



## General Information

The Australian Antarctic Program is led by the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), part of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment,

The Australian Antarctic Program needs highly-skilled and passionate people to support Australia's activities on the icy continent where we undertake world-class scientific research to deliver national priorities and answer key questions of global significance.

Australia has three research stations in Antarctica – Casey, Davis and Mawson – and one on sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island. Each station is like a small town with a diverse and dedicated workforce. There are station leaders, tradespeople, scientists, doctors, chefs and communications experts. Expeditioners are supported by head office staff based in Hobart experienced in Antarctic policy, law, operations, medicine and science.

Success as an Antarctic expeditioner relies on being content with your decision to leave your home and family to live and work in Antarctica. Separation can be challenging for you and for those who remain at home. You should carefully consider what effect separation from your family and friends might have. Talk with family and friends before deciding to apply for a job and please read the [Separation Guide](#).

## Working Conditions – Special Considerations

Due to the nature of the physical environment:

- You may need to work outside in:
  - cold and dry conditions (as low as -45°C); or
  - cold and wet conditions.
- There is an increased risk of:
  - Exposure to both high and low solar ultraviolet radiation;
  - slip hazards in continental Antarctica;
  - muscular skeletal-type injuries on Macquarie Island; and
  - Exposure to noise that may exceed recommended exposure limits (generated by aircraft and plant).

Remote and isolated community living comes with:

- Limited sophistication of medical support;
- Limited scope for medical evacuation - if at all possible evacuation is likely to be delayed and prolonged; and
- Stressors of close communal living.
- Limited external communications for ship, field and traverse based personnel.

## Conditions of Employment

The AAD generally meets the cost of:

- airfares to and from Tasmania (a pre-embarkation reunion travel entitlement may also apply);
- accommodation while in Tasmania;
- a daily allowance for miscellaneous expenditure (currently \$20.40 per day);
- transport between your accommodation in Hobart and the AAD (usually by bus);
- transportation of 1 cubic metre (up to 250 kg) of personal goods for winter expeditioners or up to 50kg for summer expeditioners to Hobart and then onwards to Antarctica or Macquarie Island, and on return, to your home location; and
- in some cases, storage of household goods and a motor vehicle.

When working in Antarctica, expeditioners can normally expect to work:

- Monday to Friday – a minimum 8 hours per day (excluding lunch);
- Saturday morning – 4 hours in primary role (e.g. carpenter, mechanic etc.); and
- Saturday afternoon – typically requires all expeditioners to undertake community duties.

Sunday is usually a rest day. However, there will be occasions where longer work hours are required, including some weekends.

You can read more about expeditioner employment conditions in the Department's [Enterprise Agreement](#). Part 9 relates specifically to Expeditioners.

## Selection Criteria

Job descriptions outline the technical requirements for each role. **You must meet all essential requirements and attach all supporting documentation (e.g. copies of licences, qualifications, etc) to your online application.** Some jobs also list 'highly desirable' and/or 'desirable' requirements. Having some or all of these requirements may make you more competitive for a job. If you don't have them (or only have a few), but you meet the essential requirements, we still encourage you to submit an application.

'Personal Qualities Criteria' and 'Other Criteria' (e.g. security clearances) are assessed at a later stage in the recruitment process.

## The Selection Process

### Stage 1 - Registration and shortlisting

- On submission of your online application/s, an automatic acknowledgment will be sent to the email address you have provided.
- Technical experts assess each application against the advertised technical requirements of the job. Performance reports will be considered for past participants of the Australian Antarctic Program.
- You may be contacted during this stage to discuss technical aspects of your application.
- If you are shortlisted, a Confidential Checklist of Medical History will be assessed by our Polar Medicine Unit.
- If you are not shortlisted, you will be advised via email once shortlisting has been completed.
- This stage is usually completed by April each year.

### Stage 2 - Assessment (shortlisted applicants)

- Technical interview – You may be required for a more in-depth interview to assess your technical skills and experience relevant to the job. These interviews are often conducted in conjunction with Selection Centres.
- Selection Centre – You may be required to attend a Selection Centre to assess your personal qualities. These are held in Hobart, Brisbane and Adelaide during March and April each year.
- Medical Examination – You will be required to complete a medical examination and/or a psychological (adaptability) assessment, and other pre-employment checks.

### Stage 3 – Offer of Employment

- If selected, you will receive an offer of employment.
- If not selected but deemed suitable, you may be identified as a Reserve.

The full selection process can take up to 8 months to complete.



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How long will it take me to complete my online application?

Generally between 45-90 minutes.

### How long will the selection process take?

The full selection process can take up to 8 months to complete.

### What happens at the Selection Centre?

During the Selection Centre you will participate in a range of activities, including small and large group discussions, designed to assess whether you have the personal qualities required of an expeditioner. It is conducted over a 24-hour period which includes an overnight stay. It's important that you be yourself and get involved in the activities – there is no preparation required.

### Do you employ nurses or other medical professions?

We do not employ nurses, paramedics, psychologists or other health professions. However, each station has a qualified and registered medical practitioner.

### Do I have to be an Australian citizen?

You must be an Australian citizen, Australian resident with work rights in Australia, or a New Zealand citizen. Please note that jobs requiring a security clearance are only open to Australian citizens.

### Am I too old?

There is no age restriction but applicants must pass a comprehensive medical assessment.

### The job I want to apply for isn't open, when can I apply?

Please register your interest on the job page and you will be notified when that position opens for recruitment.

### How long will I be employed for?

Contracts are generally for between 4 and 15 months. This depends on whether you are a summer or winter expeditioner. You will be asked to indicate your preference for a summer or winter job (or both) when you apply.

The length of your employment will include a period of pre-departure training in Hobart. This training is mandatory and can take between 2 and 10 weeks to complete.

Expeditioners employed in winter jobs will complete both a winter and summer season in Antarctica.

Summer expeditioners usually start work in September or October and are employed for between 4 and 6 months, with a return to Australia in March or April the following year.

Winter expeditioners can start as early as July, or as late as January the next year depending on which station you are going to. If you are employed at Casey or Davis you can expect to depart for Antarctica in October or November, returning approximately 12 months later. If you are employed at Mawson or Macquarie Island, you will generally depart Hobart in March or April and return around the same time the following year. Start dates for expeditioners employed at either of these two stations may be as early as November.



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Shorter winter job employment opportunities (e.g. 6 – 8 months in Antarctica over the winter months) may arise.

### How do I get to Antarctica?

Expeditioners travel via ship or plane. The mode of transport will depend on the station you are going to and AAD operational requirements.

Access to stations is possible only in summer. It is not possible to return to Australia during the winter months.

### What are the living quarters like?

Buildings are comfortable and functional for living and working. They are insulated and strengthened to withstand low temperatures and fierce winds. You can read more about station amenities [here](#).

In most circumstances expeditioners will have their own bedroom and shared bathroom facilities. There may be occasions when people are required to share (e.g. field huts). When travelling via ship, you should expect to share a cabin with other expeditioners.

### What clothes and personal items do I have to take?

The AAD provides all specialised Antarctic and sub-Antarctic clothing.

The living quarters and working buildings are a comfortable temperature. You will only need to bring everyday casual clothing and shoes for indoors. You may wish to pack something more formal for special occasions. The AAD provides personal items such as toiletries and health care products.

### What will I eat?

Each station has its own chef. The food supplied is similar to that in Australia. Fresh vegetables are available for the first few weeks after the ship's departure. Limited hydroponic produce may also be grown on station. We endeavour to meet special dietary requirements where possible. Emphasis is placed on providing a balanced nutritional diet. You will also have plenty of opportunity to help out in the kitchen.

### Will I have the opportunity to “explore” Antarctica?

While work will take priority, opportunities for recreational trips may arise.

### What do I do after work?

Expeditioners participate in a range of recreational activities. You can read more [here](#).

Expeditioners perform their own ‘housework’ and help out with station duties. This may include assisting in the kitchen, garbage clearance, and general cleaning.

### Who will I be working with?

There is the diverse range of people on station. This may include Australian and international scientists, members of international Antarctic programs, media professionals and other expeditioners.



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## How cold is it?

At Casey, Davis and Mawson:

- In the peak of summer (January) average temperatures range between -3°C and +3°C, but are much cooler in the summer margins of October and April, ranging between -16°C and -8°C. The record warmest temperature of +13.0°C is held by Davis Station.
- In winter (April to October) average temperatures range between -20°C and -10°C. The record coldest temperature of -41.8°C is held by Davis station.
- Although more frequent in winter, you can expect low temperatures, fierce winds, dryness and frequent blizzards any time of year.

On Macquarie Island it is wet and windy year round. Average temperatures range between +2°C and +9°C. The record minimum temperature is -9.4°C and maximum is +14.4°C.

## How can I contact home?

There are good telephone and internet connections for expeditioners to contact family and friends. You can find out more [here](#).

## How might the time away affect my family and friends?

The [Separation Guide](#) provides information to help you prepare for, and manage the demands of a period of extended separation from family and friends.

## How can I find out more?

[Expeditioner Handbook](#)

[Separation Guide](#)

[Living and working in Antarctica](#)

[antarctica.gov.au](http://antarctica.gov.au)



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