

## **Letter to the Editor**

**19 November 2014**

The flurry of activity that culminated in the Chinese Presidential visit this week has generated some significant results for Tasmania across all industry sectors.

For Tasmania's efforts to grow our Antarctic interests, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and China is a fundamental step forward to expand what the Tasmanian Polar Network and the Tasmanian Government have been seeking for the past decade. China's investment in the Antarctic is growing, and its use of Tasmania as a gateway to the East Antarctic, with the potential for other countries to follow, will come with benefits for the wider Antarctic and marine science and education sector and our Hobart and Launceston institutions.

The Tasmanian Polar Network – representing industry, government, science and business - has long advocated the benefits of engagement with China's polar program, following the experience of having France base its operations here for many years. The exchanges are significant on several levels - commercial, cultural, research and education.

Recent signs of a return to growth in expenditure for the Antarctic are positive but they need to be ongoing. Last week Australian Research Council detailed its \$24 Antarctic Gateway Partnership. This week it is the Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and China as well as a schedule of services for a Memorandum of Understanding between Tasmania and China. Ahead, the Federal Government has recommendations to consider for its Antarctic programs for the next 20 years. These are very positive signs for Tasmania – and the opportunities will present themselves if we work towards them and if the federal and state government fully commit to increased funding to reinvigorate science and logistics.

John Brennan  
Chair  
Tasmanian Polar Network

m +61 400 478 666  
e [brennanenvironmental@bigpond.com](mailto:brennanenvironmental@bigpond.com)