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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **TASMANIAN INNOVATION ASSURES SAFE TRIP FOR FRENCH ICEBREAKER**

05/12/2000

A new service designed in Tasmania was used to guide the French Icebreaker L'Astrolabe from Hobart through the ice to Antarctica on her first voyage South for this summer. "The service provided a safer and faster voyage for the ship due to the additional information available," Captain Yves Guedez said today.

The system uses satellites and computers to download infrared ice pictures and weather forecasts on the distribution and, to some extent, the thickness of the ice around the ship. This lets the captain select the best route to his destination by sailing in loose and soft ice and avoiding ice traps.

Latitude Technologies' Dr Antoine Guichard working with the Australian Bureau of Meteorology in Hobart designed the system. It is operated by the Captain of the ship asking for details of the weather and ice from the Bureau's web site. The ice information is kept up to date with satellite images received at Australia's Casey station.

Latitude Technologies is one of several Hobart companies regularly providing advice and supplies to the French Antarctic Program. Dr Guichard its Managing Director, proposed the concept to the French.

"The system can be applied to many other vessels to assist with their navigation in ice conditions in both the North and South Pole areas" said Dr Guichard.

Steve Pendlebury of the Australian Bureau of Meteorology declared "it also provides a lot of weather information not specific to ice navigation and we can tailor the system to the needs of vessels navigating around Australia and beyond."

Both Latitude Technologies and the Bureau of Meteorology are members of the Tasmanian Polar Network which seeks through cooperation to promote Tasmania as the world's most significant place for polar expertise.

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