



The Bureau
of Meteorology

General information for applicants of the Bureau of Meteorology's Australian Antarctic Program 2024–25





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Antarctica – is it for you?

We require people with the skills and abilities to undertake Meteorological Data programs at Australia's three continental stations (Casey, Davis and Mawson) and the subantarctic station on Macquarie Island. Additional key criteria is the ability to live and work together harmoniously in often harsh and inhospitable conditions. The Bureau of Meteorology and the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) place great importance on this and, in addition to assessment of technical capability, undertake rigorous assessment of applicants' personal qualities. We seek to recruit for skills and ability to work across the program, meaning successful applicants could be posted to any of the AAD stations.

Successful expeditions to Antarctica depend on expeditioners being happy and content with their decision to leave their homes and families to live and work in Antarctica. You need to think carefully about what effect separation from your loved ones might have, and we would encourage you to discuss your application with them before you submit it.

If, after reading the information in this document and the relevant job description, you believe you meet our requirements and are enthusiastic about these opportunities, we'd love you to complete the online application form and start the process to be part of a select few who contribute to Australia's Antarctic Program.

Eligibility

You must be an Australian citizen to apply. Please note: Applications from persons who are not Australian citizens will usually only be considered where there are no suitable Australian applicants and will be clearly noted in the job advertisement.

Please take the time to read the following before continuing with your application.

1. The Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) provides a safe working environment while [travelling to/from and working in Antarctica](#).
2. You will be required to participate in an AAD Assessment Centre in which your personal qualities are assessed for suitability in remote small communities. Refer to [AAD's website](#) for '[personal qualities](#) expected of Antarctic expeditioners' information.
3. You will be required to abide by the [Australian Public Service \(APS\) Code of Conduct](#) and [APS Values](#).
4. You are also required to sign and abide by [AAD's Antarctic Service Code of Personal Behaviour](#) prior to departure.
5. Your conditions of engagement are set by the [Bureau's Enterprise Agreement](#), and covered by Bureau's Comcare provisions.
6. Both AAD's and the Bureau's Employee Assistance Program can be used while in Antarctica.



Covid-19 Vaccination Requirements

All persons participating in the AAP will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to deployment. Pre-departure testing may be required to prevent transmission outbreaks amongst expeditioner groups.

Background information

The AAD is part of the Australian Government's [Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water](#) and leads the Australian Antarctic Program (AAP).

The AAD is also responsible for delivering the AAP in accordance with government priorities. These are to:

- lead and collaborate internally to further Australia's research and policy interests
- enhance Australia's capacity to deliver on Antarctic priorities, and derive optimum benefit from our assets in the region
- gain recognition as an international leader in Antarctic science and environmental management
- maintain and reinforce Australian sovereignty in the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Under its charter, the AAD:

- administers the Australian Antarctic Territory and the Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- conducts research in high priority areas of Antarctic science; coordinates and manages Australia's logistics program in Antarctica
- promotes Antarctic research in universities through grants and the provision of logistic support
- develops policy proposals and provides advice on Australia's Antarctic interests;
- promotes Australia's Antarctic interests within the Antarctic Treaty System
- maintains a continuing presence in the region through permanent stations, the establishment of field bases and the provision of transport, communication and medical services
- acts as the primary source of Australian Antarctic information.

About 90 expeditioners in total spend the winter at our four stations, with that number swelling during the summer season up to 300. Each station is staffed by a range of people from varied backgrounds, professions and employers.

Conditions of employment

In addition to the remuneration components, attractive conditions of employment are available for expeditioner employees.

As well as the applicable salary rate (depending on the job applied for) expeditioner employees also receive significant Antarctic duty allowances when in Antarctica (currently up to \$62,417pa).



In addition, you will also receive generous superannuation payment.

Normal PAYG taxation arrangements apply. The only taxation concession available is a Special Zone A rebate.

The Bureau and AAD generally meet the cost of:

- airfares and travel expenses to and from your home to the departure point in Hobart, Tasmania.
- Airfares and travel expenses to attend role specific Bureau training at our training facility in Melbourne prior to departure.
- accommodation and allowances while in Hobart and Melbourne
- transport to and from training venues
- transport of one cubic metre (up to 250 kg) of personal goods to Antarctica and on return to your home location
- in some cases, storage of household goods and motor vehicle
- accommodation, clothing, food and some miscellaneous items (e.g. toiletries) while in Antarctica.

Frequently asked questions

How long will I be employed for?

Deployment to stations can vary in duration, anywhere from 9 months to 18 months depending on the type of job with initial preparation and training in Hobart ranging between two weeks and three months.

Jobs can commence as early as June for training with deployment in October and in some cases can run through until March of the following year.

How do I get there?

The AAD uses ice-strengthened ships to conduct resupply and research voyages, and also transfers personnel between Hobart and Casey by using an A319 and C17 aircraft.

Helicopters and small, fixed-wing aircraft are deployed each season to move expeditioners between the ship and stations depending on ice conditions at the time, and for movement into field locations and between stations.

Access to the continental research stations is only possible in the warmer months of the year, so when the last ship or aircraft leaves Antarctica in March/April, there is no way to return to Australia until the following summer (usually October).

Macquarie Island is usually only visited at the end of each summer by an AAD resupply vessel when the changeover of winter personnel is made. Access to the island at other times is by passing tourist vessels, making opportunities to deliver cargo and supplies very limited.



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. The layout of the research stations varies, but each has scientific laboratories, powerhouses, workshops, a small medical facility, stores, communication facilities, kitchen, mess, recreation and expeditioner rooms. There is a mixture of shared and single accommodation at each research station. Accommodation is allocated according to the numbers of people on the station.

What will I eat?

Each research station has its own chef. The food is similar in variety to that in Australia. Fresh vegetables are available for the first few weeks after the ship's departure. Limited hydroponic produce is also grown on station. The AAD endeavours to meet any special dietary requirements wherever possible. Emphasis is placed on providing a balanced nutritional diet.

What clothes and personal items do I have to take?

The buildings are well heated and comfortable, so everyday casual clothing and shoes is all you require for indoors. All specialised Antarctic clothing is supplied soon after arrival at the AAD. While on station, expeditioners are fully maintained (toiletries, health care etc.) however expeditioners often choose to take some preferred 'special' toiletry items. See [AAD resources](#) for detailed information about what to bring.

Do I need any cash on station?

Everything on station is provided except for alcohol. You can pre-purchase alcohol and AAD will transport it to station for you. Cash is required to make purchases on the ships travelling to and from Antarctica, although the range of goods is generally very limited. Cash is also used to buy postcards and stamps to send mail correspondence home. Fundraising events are a common occurrence on station and on ships, but you can generally transfer funds electronically. It is recommended that \$300 is sufficient for shorter employment periods and \$500 for longer employment periods.

Will I have the opportunity to 'explore' Antarctica?

Once field training has been completed and subject to work commitments, opportunities may arise for you to participate in field trips to outlying huts and areas of special interest. Opportunities are limited over the summer period due to very tight work schedules. All field opportunities are subject to AAD priorities, field operations requirements and the permission of the Station Leader.

What do I do after work?

A range of recreational facilities are provided on stations. Libraries of books, films, records, CDs and DVDs are available. Other recreational equipment on stations may include dartboards, billiard and table tennis tables, gym equipment, spa, sauna and cross-country skis. Photography and



computer-based activities are popular. Expeditioners are required to perform their own 'housework' as well as help out with station duties such as kitchen hand, garbage runs and major cleaning. It is often possible for expeditioners to pursue their hobbies in Antarctica; some hobbies will require expeditioners to provide their own materials.

Who will I be working with?

The mix of people involved in the AAP will vary according to the station and the time of year. Each station has a station leader, medical practitioner, chef, Australian and international scientists, communications support employees, mechanics, field training employees and building trades employees.

How cold is it really?

At continental Antarctic stations, maximum daily temperatures average around -1 °C to +3 °C during summer and between -20 °C and -30 °C during winter. The climate is characterised by very low temperatures, fierce winds, dryness and frequent blizzards. The Macquarie Island climate varies little through the year, being wet and windy, with temperatures of around -2 °C to +12 °C.

How can I contact home?

Every station has internet, making it easier to contact expeditioners than ever before. Instant messaging platforms like WhatsApp are commonly used by expeditioners at all four stations. You can also contact expeditioners by email, phone and fax. During summer, mail is delivered to the stations by ship once or twice each season depending on shipping schedules.

Satellite communications allow ready telephone access between Australia and the stations. Rates are comparable to national calls within Australia. Phone calls to or from ships can be very expensive. Email provides a cheap and effective means of communication.

Wondering how the time away might affect your family? The [Antarctic Separation Guide](#) will provide you with more information.



Selection process

The following is a brief explanation of the expeditioner selection process to assist applicants in understanding how their applications will be assessed. It is intended as a guide only.

The Bureau and AAD use assessment-centre methodology for the evaluation of applicants' personal qualities. This involves bringing together all applicants who pass initial technical screening to a central location where personal qualities are assessed by an independent panel over a 24-hour period (overnight).

It is expected that assessment centres will be held during March–April 2024. All shortlisted applicants who have not had recent Antarctic employment with the Bureau or AAD or have not attended an assessment centre within the last three years, are required to attend.

Behavioural interviews may be required for those who have completed a prior deployment.

Stage 1 – registration and shortlisting

Each application is assessed against the advertised requirements of the job. Only those applicants considered to best meet these requirements are shortlisted.

Performance reports are considered for past participants in the AAP.

Some applicants may be contacted by telephone during this stage to discuss technical aspects of their application.

For those who are shortlisted, a confidential checklist of medical history is assessed by the AAD Polar Medicine Unit to identify any medical conditions which may preclude selection.

This stage is usually completed one to two months after the closing date for applications.



Stage 2 – assessment

Individual technical interviews will usually be held shortly after the completion of stage 1 and are generally conducted prior to assessment centres.

Applicants being considered further will then complete a medical examination, psychological (adaptability) assessment and other pre-employment checks. It should be noted that an invitation to attend these assessments is not a guarantee of getting a job.

Psychological assessment will usually be aimed at assessing suitability for winter participation, unless you are selected for summer participation only.

This assessment stage may take several weeks to complete.

Stage 3 – selection outcomes

All information obtained through the selection process is taken into account to enable final selection recommendations to be made to the delegate. Once approved by the delegate those applicants who have been selected for a position will be made an offer of employment. Applicants who have not been selected will be advised in writing.

Applicants who were considered suitable but did not receive an offer due to not being as competitive as other applicants, may be identified as a 'reserve'. These applicants will be advised of their status in writing and may receive an offer of employment should a position become available.

Due to the unique nature of deployment, the full selection process can take up to nine months to complete. We aim to provide all applicants with as much notice as possible to ensure they have sufficient time to prepare for employment with us. Reserve applicants who are given an offer of employment at a later date, may receive minimal notice prior to commencement of employment.

If we do not attract enough suitable applicants, we may re-advertise or canvas interest from former successful applicants.





Antarctic program

Composition of Bureau of Meteorology employees at each station is as follows.

Typical winter employees (subject to change)

	Macquarie Island	Mawson	Davis	Casey
APS Level 6 TO4	1	1	1	1
APS Level 5 TO3	1	1	1	1
APS Level 3 TO2	1		1	1

Typical summer employees (subject to change)

	Macquarie Island	Mawson	Davis	Casey
EL1 (SPOC)			1	1
PO2 (Met)			1	1
APS Level 3 TO2 (Obs)				1

The Leadership Representative for each station's Bureau personnel is the Technical Officer Level 4, except at Casey and Davis stations during summer where the SPOC is an additional Leadership Representative for the forecaster team.

Remuneration and allowances

Salaries will be directed to the employee's nominated financial institution account, as per their normal pay arrangements.

While stationed in Antarctica, long-term expeditioners will be paid the allowances set out in clauses F.18.9 to F.18.14 of the EA in addition to their normal salary.

Antarctic Allowances specified in clauses F.18.9 to F.18.14 of the EA will be paid fortnightly, with salary, from the day of embarkation until the day of disembarkation unless otherwise specified, using the formula: Fortnightly rate = annual allowance rate x 12 / 313. The daily rate of the allowance is 1/14th of the fortnightly rate.

Training

The AAD and the Bureau are responsible for ensuring that all employees participating with the AAP are prepared with the knowledge and skills to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others during their time in Antarctica. A large number of training courses are designed for employees according to the role that they will undertake in the AAP.



Successful applicants will be required to attend the Bureau's training facility in Melbourne, for up to 12 weeks. During this time applicants are required to undergo and attain competency in both technical and observing skills required to undertake Bureau roles. Transfer to Hobart to participate in AAD specific training will then occur to prepare expeditioners for their deployment.

All expeditioners must attend station and field programs as advised by AAD's Expeditioner Training Unit (ETU). Training requirements can vary depending on your station and length of deployment. Employees will also undergo additional field training on-board the ship and after arrival at the Station. Short-term expeditioners who are in Antarctica for less than two weeks are not usually required to attend field training programs.

A training program will be available from Senior People Connect Advisor – Antarctic. It will be continually updated throughout the training period as details are subject to change and depend on the station of deployment.

Personal and cargo movement to and from Antarctica

Personal effects

Accompanied Personal Effects (APE) and Unaccompanied Personal Effects (UPE) must comply with the AAD requirements on the [AAD personal effects website](#).

For the process on packing and sending of UPE consignments please refer to the [AAD Cargo \(freight\)](#) information. For further information please contact Antarctic Operations, in Hobart, for assistance with this.

When returning, all employees are requested to return to Australia all items of personal clothing and equipment not immediately required, via the Antarctic Division Warehouse. These items will be dispatched to any designated address at their earliest opportunity. Please note, all personal effects are subject to Quarantine and Customs clearance.

Only essential items should be brought back on board the ship or aircraft, keeping excess baggage to a minimum. The cost of on-forwarding excess baggage and freight will be at the Bureau's expense.

Employee vehicle

As employees are on temporary transfer, the Bureau will not meet the cost of transporting and parking of private vehicles to Tasmania.

The Bureau may arrange storage for one vehicle from the time employees leave their home State until the expiration of their Antarctic leave credit or when they return to their home location.

Insurance of the vehicle whilst in store is the employee responsibility. For details on vehicle storage contact the Senior People Advisor – Antarctic.



Transport schedule

The AAD's [transport schedule](#) is published at www.antarctica.gov.au. This is not a static document; variable weather, sea and ice conditions may mean that departures and arrivals are brought forward or delayed by several days, and final timings may not be established until within a few days of the published dates.

The AAD also has a recorded shipping and air information service accessed by phoning 1800 030 744. In the days before the scheduled departure, employees are required to monitor this service at least daily for updates on pre departure arrangements.

Employees are strongly encouraged to advise people meeting the ship and making associated travel arrangements to monitor the recorded message service for updates.

General information

National Police Checks

The AAD require all employees travelling to Antarctica to complete a National Police Check. This will be organised by the Senior People Connect Advisor – Antarctic in Hobart. Employees will be contacted by Fit2Work to complete the official paperwork once they have been approved to travel.

Passports

A valid current passport is required for travel to and from Antarctica and Macquarie Island. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure they have at least six months' validity remaining on their scheduled return to Australia date. This is an AAD mandatory requirement.

First Aid certificates

It is a mandatory requirement that all expeditioners hold a current first aid qualification (minimum requirement HLTAID011), with at least six months' validity remaining on return to Australia. The Program will not sponsor individual certification of this competency.

Health care

Whilst in the Antarctic, employees are entitled to medical care provided by the Station Medical Officer without cost. Employees undergo an extensive medical examination to determine their suitability for Antarctic service. It is essential that employees have honestly declared any past or present illness or disabilities and that they declare any medical conditions occurring after the examination.

On the expedition, medical services are limited, and employees should maintain their best physical condition. If a medical problem is suspected, it must be declared at the earliest opportunity so that treatment can be initiated before complications arise.

Medical research may be conducted at the stations. Employees are required to cooperate with their Station Medical Officer working on approved medical programs. This may include giving blood



or urine samples, participating in special diets, or allowing routine measurements of blood pressure and weight.

All employees will be asked to sign forms of consent after the doctor conducting the research has explained the research to them.

Health insurance

Employees should carefully consider their situation before suspending private health or accident insurance cover during their time in Antarctica. The Bureau recommends that before deciding employees should contact their health insurance provider and discuss the matter directly with them.

Dental certificates

All long-term (winter) expeditioners must be certified as dentally fit within three months of the southbound journey. The Bureau will reimburse employees the costs associated with dental examination and provision of the certificate, but individuals must meet costs of any treatment or work required.

Power of attorney

It is advisable that employees make the necessary arrangements to allow someone to act on their behalf during their absence from Australia. This person should be competent to act on the employee's behalf in personal, business, or legal matters, and to represent their best interests whilst they are away.

We suggest that you seek advice from a legal professional about appointing power of attorney and that you do so within your own State or Territory as conditions and restrictions can vary.

Wills

It is also suggested that employees consider the need for a Will. If the need arises, this ensures that personal estates will be distributed in accordance with your wishes and not as the law demands, where no will exists. If you need advice on the preparation of your will, we suggest that you consult a solicitor or public trustee office.

Life insurance

It is strongly recommended that employees discuss with their insurance company or broker the validity of their policy whilst in Antarctica. Failure to clarify the situation may cause problems in the event of a claim being made against the policy, particularly if the company concerned claims to have been unaware that the assured was working in Antarctica.

Voting

You may have the opportunity to vote in national or state elections if you are an Australian, but please note that not all states have a provision for Antarctic voters. You should contact your local



electoral office to discuss your personal circumstances and the arrangements that are required for voting while you are in Antarctica. Each station has a voting officer who can provide guidance.

Deductions from pay

Employees sign an authority consenting to recovery for personal expenses of the employee incurred by the Bureau on their behalf. The specified amounts are deducted, usually monthly, through payroll.

Your career interests

The Bureau advertises new vacancies on its Careers web page.

Communications systems

All stations have access to Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions Satellite (ANARESAT) telecommunication system, which provide high quality, reliable, confidential communication with people in Australia and the rest of the world by telephone or facsimile.

Computer networks are installed at all stations, offering a range of services including email.

Computers

Owing to the operational nature and restricted use of Bureau computers, employees are strongly recommended to take their own device for personal use. Bureau computers are supplied on station to perform operational functions.

All Bureau employees are required to read and abide by the conditions in accordance with the Acceptable Use of ICT Resources Policy.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

As part of the Bureau's commitment to occupational health and safety and preservation of employees' well-being, an EAP provider is available to provide an independent, confidential counselling service for employee and their immediate families.

The service is able to provide assistance on a wide range of matters at no cost to the employee.



Debriefing on return to Australia

Upon an employee's return to Australia, they are required to attend debriefing with both the AAD and the Bureau in Hobart. This will include Psychological debriefs and the completion of Expeditioner Performance Reports (EPRs). The Senior People Connect Advisor – Antarctic will organise accommodation and travel arrangements where appropriate.

Posting on return to Australia

Expeditioners who are ongoing employees will return to their permanent posting location on completion of Antarctic service.

Enquiries

Any enquiries in relation to this procedure should be directed to the Senior People Connect Advisor – Antarctic, in the Bureau's Antarctic Program. Find contact details at <http://www.bom.gov.au/careers/antarctica.shtml>.