



4 August 2008

MEDIA RELEASE

Russian Interest in Basing Antarctic Expeditions in Hobart Demonstrates the Need for a Working Port

The Tasmanian Polar Network is buoyed with the news that the Russian Antarctic Expedition will give serious consideration to using Hobart as their base for future scientific activities in Antarctica and the Southern Oceans.

The news follows a recent visit to St Petersburg by a member of the TPN Executive where discussions were held with key officials in control of Russia's Antarctic and Southern Oceans endeavours.

The Russians responded positively to the hand delivered 'expression of interest' which noted Hobart's attributes and capabilities of the TPN members' organisations. TPN will now work with the Tasmanian and Federal Governments to send a formal invitation to the RAE to visit Hobart.

Tasmanian Polar Network Chairman, Bill Lawson, said this opportunity reinforced the need for Hobart to preserve and enhance its port capabilities as opposed to reducing it in either space or capabilities.

"The TPN's submission to the design plans of the Sullivan Cove Authority and the Royal Hobart Hospital will reflect this recent development with the Russian Antarctic Expedition."

Mr Lawson said in addition to the Russian interest there are other northern hemisphere nations which have also previously expressed interest in using Hobart as their point of embarkation and disembarkation for Antarctica and the Southern Oceans.

"The TPN is investigating and following up each of these prospects as appropriate.

"We need to ensure that the positive development of such future opportunities for the economic benefit of Tasmania and Tasmanians are not impeded by any reduction in the capabilities of the port of Hobart," Mr Lawson said.

For further comment please contact Bill Lawson, Tasmanian Polar Network Chairman, on 0418 123 293.