

## **Appendix 4**

### **Recommendations of the 20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan**

## Recommendations of the 20 Year Australian Antarctic Strategic Plan

The recommendations of this report are made to provide guidance on how Australia can ensure that its Antarctic interests are protected and advanced over the next 20 years and beyond. Many of the recommendations require whole-of-Government consideration in the near to short term in order to ensure that Australia's relative standing in Antarctica is protected.

### Australia's Antarctic Interests

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**Recommendation 1** - The Australian Government should reaffirm Australia's Antarctic interests and put in place mechanisms to ensure whole-of-Government commitment to their implementation.

- Responsibility for Australia's Antarctic interests should be explicitly assigned to relevant agencies.

The Australian Government should also consider amending these interests and adding the additional interest of "Support a strong and effective Antarctic Treaty System".

**HIGH PRIORITY-IMMEDIATE-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 2** - The replacement for *Aurora Australis* should be capable of meeting Australia's likely needs for at least the next 20 years and be used to Australia's maximum advantage:

- It should be more ice-capable than *Aurora Australis* enabling year-round access to the sea-ice zone;
- It should be Australian owned, controlled, and flagged;
- It must be used efficiently for resupply of Australia's Antarctic stations;
- It should be used as a platform for a program of logistic collaboration with other countries; and
- It should be engaged in conducting world class research in the Southern Ocean and Antarctica to lead Australia's Antarctic science efforts.

When not engaged directly in Australia's Antarctic program, the vessel should be available, where appropriate, for other uses by the Australian Government.

**HIGH PRIORITY-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 3** - Australia should build on its development of ground-breaking inter-continental air transport by exploring capabilities including those that were previously unavailable, including:

- Options for intra-continental air transport to link with the direct flights from Hobart to Wilkins Aerodrome;
- The viability of flying ski-equipped aircraft directly from Australia to Antarctica, or other direct flight options;
- Assessing the long-term viability of the Wilkins Aerodrome; and
- The option of regular heavy-lift aircraft flights from the extended Hobart Airport runway to Wilkins Aerodrome or elsewhere in Antarctica.

**HIGH PRIORITY-MEDIUM TERM-ONGOING**

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**Recommendation 4** - Australia should re-acquire its deep field traverse capability to support high priority science.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 5** - Australia should develop a program for the modernisation of its Antarctic stations which includes:

- More efficient station operations;
- Increased flexibility in the configuration and use of assets and personnel;
- Increased capacity to support science and high priority activities throughout the Australian Antarctic Territory; and
- Increased collaboration with other nations active in East Antarctica.

**HIGH PRIORITY-MEDIUM TERM-ONGOING**

## **Australia's Administration of the Australian Antarctic Territory**

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**Recommendation 6** - The Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of the Environment should undertake a review of legislation and administrative practices applicable to the Australian Antarctic Territory to ensure that it is effectively administered.

**HIGH PRIORITY-MEDIUM TERM-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 7** - Australia should consider administrative steps such as:

- Appointing ex-officio the Director of the Australian Antarctic Division as Administrator to the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands (this could be done through amendment to the *Australian Antarctic Territory Act* (1954) and the *Heard Island and McDonald Islands Act* (1953));
- Adopting flags for the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands (the adoption of these flags could be done as part of a broader Government program to adopt flags for all of Australia's external territories including the Coral Sea, and Ashmore Reef and Cartier Islands);
- Ensuring a continuing program of mapping of the Australian Antarctic Territory and its adjacent maritime zones; and
- Facilitating a program of visits by Senior Government figures to the Australian Antarctic Territory.

**MEDIUM PRIORITY-MEDIUM TERM**

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## Regional Security

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**Recommendation 8** - Australia should work to ensure that the Antarctic Treaty System remains strong and stable.

HIGH PRIORITY-ONGOING

**Recommendation 9** - Australia should devote diplomatic resources to provide influence in the Antarctic Treaty System, and to work with Parties within it, in order to maintain Antarctic Treaty System norms and practices which keep the Antarctic free from discord, conflict and militarisation.

HIGH PRIORITY-ONGOING

**Recommendation 10** - Australia should engage with other Antarctic Treaty Parties operating in the Australian Antarctic Territory.

HIGH PRIORITY-ONGOING

**Recommendation 11** - Australia should specifically engage with countries now emerging as significant players in Antarctica, especially in the Australian Antarctic Territory.

HIGH PRIORITY-IMMEDIATE-ONGOING

**Recommendation 12** - Australia should ensure that important existing bi-lateral arrangements it has with other countries (for example its Treaty with France, and bi-lateral agreements with France, China, Russia, and New Zealand) are adequately serviced and supported. Australia should give further consideration to its use of these kinds of arrangements.

MEDIUM PRIORITY-ONGOING

**Recommendation 13** - Australia should engage with natural groupings in the Antarctic Treaty System to pursue common objectives in ensuring the stability and strength of the Antarctic Treaty System.

HIGH PRIORITY-ONGOING

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## Antarctic Science

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**Recommendation 14** - The Australian Antarctic Division Chief Scientist should meet annually with the Heads of the Integrated Marine Observing System; the Marine National Facility Steering Committee; and the Australian Research Council, and others as required, to ensure coordination of research effort in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

**HIGH PRIORITY-IMMEDIATE**

**Recommendation 15** - Australia should retain the 'hybrid' system of supporting Antarctic science, with the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of the Environment providing the core of researchers focussed on delivering priority scientific advice to government, and national and international research institutions and universities providing competitive-based research against Australia's Antarctic Science Strategic Plan.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 16** - Funding for Australian Antarctic Science grants should be increased substantially to:

- Facilitate national and international collaboration in priority science in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean;
- Facilitate the planning and conduct of logistically complex priority research programs that may extend over a number of years;
- Encourage greater collaboration among nations in East Antarctica; and
- Demonstrate Australian leadership in Antarctic science.

Funding for collaborative research should not be allocated at the expense of other core functions of the Australian Antarctic Program.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM**

**Recommendation 17** - In conjunction with an increase in Australian Antarctic Science grants, the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of the Environment should budget sufficient appropriation to support the planning and conduct of major campaigns, particularly those that rely on complex logistics and which may extend over a number of years.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 18** - Australia should continue to engage in, promote and facilitate international collaboration in Antarctic science and governance.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM-ONGOING**

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**Recommendation 19** - Australia should prioritise large field-based research campaigns in areas of high priority scientific research, and promote, encourage and facilitate international collaborations in these campaigns.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 20** - Australia should engage with other Antarctic nations in their research programs to provide assistance and research collaborations consistent with the Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 21** - The Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan should be renamed the 'Australian Antarctic Science Plan' and should be reviewed regularly (every 5 years).

The process for reviewing the Australian Antarctic Science Plan should be led by the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of the Environment and include:

- External, independent review
- Broad consultation with the Australian science community and professional bodies
- Broad consultation across Government.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 22** - A whole-of-Government position should be reached on ongoing funding for national and international collaborations in Antarctic science to cover the cessation of the Antarctic Gateway Partnership funding in 2017 and the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem Cooperative Research Centre funding in 2019.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM**

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## Economic Benefits for Tasmania as an Antarctic Gateway

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**Recommendation 23** - The Australian and Tasmanian Governments should work together to build Tasmania's capacity to be a leading global gateway to East Antarctica.

**HIGH PRIORITY-IMMEDIATE-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 24** - A joint Tasmanian-Commonwealth Government agreement should prioritise infrastructure investment decisions to support the East Antarctic gateway, including:

- Investment in Hobart's rundown port facilities to ensure they are able to capitalise on growing marine research and resupply shipping in East Antarctica;
- Ensuring that Hobart has the ability to hold, and efficiently supply, ship and aircraft fuel; and
- Ensuring that efficient port access, quarantine, storage and resupply facilities are in place in order to service the potential growth in East Antarctic sea and air traffic.

**HIGH PRIORITY-IMMEDIATE-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 25** - The Australian and Tasmanian Governments should jointly commission a report on the future shipping fuel facility requirements for the Port of Hobart, including:

- Options for delivery of fuel to vessels in the Port;
- Options for the supply of fuel to and from Selfs Point;
- The cost and opportunity cost of ship transit to and from the Port to Selfs Point; and
- The risks associated with the current ship refuelling arrangements, compared with viable alternatives.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM**

**Recommendation 26** - The Commonwealth should actively engage with the Tasmanian business community to facilitate opportunities for businesses to participate in the Antarctic sector.

The Commonwealth should explore ways to engage business early in procurement processes in order to foster innovation, efficiency and provide better value for money.

**HIGH PRIORITY-IMMEDIATE-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 27** - The Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of the Environment, in consultation with other agencies, should explore opportunities to establish partnerships with the State, other organisations, and industry in Antarctic related activities, including:

- The provision of training and services in medical and allied health services;
  - Maritime skills training (including operations in sea-ice);
  - Antarctic meteorological services, weather forecasting, and provision of sea-ice assessments for shipping;
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- Scientific instrument and technology development;
- Antarctic field training and support;
- Training in Antarctic-related trades;
- The provision of goods and services; and
- Polar infrastructure research and development.

**HIGH PRIORITY-ONGOING**

## Direct Support for Australia's Antarctic Program

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**Recommendation 28** - The Department of the Environment and the Department of Finance, in consultation with other relevant Departments and agencies, should jointly undertake a review of the budget of the Australian Antarctic Division (Department of the Environment, Outcome 3).

This review should include:

- The fixed costs of running the Australian Antarctic Program, including:
  - The operation of Australia's Antarctic stations;
  - The operation of logistics to support Australia's sovereign and strategic interests in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean; and
  - The operation of the Australian Antarctic Division's station on Macquarie Island.
- The core functions undertaken by the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of the Environment in operational support, science, policy, and the administration of the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands;
- The funding required to meet Australia's obligations in the Antarctic Treaty System including environmental management; sustainable management of marine living resources and conservation in the Antarctic, Southern Ocean and the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands; and scientific, practical and diplomatic engagement;
- The funding required to advance Australia's Antarctic interests through the initiation, conduct and support of priority science in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean;
- The provisions required to meet Australia's obligation to remediate environmental damage and abandoned sites in Antarctica;
- The future requirements for capital investment and/or renewal in logistics and infrastructure;
- Opportunities to diversify the funding base to support some Antarctic activities including from business and philanthropic sources; and
- The future operational support required to sustain a credible Antarctic program that matches Australia's national interests in the Antarctic.

The review should call on the expertise of external experts in polar operations and science.

**HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM**

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## The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty

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**Recommendation 29** - Australia should undertake diplomatic and practical activities to support the provisions of the Madrid Protocol, including the prohibition on Antarctic mineral activities. These activities should include capacity building efforts and education on Parties' obligations under the Madrid Protocol and its provisions with respect to mining.

HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM

## Antarctica and World Heritage Listing

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**Recommendation 30** - Australia should approach with extreme caution calls to have Antarctica listed on the World Heritage List and should not pursue World Heritage nomination for the Australian Antarctic Territory or Antarctica as a whole.

MEDIUM PRIORITY-ONGOING

**Recommendation 31** - Australia should consider any assessment of proposals to place Antarctica on the World Heritage List against the comprehensive protections already provided within the Antarctic Treaty System, including the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, and the impacts that pursuing such a proposal may have on the Antarctic Treaty System itself.

MEDIUM PRIORITY-MEDIUM TERM

**Recommendation 32** - Australia should identify opportunities to actively promote the natural, scientific, and cultural values of the Antarctic and the environmental protection outcomes achieved by the Madrid Protocol, especially in the lead up to its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016.

HIGH PRIORITY-SHORT TERM

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## The Territory of Heard Island and the McDonald Islands

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**Recommendation 33** - Australia should support fisheries surveillance and enforcement operations in the French and Australian Exclusive Economic Zones in the Heard Island-Kerguelen Island region, and in the surrounding areas of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources in accordance with the Treaty with France.

**HIGH PRIORITY-ONGOING**

**Recommendation 34** - The Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of the Environment should provide the Government with a carefully considered budget for conducting priority research at Heard Island and McDonald Islands and surrounding waters and supporting Australia's presence in the Territory.

Priority research in this region should be considered part of the core responsibilities of the Australian Antarctic Division as the region is strategically important for Australia, has important fisheries resources, and is important for wildlife conservation.

**MEDIUM PRIORITY-SHORT TERM**

## Macquarie Island

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**Recommendation 35** - The operation of the research station on Macquarie Island should be reviewed as part of the Australian Antarctic Division's modernisation project.

**MEDIUM PRIORITY-MEDIUM TERM**

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