



Questions on Notice from the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications:
Australian Antarctic Division Funding

Thank you for the opportunity to make a further submission, from the committees' questions on notice, to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications inquiry into the funding of the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD).

The Tasmanian Polar Network

The Tasmanian Polar Network was incorporated in 1999 and has more than 70 members drawn from all areas of the Tasmanian Antarctic community, including private businesses, educational institutions, research bodies, and government agencies.¹

TPN members provide a niche and wide range of specialised goods and services to all organisations operating in the Southern Ocean and in Antarctica. This includes the Australian Antarctic Program and other National Antarctic Programmes.

The TPN's vision is for Tasmania to be the world's leading hub of excellence for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector.

The TPN's mission is to strengthen, promote and grow Tasmania's business, education, training, and research expertise in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector.

Questions on Notice

Senator DUNIAM: Perhaps on notice, I'm inviting you to paint on a blank canvas how the TPN would fund Antarctic science into the future. You might want to give that some thought. Additionally on notice, if you could check with the membership of the TPN whether there have been any cancellations of work as a result of changes to the programmed work of the AAD, I'd be grateful as well—just on notice. You may not be able to provide anything further, but I figured that today it would be difficult for you to give me a direct answer on that.

Long-term, consistent funding of Antarctic research is essential to understanding critical changes to the Antarctic environment and its related resources and therefore understanding broader impacts on Australian populations such as extreme weather, climate-driven events, and sea-level rise, as well as understanding geopolitical and legal tensions within the Antarctic Treaty System which is critical to Australian peace and security. Long-term horizons of funding will ensure Hobart is seen as and retains its place as an Antarctic Gateway city, and deliver strong scientific understanding for not just Tasmania and Australia, but the whole world.

¹Tasmanian Polar Network (link [here](#))

There are various ways in which this could be achieved in terms of institutional structure, as discussed in the O’Kane Review, and as suggested in the University of Tasmania submission, but given that research needs to be coordinated alongside AAD’s logistical capabilities and science capability, AAD needs to remain a strongly supported and enabled institution to deliver science alongside the university and other government departments undertaking science.

To attract the best and brightest researchers, and retain them to ensure the best results, opportunities need to be long-term and stable, and the outlook bright. This can only be done in partnership between government, research organisations and other supporting institutions.

With regard to cancellation of work supporting AAD science projects, our TPN membership has not had any cancellations of works for which there were committed purchase orders, however a number of projects that have been in discussion for many years have been delayed.

Tasmanian Polar Network thanks the Senate Committee for allowing the Network to provide this further information to ensure that Hobart and Tasmania remain a prominent and exceptional hub for Antarctic and Southern Ocean expertise, culture, economic benefit, and critical science.

Contact

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