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PRESS RELEASE

HOBART HOSTS FIVE ANTARCTIC SHIPS IN PORT

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Chairman of the Tasmanian Polar Network, Mr Bill Lawson says the Port of Hobart is having one its busiest periods of the year with five Antarctic ships in port.

"While December is one of the busiest months for re-supplying Antarctic bases, it's not a regular occurrence to have five Antarctic ships in port at the one time. As the Gateway to the Antarctic, Hobart is currently hosting Capitan Khlebnikov, Aurora Australis, Polar Bird, L'Astrolabe and the Italian Antarctic program's resupply vessel, Italica."

"Italica is in port to link up with the return of the French Institute for Polare Research and Technology's resupply ship Astrolabe to take cargo down to Dumont d'Urville for transfer by traverse to Dome C, the new permanent, international research support facility high on the Antarctic ice cap currently being operated as a joint initiative by the French and Italian Antarctic Programs," said Mr Lawson.

"During the month of December, the Port of Hobart will handle more than 30 shipping movements, all related to the Antarctic and it's important for the Tasmanian community to understand the value of having Hobart as the 'Gateway to the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean."

"Members of the Tasmanian Polar Network share a wealth of experience, participating in many meetings to create an awareness of TPN's resupply capacity and to promote Hobart as a port of call on the way south to representatives of the 26 countries currently engaged in Polar research."

"Our major advantage lies in the breadth of our Polar connections which includes quality education in the Antarctic sciences, a historical connection with Antarctica that extends over 200 years, an Antarctic research capacity that is world class, and a level of expertise in its private industry that is second to none."

"Our members take every opportunity to promote Hobart and its wonderful harbour. We are still negotiating with an interstate oil company to increase Hobart's capacity to supply fuel for visiting Antarctic ships," said Mr Lawson

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