



# Tasmanian Polar Network

**Media release  
31 October 2014**

## **Sector backs report on Antarctic funding hike**

Tasmania's peak Antarctic voice has backed the findings of a Senate Inquiry into Australia's future activities and responsibilities in the Southern Ocean and Antarctic waters which says the sector can only grow with adequate funding for infrastructure, resources, science and education.

The Chairman of the Tasmanian Polar Network, Mr John Brennan, said the government and business interests represented by the Network are unchanged in their stance on funding if Tasmania is to appeal to other nations as a supply and stepping off point to the Antarctic.

"Not only does funding for scientists and logistics need to be maintained it needs to be increased so that we can capture future opportunities and remain attractive to other nations such as China and South Korea," said Mr Brennan.

Of particular significance is the recognition by the standing committee that the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector requires to be funded adequately if it is to benefit from attracting international scientists, students and icebreakers to the state.

"We welcome all existing commitments from the Federal Government such as the Hobart Airport runway extension and look forward to the time when flights to parts south from Hobart will be operating on a schedule.

"Tasmania appeals for several distinct reasons but as a sector we cannot rely solely on proximity to the continent and an attractive location backed up by a science hub. The evidence is abundantly clear that the time to invest in science, people and education is now or we may miss the boat," he said.

Mr Brennan said the TPN strongly endorsed the recommendations released this week by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade standing committee -

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Defence\\_and\\_Trade/Southern\\_Ocean\\_and\\_Antarctic\\_waters/Report/b02](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Southern_Ocean_and_Antarctic_waters/Report/b02)

Mr Brennan said a key recommendation was that the Commonwealth government and the Government of Tasmania work together on the development and implementation of a dedicated strategy for maximising Tasmania's potential as an Antarctic Gateway, including joint investment toward the upgrading of Hobart's port and other key infrastructure, and drawing upon the recommendations made in the 20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan.

He said the recommendations of the report are very complementary to the recent 20 year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan, submitted to the Federal government by Dr Tony Press

Other Senate Committee recommendations included -

- a recommencement of maritime patrolling in the Southern Ocean
- commitment to continued funding of the Southern Ocean Research Partnership to 2020
- that researching changes in the Southern Ocean on the Australian and global climate remain a strategy priority
- an immediate commitment be made by the government to continue funding for Antarctic and Southern Ocean scientific research beyond the sunset dates of existing collaborative initiatives in 2017 and 2019.
- that future allocation of research funding for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean include specific funds to support young and early-career scientists, in recognition of Australia's comparative advantage in maintaining world-class scientific expertise in these fields into the future.

Mr Brennan said the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector is a key contributor to the future of Tasmania's economic growth, with Hobart having the highest concentration of Antarctic and Southern Ocean scientists in the world, as well as being a hub of excellence for science research and related commercial activities.

The full list of Committee recommendations can be found here:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Defence\\_and\\_Trade/Southern\\_Ocean\\_and\\_Antarctic\\_waters/Report/b02](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Southern_Ocean_and_Antarctic_waters/Report/b02)

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