



ANARE CLUB Inc.
Reg No. A0014408G (Vic.)

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Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
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8 May 2024

Dear Committee Secretary,

The National Council of the ANARE Club wishes to thank the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories for its permission to receive a late submission to the Inquiry into the Importance of Antarctica to Australia's national interests.

By way of background, our submission provides a brief summary of the history and involvement of the ANARE Club and that of its members since the Club's formation in 1951, and its role since that time, as a close working partner with the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) and since 2001, with the Australian Antarctic Division, when the administration of the Division's efforts in Antarctica became known as the AAP / AAP (Australian Antarctic Program). Over the years the Division has been variously administered by a number of Government Departmental Ministries.

Our submission also addresses the Club's views on the specific terms of reference set and announced by the Committee Chair, in the media statement setting up the Inquiry, 'that; "Australia has a proud history as an Antarctic leader. The Australian Antarctic Territory covers approximately 42 per cent of the continent and Australia plays a significant role in maintaining the continent for peace, scientific exploration, and environmental protection."

The Inquiry's terms of reference state that it is to inquire into and report on the importance of Antarctica to Australia's national interests, including;

- *upholding the principles of the Antarctic Treaty System;*
- *conserving and protecting the unique biodiversity and environment of Antarctica;*

- *developing a better understanding of global environmental and climate science; and*
- *contributing to Australia's economic and social development.*

From the outset, the ANARE Club is fundamentally concerned about the rising geopolitical tensions in Antarctica in the face of a growing world disorder. It furthermore agrees that it is timely and **recommends** that it is absolutely critical for Australia as a major signatory to the original Antarctic Treaty, to re-examine its role and its protection of the World's last pristine region, all this in the context of a World facing the emerging crippling economic and social effects of Climate Change.

1. Brief History of the ANARE Club Inc. (1951 -)

The ANARE Club was established in 1951 by returning expeditioners from Heard and Macquarie Islands and has a proud continuous history. It will celebrate its 75 years of its existence in October 2026.

The Club is Australia's only body representing the history of the expeditioners past and present, men and women who have served at Australia's post-war stations in Antarctica. Their early pioneering activities in establishing and operating Antarctic and sub-Antarctic stations, firstly the Sub-Antarctic stations of Heard Island (1947-1955) and Macquarie Island (1948 -) and then the continental stations of Mawson (1954 -), Davis (1957-) and Casey/-Wilkes (1959 -), formed the foundations of the modern Australian Antarctic Program.

Not only did these expeditioners maintain the work and observations at these stations, but over the years they undertook extensive exploration, research, discovery and mapping of Australian Antarctic Territory, with basic means including our ever-faithful husky dog teams. They left an enormous foundation and legacy for Australia's efforts in East Antarctica as we know it today.

The ANARE Club is incorporated in Victoria and has an active elected 15-member National Council, with Branches in most States and Territories. It is run entirely by dedicated volunteers. The Club issues a quarterly Journal aptly named 'Aurora'. It has an Australia -wide membership, but like all similar community bodies, it faces declining membership as those in their 80s & 90s pass away and as younger expeditioners seemingly not seeing the need to join our Antarctic community, a phenomenon all too present in today's changing world. Nevertheless, the Club is now reaching out to all people interested in Antarctica and the families of expeditioners, and there has been a pleasing upward trend in our numbers. The Club receives no Government support and is wholly funded by its members and from time to time by fund raising. It manages an active interactive website at www.anareclub.org.

The ANARE Club's archives maintain a continuous post war record of the corporate history of Australia's operations in Antarctica and include memorabilia and diaries written or held by our early expeditioners since 1947. The Club has invested in establishing extensive video archival recordings of early expeditioners and in recent years has arranged a number of key anniversaries commemorating the establishment of our early stations. It has also extended these important anniversaries internationally, partnering with the Norwegian Embassy in 2019 (100th anniversary *Fanefjord-/ HMAS Wyatt Earp*) and the Russian Embassy in 2020 (200th anniversary Bellingshausen's Circumnavigation / visit to Macquarie Island in 1820). In 2023 the ANARE Club commemorated the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of ANARE/AAP with the Division, including organising the release of a special Pre-Paid Envelope marking the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Macquarie Island through collaboration with Australia Post.

The ANARE Club, despite its long-standing advocacy for the establishment of a Hobart based Antarctic Museum, has welcomed the establishment of the Australian National Heritage Collection at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. With the recent removal of historical artifacts from the Antarctic Division to the Heritage Collection, it suspects that its role as the unofficial custodian of the Australia's Antarctic corporate history, will now be substantially increased.

The Club's Purposes, as defined in its Rules of Association, aligns well with the Committee's terms of reference and includes a mandate;

To generate awareness of Australian Antarctic history, and to contribute to archival resources.

To serve as a source of information and informed opinion on Antarctic issues and developments.

To generate awareness and interest among the wider public in issues and developments affecting Antarctica and in particular the Australian Antarctic Territory and Macquarie Island.

2. Returning to the Committee of Inquiry's terms of Reference.

The ANARE Club wishes to make the following observations and comments on the specific matters raised and also wishes to raise a significant Anniversary alert, which relates to the outcomes of the Inquiry's findings:

2.1 upholding the principles of the Antarctic Treaty System

As indicated earlier in this submission the Club believes that in today's disjointed World order, it is critically important that the Antarctic Treaty System, with its principles and protocols, largely unscathed since its adoption in 1961, continues to be the governing force for the activities of all nations maintaining permanent bases in Antarctica. We understand that the Treaty obligations have gone through some minor iterations to update it, but the key overriding factors and issues remain the protection of this fragile environment and its land and marine wildlife.

2.2 conserving and protecting the unique biodiversity and environment of Antarctica

Australia has been a leader in the protection and conservation of the Antarctic and Sub Antarctic biodiversity with its remediation and bio-diversity work and modern station operating systems and maintenance protocols aiming to minimize the human impact on the Antarctic environment.

The Club **recommends** that consideration should be given to lending the Division's biodiversity / remediation teams to other nations who have poor or no biodiversity / remediation protocols. The Club notes that Australia itself has a responsibility to clean up the Heard Island Station which it left in 1955.

2.3 developing a better understanding of global environmental and climate science

With more and more 'Attenborough'-style documentaries and with Antarctic tourism being developed and promoted largely in West Antarctica, the Australian public has become more aware of Australia's responsibilities in managing the continent as a whole.

Since 2009 the ANARE Club, initially in association with the Royal Society of Victoria, has arranged for over 300 Australian and New Zealand Secondary School students to experience day flights to Antarctica. This arrangement has also extended to Australian University groups conducting in-flight

projects over Antarctica. Changes to the capacity of the Qantas Aircraft (from the 747s to modern Dreamliners) has led to the curtailing of these student experiences, but University project groups still participate.

The Club is currently exploring ways with the STEM network to facilitate this experience with science teachers: the aim is to influence positively the next generation of Antarctic researchers.

2.4 contributing to Australia's economic and social development

The Club is aware of the burgeoning economic costs associated with the physical maintenance of Australia's presence in Australian Antarctic Territory and at the same time supports the multi-million-dollar investment by the Federal Government on the basis that such investment leads to quality research and development by our Antarctic Agencies across all research sectors.

The previous experiences with a one ship policy have demonstrated what a fully planned re-supply and marine research program can undertake, for example with our own *Aurora Australis* and now with our new state of art Research vessel RSV *Nuyina*. The Club is hopeful that this vessel can successfully deliver to all of our agencies and partners operating in Antarctica today.

The ANARE Club strongly supports the concept of Hobart as the 'Gateway to Antarctica' and recognises the economic spin off to the economic development of Tasmania. The Club **recommends** that proper port facilities be developed and that the refuelling issues with the *Nuyina* be expeditiously resolved.

The question of the importance of Antarctica in terms of contributing to Australia's social development is problematic.

Australia's presence in Antarctica is now essentially as a global citizen leading with other Antarctic Nations to protect the World's last pristine wilderness. It is the only Southern Hemisphere nation with such a large responsibility in managing the largest territorial claim and as such has a unique social responsibility as the world grapples to understand the related environmental effects of climate change within Australia itself and within Antarctica

The Club **recommends** that this important responsibility is not hindered by bureaucratic issues and that an orderly, balanced and experienced approach to maintaining a fully resourced annual resupply and research program is adopted and administered and planned in a professional prioritised manner befitting our nation as a leading Antarctic participant.

3. General comment. An important 100th Antarctic Anniversary Commemoration at Australia's doorstep.

The austral summers of 2029-30 and 2030-31 will mark the 100th anniversaries of Sir Douglas Mawson's famous British, Australian, New Zealand Antarctic Expedition (BANZARE).

The significance of this Expedition is enormous within the context of the outcomes of this Inquiry, for it was the outcomes of this Expedition which ultimately led to the British Government handing over to the Australian Government, the establishment and responsibility for Australian Antarctic Territory. New Zealand was handed their responsibility for the Ross Sea Dependency in 1923, but it was Mawson's BANZARE Expedition which galvanised the British Government to move in 1933 to hand that part of East Antarctica

over to the Australian Government, which subsequently became known as Australian Antarctic Territory and which was proclaimed in 1936.

The reports of Mawson's two summer voyages provide Australian and world researchers with a remarkable platform to examine an 100th year longitudinal study of changes in East Antarctica.

The Club **recommends** that this Mawson centenary event calls for the Australian Government to sponsor a key anniversary international conference involving researchers from the World's polar nations lead by Australian researchers and agencies.

This legacy conference could be seen as a prelude to the 5th International Polar Year planned for 2032/33, which will again see Australia being a major participant as it was during 1957/58 and again in 2007/08.

Interestingly Australia, through the members of the Royal Society of Victoria, has taken part in all four International Polar years since the first was held in 1882-83. It is hoped that the Society will again participate in the forthcoming 5th 2032/33 International Polar Year, thus preserving its unique 150-year record.

The Club is exploring the possibility of chartering a ship to follow Mawson's historic summer voyages, albeit in a much-reduced time frame, and is prepared to become a major contributor to such a conference if supported by the Federal Government or its agencies.

Such exposure will continue to support Australia's position in the forefront of international polar and climate change research and advocacy and will not only capture the imagination of the Australian public, but will enhance their understanding of the importance of Antarctica to Australia's national interests.

I will be pleased to provide a further expansion of the foregoing submission and appear before the Committee of Inquiry, should this be deemed necessary.

Yours sincerely,

David Dodd
President,
2023-2024 National Council

***The ANARE Club celebrating the 75th Anniversary of its founding in
October 2026.***