



Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories:
Inquiry into the Importance of Antarctica to Australia's National Interest

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories' inquiry into the importance of Antarctica to Australia's national interest.

About the Tasmanian Polar Network

The Tasmanian Polar Network (TPN) 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.

Terms of Reference

The TPN would like to highlight the following regarding the Terms of Reference in the inquiry into the importance of Antarctica to Australia's national interest.

a) upholding the principles of the Antarctic Treaty System;

The Network recognises that stability and security in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean region, facilitated by the Antarctic Treaty System, are of the utmost importance to Australia. The Network fully supports Australia's continuing leadership role in the various aspects of the Antarctic Treaty System.

b) conserving and protecting the unique biodiversity and environment of Antarctica;

The unique biodiversity and environment of Antarctica are a primary driver of Australia's involvement in the Antarctic Treaty System, and it is in Australia's best interests to continue to protect and preserve this environment. Such protection and preservation of the biodiversity and broader environment will assist in ensuring ongoing security and societal benefit of the region. For the TPN, valuing Antarctica's unique environment will benefit one of its primary gateways—Tasmania—through the provision of scientific endeavour, tourism, supporting industries such as port facilities, logistics, and supplies, and cultural connection.

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

c) developing a better understanding of global environmental and climate science; and

Understanding Antarctica's role in the global environment and climate is critical to knowing the impacts of weather and climate on many aspects of Australians' lives, including but not limited to sea-level rise and extreme weather events. The TPN supports the large Tasmanian Antarctic, ocean and climate research community and the major role that it plays in better understanding global environmental and climate science.

d) contributing to Australia's economic and social development.

An economic analysis undertaken in 2021 states that Tasmania's Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector contributes almost \$159 million annually to the Tasmanian economy, and supports 947 FTE.²

Economic and social development for Tasmania is derived from:

- the operation of the Australian Antarctic Program, including the RSV *Nuyina*;
- port and cultural visits from other National Antarctic Programmes (including most recently France, Italy, China, Germany, and the United States),
- the large Antarctic, climate and ocean research and technical sector;
- operation of large-scale research infrastructure such as the RV *Investigator* and the Integrated Marine Observing System;
- support from the large, medium, and small-scale industries related to all of these operations and institutions.

The Australian Antarctic Program, which largely operates from Hobart, is a major source of funding and revenue for the Tasmanian community, and many of our members supply goods and services to the Australian government and other National Antarctic Programmes. This includes the provision of goods, research equipment services, employment, and technical expertise. The concentration of research institutions in Tasmania also attracts many international and national conferences, meetings and workshops.

The TPN stands by to assist in the ongoing growth of economic and social development derived from this sector.

Tasmanian Polar Network thanks the Senate Committee for allowing the Network to provide this 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.

With thanks,

Tasmanian Polar Network

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² Wells Economic Analysis Report into the Contribution of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Sector to the Tasmanian Economy 2019-20 (link [here](#)).