

TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION TO FEDERAL STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Australia's Future Activities and Responsibilities in the Southern Ocean and Antarctic Waters

Background

As Australia's Antarctic Gateway, Tasmania is very much part of the nation's Antarctic and Southern Ocean (ANSO) activities. This involvement has built on the Australian Antarctic Division's (AAD) long-standing presence in the state, along with historical and geographical precedents. It is also closely linked to the social, economic and educational benefits Tasmania enjoys as the nation's Antarctic/ANSO Gateway¹.

National and international connectivity are 'force multipliers' for Hobart's international Antarctic Gateway's standing. They underpin socio-economic benefits, as well as strategic assets, that Tasmania enjoys as a consequence. As one of five internationally-recognised Antarctic Gateway ports, Hobart is alone in offering a unique blend of: (a) amenities attached to a modern and attractive capital city with excellent maritime² and air transport infrastructure, (b) world-class expertise in Antarctic, Sub-Antarctic and marine research, logistics, support services and education, and (c) ready access to specialist ANSO cold climate expertise through a unique government-business alliance – the Tasmanian Polar Network (TPN)^{3,4}. Together these attributes are at the centre of Hobart's internationally-recognised 'ANSO Gateway brand'.

Pursuant to the above, this submission focuses on items (b) and (c) identified in the 4 April 2014 letter to Tasmanian Premier Hon Will Hodgman MP from Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens.

¹ The Tasmanian ANSO sector employed 1,185 Tasmanians full time in 2011/12, with an average wage (\$118,400) just under twice the mean state wage. The sector contributed \$187.4 million to the Tasmanian Gross State Product (GSP) in 2011/12, with \$142.5 million coming from ANSO organisations (a 12% growth compared to 2009/10) and \$44.9 million from ANSO businesses. Flow-on from spending by Tasmanian ANSO sector employees in 2011/12 contributed a further \$256.9 million to the state's GSP, as well as \$193.5 million to the GSP of other Australian states. The sector's direct, indirect and induced contribution to Tasmania's GSP in 2011/12 stands at close to \$450 million (\$444.2 million).

² http://www.tmn.org.au/about_tmn.html

³ Since 1999, the TPN has served as the central Australian contact point for Antarctic and Southern Ocean-related business enquiries. With a membership of 60 individuals, businesses, education institutions, research bodies and government agencies, the TPN is supported financial and provided by the Tasmanian Government. It also provides direct input into national Antarctic policy initiatives.

⁴ Details of Antarctic sector amenities and business capabilities at : <http://www.tasmanianpolarnetwork.com/about.html> and http://www.tasmanianpolarnetwork.com/uploads/7/6/6/9/7669909/dedv9909_antarctic_capability_booklet_edition_2_web_spreads.pdf

Cooperation Under International Treaties and Agreements

Tasmania is home to various ANSO-affiliated institutions (Table 1); the majority of which have strong international associations and a marine or Antarctic focus. The most prominent of these is the 25-member Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) which is supported by both the Federal and Tasmanian Governments. It has been located in Hobart since 1982 and is one of the largest international organisations domiciled in Australia.

The benefits flowing from the rich mix and high standing of Tasmanian-based ANSO institutions has meant that Australia has been able to:

- Play a leading role in Antarctic, and globally-related, important research;
- Build collaborative partnerships with other Antarctic nations to enhance its leadership role in the important Antarctic Treaty System commensurate with its standing as an original Antarctic Treaty Consultative State and claimant;
- Leverage international cooperation, both in-kind and economically, to act as a 'force multiplier' for its own ANSO activities;
- Build a world-leading Antarctic support and logistical capability; and
- Fulfil its national and international legislative, environmental and cultural heritage obligations.

These benefits have delivered positive flow-on effects to Tasmanian-based ANSO activities and the state's ANSO Gateway. They comprise international collaborative programmes, most notably the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem Cooperative Research Centre (ACE-CRC), a proposed Hobart-based Antarctic Gateway Research Partnership and related ANSO infrastructure development. The latter includes upgrading of Hobart airport to improve air-based connectivity to Antarctica and various memoranda between Tasmania and international entities on Gateway cooperation⁵.

While recognising the heavy costs associated with Australia's ANSO activities, the Tasmanian Government is concerned that:

- **Australia's ability to identify, forge and meet ANSO needs to its benefit will be eroded if fiscal priority is not given to essential activities, where these rely on, or underpin, internationally cooperative endeavours;**

⁵ For example, the 2013 *Memorandum of Understanding on Antarctic Gateway Cooperation between the Government of Tasmania and the State Oceanic Administration of China*

- **Erosion of Australia's international ANSO affiliations/cooperation will negatively impact future sustainability of the Tasmanian ANSO Gateway. This would compromise the state's regional development by possibly foreclosing on socio-economic benefits from, and investment in, Tasmanian-based ANSO-associated activities, and**
- **Both the above concerns will coalesce to erode Tasmania's place in Antarctic affairs at a national and international level.**

Appropriate Resourcing

In a recent letter to the Prime Minister on 4 April 2014, the TPN expressed concern that impending cuts to the AAD's budget do not align with the Tasmanian Antarctic sector's expected growth outcomes. In his reply of 16 April 2014, the Minister for the Environment, The Hon Greg Hunt MP, reiterated the Federal Government's commitment to funding the Antarctic Gateway Partnership as a way to complement the AAD's key role in delivering the national Antarctic Program by drawing on expanded contributions from other research institutions. He also indicated that a partnership approach could be pursued more actively in relation to the Program's operational and logistical support.

Specifically, the Tasmanian Government notes that:

- Potential economic losses attached to economic downgrading of Tasmania's Antarctic Gateway may prove contrary to the objectives of the Federal Government's *Joint Commonwealth and Tasmanian Economic Council*⁶;
- It has a role to play in expanding ANSO Gateway capabilities, value and cost-efficiency to ensure that national Antarctic interests are not compromised, and/or undermined. Consequently, Australia's Antarctic strategic interests, as well as geopolitical, diplomatic, legal, scientific and policy expectations, would be boosted by expanding Tasmania as the ANSO gateway for relevant expeditions and scientific research in Eastern Antarctica and the Australian Antarctic Territories;
- There are opportunities to: (a) build on and further stimulate economic, social, research and policy benefits derived from Tasmania's status as the national Antarctic Gateway, and, as already noted, (b) build efficient, effective and internationally-integrated partnerships amongst Hobart-based ANSO research institutions, and
- Delivery of the current AAD Modernisation Program is crucial to the Tasmanian Gateway's future sustainability.

⁶ <http://jbh.ministers.treasury.gov.au/media-release/034-2013/>

In the Tasmanian Government's view the Federal and State Governments should:

- **Provide a climate of support, mutual reinforcement, essential expertise and effective delivery of required infrastructure and/or outcomes to ensure that strategic priorities are met by both the national Antarctic program and Hobart Antarctic Gateway;**
- **Mandate integration and coordination of Federal and Tasmanian Government action, so that current and future Antarctic strategic objectives continue to be met;**
- **Explore the possible development of public-private partnerships between the Australian Antarctic Program and Tasmanian businesses where relevant, and in relation to delivering better than current Program and Gateway outcomes, and**
- **Recognize that both national and Tasmanian commitment are important to identifying, inspiring and legitimizing the strategic importance of Australia's Antarctic interests.**

This recognises that:

- **Aligning ANSO funding at Federal and state level is essential to ensure that significant disinvestment in the Australian Antarctic Program does not occur at this currently critical time⁷, thereby causing an erosion of certainty about the Program's future, as well as greatly reducing its potential to deliver high-quality scientific research⁸.**

Equally, whole-of-Government coordination is critically important to realistically align:

- **National Antarctic strategic, and Tasmanian socio-economic, interests to be outcome and mutually-benefit focused;**
- **Formal and informal (i.e. task-focused) stakeholder cooperation (e.g. between the Tasmanian Government, AAD and DFAT⁹ etc.) at all levels of government to ensure sustained, coherent and cohesive delivery of essential Gateway outcomes consistent with national strategic imperatives, and**
- **Tasmanian-based ANSO enterprises, notably the Tasmanian Government-supported TAG¹⁰ and TPN through expansion of regular meetings between AAD and State Government managers to ensure sustained, and ground level, translation of national Antarctic policy/strategies into positive Hobart Antarctic Gateway outcomes.**

⁷ TPN position paper at: <http://www.tasmanianpolarnetwork.com/publications.html>

⁸ Under Antarctic Treaty Articles II and III, scientific research is viewed as the 'currency' of Antarctic involvement. See paper by A. Hemmings at: <http://www.int-res.com/articles/esep2010/10/e010p005.pdf>

⁹ AAD - Australian Antarctic Division, DFAT – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

¹⁰ TAG was established in 2009 and provides an opportunity for industry and all tiers of government to set a collaborative strategic agenda. It pursues a targeted approach to new opportunities to build and grow the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector, particularly its gateway component, for the benefit of all stakeholders. Membership comprises representatives from the Tasmanian Government, AAD, DFAT, Hobart City Council, Tasports and Hobart International Airport

Table 1: Tasmanian-based institutions and organisations with Antarctic and Southern Ocean Affiliations

| Institution/Organisation | Location | Purpose |
|--|--|--|
| <p><u>Tasmania</u> University of Tasmania (UTAS)</p> <p>Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)</p> <p>Antarctic Tasmania & Science Research Development (ATSRD)</p> <p>[Department of Economic Development, Tourism & the Arts] (DEDTA)</p> <p>Climate Change Office [Department of Premier & Cabinet]</p> | <p>Hobart & Launceston</p> <p>Hobart Waterfront</p> <p>Hobart</p> <p>Hobart</p> | <p>Education & Research</p> <p>Education & Research</p> <p>Economic Development & Facilitation</p> <p>Research Oversight & Policy Management</p> |
| <p><u>National</u> Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)</p> <p>CSIRO Marine & Atmospheric Research Division (CMAR)</p> <p>Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS)</p> <p>Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem Cooperative Research Centre (ACE CRC)</p> <p>Australian Maritime College</p> | <p>Kingston</p> <p>Hobart Waterfront</p> <p>Hobart Waterfront</p> <p>Hobart Waterfront</p> <p>Launceston</p> | <p>Operational Implementation National Antarctic Program</p> <p>Ocean & Atmospheric Research</p> <p>Southern Ocean IMOS Node</p> <p>Climate Science</p> <p>Maritime Education, Training & Research</p> |
| <p><u>International</u> Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)</p> <p>Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses & Petrels (ACAP)</p> <p>Southern Ocean Observing System</p> <p>International Antarctic Institute</p> | <p>Hobart</p> <p>Hobart</p> <p>Hobart Waterfront</p> <p>Hobart Waterfront</p> | <p>International Secretariat</p> <p>International Secretariat</p> <p>International Network</p> <p>International Network</p> |
| <p><u>Business Networks & Other Groups</u> Tasmanian Polar Network</p> <p>Tasmania Maritime Network</p> <p>Tasmanian Antarctic Gateway Group</p> | <p>Hobart</p> <p>Hobart</p> <p>Hobart</p> | <p>Business Network</p> <p>Business Network</p> <p>Advisory Group</p> |