



Tasmanian Polar Network

Media release
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New Chair for the Tasmanian Polar Network

The Tasmanian Polar Network's annual general meeting has today voted to approve a change in leadership.

John Brennan has stepped down as Chair after seven years in the role, and Karen Rees has been elected to lead the peak body for Tasmania's Antarctic sector.

Ms Rees will be the first woman to hold the office of Chair in the 23-year history of the TPN.

She speaks three languages, has strong marketing skills and a varied background in small business and government in the areas of Antarctic infrastructure services, tourism and environmental policy.

Ms Rees has served on the TPN Executive Committee for five years, as Secretary and Public Officer and has been active in building stakeholder relationships with international Antarctic programs.

She is also one of the few women to have driven a tractor across Antarctica.

"I am both honoured and excited to be taking on the role of Chair for the TPN at an important time for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector in Tasmania," said Ms Rees.

"New opportunities abound for the sector in Tasmania, and I am looking forward to working with TPN members and stakeholders to meet the challenges of the next growth phase."

"Together with my colleagues on the TPN Executive Committee, I hope to provide continuity and inspiration to continue to drive growth and to build Tasmania's reputation as a premiere Antarctic gateway."

Ms Rees paid tribute to Mr Brennan's commitment to the role, and contribution to the sector.

"John has been an outstanding voice for our sector, as well as a popular Chair among our members," Ms Rees said.

"He has been a strong and consistent advocate on the importance of Antarctic research in driving jobs and growth for Tasmania," Ms Rees said.

The TPN has grown its member base by 25% under Mr Brennan's leadership.

Mr Brennan has worked closely with successive Tasmanian and Australian Governments to internationally promote Tasmanian Antarctic expertise.

Mr Brennan said he was stepping down from the TPN to concentrate on building his small business.

“This has been a tremendously rewarding role for me, and I am proud to have played a part in helping build capacity in the sector,” said Mr Brennan.

“It is gratifying to know that the TPN will continue to help build strong international, national and state partnerships for the greater good of Antarctic science and trade, and for the benefit of Tasmania.”

“The TPN’s incoming committee is a great mixture of new energy, skills and solid experience and I am certain that our members and stakeholders will be well served under Karen’s stewardship.”

Contact:

Karen Rees
Chair
Tasmanian Polar Network

m. 0400660117

e. karenrees1@bigpond.com