



# **SUBMISSION TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FOR THE TWENTY-YEAR AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Tasmanian Polar Network (TPN) is the State's peak Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector industry body. This submission is a response to an invitation from the Australian Government to contribute to the Twenty Year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan.

In mid-2013 the TPN released a paper "*Growing The Antarctic & Southern Ocean Sector – Buy In For Tasmania and the Nation*" (Attachment I) for use by policy-makers and stakeholders to facilitate growth and sustainability in Australia's Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector and strengthen Australia's position as an Antarctic Treaty leader. The issues raised in the paper remain current and form detail of the TPN submission.

A summary of issues is outlined below.

## **SUMMARY**

The key message from the TPN is that the time for investment into the Australian Antarctic program (AAP) is now. The Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) is the keystone to the entire sector. If AAD continues to suffer a reduced budget and a lack of capital investment jobs and economic stimulus generated from the sector will decline. On the other hand, investment in restoring budgets, allocating new infrastructure funding and maintaining and building people/positions will result in sustained economic stimulus and future growth to Tasmanian businesses, including the education/research sector.

The following table outlines the key issues and briefly discusses their relevance to the strategic plan.

The TPN has endeavoured to place a qualitative priority ranking on these issues. Priority rankings are:

**I** – Immediate next 12 – 18 months

**M** – Medium Term next 18-36 months and

**L** – Long term next 36 months +

ISSUE	PRIORITY RANKING	DISCUSSION POINTS
<p><b>Maintaining the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) internationally position and science programs.</b></p> <p><b>(Budgetary)</b></p>	<p><b>I</b></p>	<p>While there are other very important organisations that collaborate closely with the Australian Antarctic program (e.g. CSIRO, IMAS (UTas), the <b>keystone</b> to the sector is the presence of the Australian Antarctic Division in Hobart. If the critical link, (AAD), is not maintained through realistic budgets and capital investment requirements then the entire Tasmanian Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector is at real risk of decline. This will negatively affect jobs, business and the economy.</p> <p><b>Restore the annual science and operations budget and index it annually (at a minimum of CPI) AND increase the organisations capacity to allow for world class capital investment projects and modernisation (including shipping, aviation, station modernisation and development of traverse capability)</b></p>
<p><b>Attracting and Developing the best people to the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) People</b></p>	<p><b>I</b></p>	<p>Redundancies have recently been undertaken. A loss of human resources and specialist intellectual property now and into the immediate future is counter-intuitive to the investment that is required in order for Tasmania to reap future economic and social benefits from the sector.</p> <p><b>Permanent positions at the AAD should be quarantined from government departmental job cut backs/redundancies. Furthermore, transition programs should be employed to capture any skill and knowledge leakage from the AAD before people leave the organisation.</b></p>
<p><b>Australian antarctic Program – Modernisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement Icebreaker for <i>Aurora Australis</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>I</b></p>	<p>It is essential for safety, logistical and science/research reasons as well as for Australia’s international Antarctic credibility that the <i>Aurora Australis</i> be replaced without delay. The specifications for the replacement vessel should not be compromised and it must meet the future needs over the next 20 years.</p>

<p>Replacement for <i>Aurora Australis</i> (contd)</p> <p>• Airlink capacity</p>	<p><b>M</b></p>	<p>Design should take into account the commercial facilities and expertise on offer in Tasmania so that Tasmanian businesses can provide services (eg – there is no point having engines in the vessel that have to be serviced off-shore when we have mechanics/know-how here in Tasmania).</p> <p><b>Tasmanian businesses have the expertise to provide design advice, fit out, scientific equipment and ongoing repairs/maintenance and servicing of a new vessel. Specification should deliberately ensure that Tasmanian businesses can service the needs of the vessel during construction and maintenance as much as possible. Where possible the development of Tasmanian business to expand these services should be explored in partnership with the AAD and be supported through State and Federal government mechanisms.</b></p> <p>Federal funding commitment for upgrading Hobart Airport is acknowledged and supported. This will boost Australia’s capacity to offer inter-continental flights and provide sought after aviation access to other nations.</p> <p>The ability to easily and consistently transport people (scientists) and materials to East Antarctica directly from Hobart by air is essential in developing and supporting strong science programs being based in Hobart.</p> <p>Australia’s intra-continental flight capacity and opportunities to service the needs of other nations is an essential key to logistical, scientific and strategic collaboration with other nations (e.g. China).</p> <p><b>A failure to develop both inter and intra-continental airlink capacity could jeopardise future opportunities with emerging nations such as China.</b></p> <p><b>With flexible inter and intra-continental airlink capacity Tasmania will benefit from the economic inputs and this could open further opportunities for existing and new businesses.</b></p> <p><b>The AAD must be funded and supported to ensure that both inter-andintra-continental airlink capacity is modernised.</b></p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modern Station Facilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>M-L</b></p>	<p>Australian stations were designed and built in the late 1980's. While upgrades have been undertaken over the years, the fact remains that emerging nations such as China, South Korea and India are building <i>state of the art</i> stations which are energy efficient, safe and provide for contemporary research needs. For efficiency purposes and Australia's international Antarctic credibility, stations must be upgraded.</p> <p><b>Tasmanian businesses have the experience and capacity to provide services for these upgrades. The TPN and the Tasmanian Government will work with Tasmanian businesses and innovators to address capability and skills gaps.</b></p> <p><b>Other Antarctic Nations are currently building and planning stations in East Antarctica providing further economic opportunities for business skilled in this area.</b></p> <p>Increasing traverse capability will enhance Australia's position to collaborate with key nations (e.g. China, and France).</p> <p><b>Tasmanian business has a global reputation for supplying and servicing specialised traverse equipment. This business could be further developed for the benefit of the Tasmanian economy. Increased capacity could also attract other scientists to collaborate in Tasmania.</b></p>
<p><b>Procurement</b></p>	<p><b>I</b></p>	<p>While price should never compromise quality and value, regional economic development criteria would assist Tasmanian businesses in the procurement process. A partnership approach to build on intellectual value from Tasmanian private enterprises and the AAD will strengthen the sector.</p> <p><b>Overhaul the AAD procurement process to weight in favour of buying and partnering with local businesses.</b></p>

<p>Antarctic Treaty Standing and Sovereignty</p>	<p><b>M</b></p>	<p>Australia’s reputation as a leader in Antarctica is in jeopardy. Ageing station infrastructure; an expired ice breaker; recent redundancies of experienced staff from the Australian Antarctic program; an Antarctic airlink that cannot offer landing reliability, capacity or flexibility (i.e. Wilkins runway melt); and the growing interest and establishment of new stations by other nations in the AAT, means that Australia risks losing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its international credibility and standing amongst its peers and a loss of attractiveness to other Antarctic Treaty (AT) nations to do science/research and business with; and</li> <li>• Potential sovereignty and issues surrounding this subject</li> </ul> <p><b>A lack of investment in infrastructure, logistics and jobs for the AAD will weaken Australia’s standing as a leading Antarctic Treaty nation and is likely to discourage growth in business outcomes for the Tasmanian sector.</b></p> <p><b>Emerging Antarctic powers will prefer to deal and collaborate with leaders. Conversely through leadership and a reinvigorated investment by government into the sector, Australia has a genuine opportunity to attract other nations to Tasmania, which will benefit the Tasmanian economy and protect Australia’s profile and reputation.</b></p>
<p>Commercial engagement – core activity</p>	<p><b>I</b></p>	<p>The AAD should focus on core activities while those services that can be supplied by the commercial sector should be outsourced.</p> <p><b>The opportunity for Tasmanian businesses to service the needs of the AAD efficiently and meet compliance should be maximised through reducing any duplication. An assessment is recommended to ensure areas of duplication do not exist and that every attempt is being made to use local Tasmanian businesses and partner with AAD wherever possible.</b></p>

<p><b>Essential infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quay line at the Hobart port</li> <li>• Fuel</li> <li>• The Port Area and Macquarie Point Railyards Area</li> <li>• Hobart Airport Runway Extension</li> </ul>	<p><b>I</b></p> <p><b>I</b></p> <p><b>I-M</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>Adequate berthing capacity will be required to cater for increased visits of cruise and Antarctic shipping. The TPN suggests that a study be funded in collaboration with TasPorts to establish costs and any requirements for future redevelopment/upgrade to wharf areas (Macquarie Wharf 5 and 6), which are currently limited to restricted use due to unsafe infrastructure (i.e. wharf area).</p> <p><b>A future inability to respond and cater for increased shipping capacity would likely to threaten the potential gains that the commercial sector could gain from increased Antarctic, research and cruise ships.</b></p> <p>Improving refuelling efficiency and services for shipping (i.e. bunkering opportunities at Macquarie Point), increasing fuel type and storage availability/services could provide efficiencies to the AAD and French Antarctic program and also attract other nations (e.g. China, South Korea, USA and Russia) to use the Hobart Port.</p> <p><b>Fuel for shipping is an international drawcard. A scoping study and federal financial support for the appropriate infrastructure is required. If upgrades do eventuate the commercial sector will benefit as will science and logistics exchange programs.</b></p> <p>The Macquarie Point redevelopment, adjacent to the working port, presents an ideal opportunity to re-locate and develop allied industries, services and administration to areas closest to the working port and Macquarie 2 Antarctic and Cruise Terminal.</p> <p><b>Redevelopment should not compromise the future development/expansion of the sector. Incompatible uses should not be permitted under any circumstances.</b></p> <p>The commitment to extend the Hobart Airport Runway to support long range aviation operations to Antarctica is essential to develop Hobart and Australia as a key aviation access point to East Antarctica as well enabling Hobart to become a full logistic hub.</p> <p><b>Ensure that funding for the Hobart Airport Runway is allocated in a timely fashion and that development is not unduly slowed because of red tape.</b></p>
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<p><b>Essential Infrastructure (contd)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarantine Waste Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>M</b></p>	<p>Tasmania does not have a quarantine treatment facility. All waste is deep buried at domestic landfill. The current approved landfill in southern Tasmania is nearing its end of life. Tasmania must have modern infrastructure to protect its agricultural sector and natural biodiversity. International shipping and airlink generates quarantine waste. All waste returned to Australia from Antarctic operations is classified as quarantine waste. The ability to offer modern treatment would not only provide a better level of protection for Tasmania, but also be appealing to nations visiting the state.</p> <p><b>Support for a modern quarantine treatment facility should be provided from federal and state level. Infrastructure would not only provide quarantine protection to Tasmania but also generate jobs and provide a drawcard for use by other Antarctic nations.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazardous Antarctic Legacy Waste</li> </ul>	<p><b>I</b></p>	<p>Tasmania is the only state in the country that does not have a Class C Hazardous waste landfill facility for the storage of hazardous waste (e.g. heavy metal impacted soil and other solids).</p> <p>All nations in the east Antarctic sector have legacy waste issues including contaminated materials. Australia has been proactive in initiating Antarctic legacy waste clean-up and in the past materials have been returned to Tasmania. For future materials to return to Tasmania a C cell is required. The remainder of the Tasmanian community will benefit from a C cell facility because legacy waste from heavy industry within the state will be handled as well.</p> <p><b>Support for the Copping landfill C Cell is required so that the AAD can address legacy waste issues and so that we can offer services to other nations within the east Antarctic sector. This would also provide economic benefit to a Tasmanian regional area.</b></p>

<p><b>Hub of Excellence and Expertise</b></p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cold climate and remote medicine</li> <li>• Polar training</li> <li>• Communications/technology</li> <li>• Maritime &amp; Polar Law</li> <li>• Logistics</li> <li>• Expertise in Antarctic trades and operations</li> </ul>	<p><b>M-L</b></p>	<p>Tasmania has established Southern Ocean, Sub Antarctic and Antarctic expertise. There is real potential to further develop a number of niche related organisations/business. Cold climate medicine, Polar training (evacuation, survival, search, rescue and fire), remote communications/technology and maritime and polar law are several opportunities that are either being developed now or are being considered. Growth in these areas would further consolidate Tasmania as an international drawcard for professionals who seek collaborative outcomes and education opportunities.</p> <p>Tasmania has experience through the AAD and other business of logistic support and supply for East Antarctica.</p> <p>Should Hobart become an important international Antarctic centre for both science and logistics there is economic opportunity for local business to develop specialised skills to service both Australian and International stations on the ice. This is particularly the case if aviation access enables a fly in fly out workforce to be developed.</p> <p><b>Investment and creating an environment for these niche organisations and businesses to establish and grow will be of benefit to the Tasmanian economy and reputation.</b></p>
<p><b>Continued support to the TPN for expos and international meetings</b></p>	<p><b>I - M</b></p>	<p>The TPN is a voluntary organisation that works in collaboration with the Federal and Tasmanian Govt as well as the ADD to attend and engage at relevant expos and international meetings (e.g. COMNAP). Networking, relationship building and marketing has directly benefited the Tasmanian commercial sector. The TPN has a proven track record of making connections, building local and international relationships. A weakening of support for the TPN would undermine the sector and put in jeopardy the investment made over many years.</p> <p><b>The TPN requires ongoing cooperation and support from the federal and state government to attend future expos and international meetings.</b></p>
<p><b>Cut Red Tape</b></p>	<p><b>I-M</b></p>	<p>Improving communications on protocols for quarantine, customs, port security and public vessel status (PVS) would reduce barriers to other nations wanting to undertake business in Tasmania.</p> <p><b>Red tape could be a disincentive to potential expansion of the sector. It needs to be made easy to negotiate. We want to encourage international collaboration for science, logistics with benefits to flow on to Tasmanian businesses and the community.</b></p>



<p><b>Maintenance of Federal support for Hobart based International Secretariats</b></p> <p><b>CCAMLR, ACAP AND SOOS</b></p>	<p><b>M</b></p>	<p>Hobart is home to a number of international secretariats. These organisations provide employment and global profile for Tasmania and for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector. Tasmania cannot afford to lose any of these secretariats.</p> <p><b>Appropriate investment commitment must be on going to ensure that these secretariats remain in Tasmania and that any others may be attracted to the State.</b></p>
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Please refer to Attachment I “Growing the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Sector – Buy in for Tasmania and the Nation”