. (That water catchment land not used for actual collection of water for domestic consumption)

Auckland Astronomical Society



Behaviour in Camp

- (a) This Centre site is situated in a stand of Kanuka and pasture land with much new planting of native trees and shrubs. It is on the edge of an area supporting young native trees which are vigorously regenerating. One of the main purposes for having the outdoor centre is to provide young people with an opportunity to appreciate the bush and shore environment which abounds in bird life. Those in charge of camps are to ensure all aspects of the environment and animal life are protected and respected.
- (b) Leaders are asked to make themselves very familiar with the daily routine and make sure that this is followed to ensure good habits, good hygiene and care of the facility.
- (c) Rules of the Regional Park are:-
 - (i) Plant and animal life is protected.
 - (ii) Dogs and other pets are prohibited from the Park.
 - (iii) Firearms are not permitted.
 - (iv) Do not trespass into private farmland, restricted water catchment areas or Park Service Depots.
 - (v) Do not disturb livestock.
 - (vi) Cross fences at stiles only.
- (d) The peaceful nature of the bush environment is to be maintained. Remember that there are houses close to the camp and unfavourable comments will bring the camp into disrepute. Night activities must be organised well away from houses.
- (e) Due to the proximity of campers in the Regional Park, no loud music or other noise is permitted after 10.30 pm.
- (f) When walking to the beach walk on the side of tracks, cross road at gate and walk on grass verge. The main road is busy and carries fast traffic.
- (g) Groups using the park must be supervised by an instructor.
- (h) Smoking is prohibited in any buildings.
- (i) No open fires are to be lit anywhere in the camp area.

Fire

It is the responsibility of the camp leader to read and implement the instructions relating to fire and safety evacuation procedures **immediately upon arrival at camp**. These instructions are located in the box on the pantry shelf labelled FIRE & EMERGENCY SAFETY PROCEDURES.

NOTE: The fire assembly point is located outside the **DOUBLE GARAGE**.

Daily Routine

The following daily routines should be observed:-

- a) Ablution Block Cleaned each morning following breakfast.
 - i. Toilet bowls cleaned with brush, harpic and flushed.
Please use a minimum of detergents.
 - ii. Toilet rolls checked and replaced.
 - iii. Sinks and soap trays cleaned with steelo and a minimum of Ajax.

Auckland Astronomical Society



- iv. Floor disinfected, hosed, swept and mopped.
- v. Drains cleaned out, paper and litter removed from grates.
- vi. Showers cleaned and bins emptied.
- vii. Check sanitary disposal receptacle.
- b) Kitchen (After each meal)
 - i. Swept, dishes washed, dried and stored, sink cleaned.
 - ii. Waste scraps, vegetable matter and rapidly biodegradable substances can be put into the scrap bin provided.
 - iii. All other rubbish must be transported back to your school or base and disposed of there.
 - iv. Particular care must be taken not to allow tea leaves to enter the drains and septic tank; sieve and place in disposal pit.
 - v. At the end of a stay, the domestic stove to be pulled out and cleaned behind.
- c) Lodge
 - i. Swept after each meal, benches and tables wiped and tidied.
 - ii. Last day, floors mopped.
 - iii. Outside landing swept daily; mopped last day as required.
- d) Huts

Swept daily, beds made, packs tidied, landing swept. Mopped last day if required.
- e) Muddy Boots

Boots, gumboots and muddy footwear must not be worn inside lodge or chalets.
- f) Grounds

To be checked daily and cleared of all litter. No weeding or cutting of vegetation is allowed.

First Aid

1. The nearest local doctor is Medical Centre, Kaiaua, only open three days a week. Otherwise, the Medical Centre at Ngatea is open fulltime.
2. In an emergency, Phone 111.
3. Groups are responsible for their own first aid/medical supplies.

Other Important Information

Camp	(09) 232-2820
Caretaker	027 2801750
Store	(09) 232-2824
*Ngatea Medical Centre	(07) 867-7521
Emergency	111

Local calls only can be made from the phone available at the camp. Users who wish to make toll calls, must bring their own cellphone.

* To get to the Ngatea Medical Centre:

Take the Coast Road South, past Miranda
Waitakaruru T intersection – turn left
Go over twin bridges

Auckland Astronomical Society



Follow road North then turn off right into Piparoa Road (Main Road)
Turn left into Dent Street.
Medical Centre on the left