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c/- **ANTARCTIC TASMANIA**

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PRESS RELEASE

TPN APPLAUDS GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR ANTARCTIC AIRLINK

29/05/2001

The Chairman of the Tasmanian Polar Network, Bill Lawson today strongly applauded the Premier's determination to ensure that Tasmania is chosen as the preferred departure point for the proposed Antarctic Airlink to Australia's Antarctic Territory.

"The Premier's strong leadership and his Government's full support for the Airlink can only benefit the State's efforts on this vital project."

"As members of the Tasmanian Polar Network, we will do everything we can to support Premier Mr Bacon's moves to ensure Hobart is selected as the departure point for the Antarctic Airlink."

"No other city in the world can match Hobart in what it has to offer. We have a specialised workforce that knows and understands the unique requirements of working in the world's coldest and most inhospitable environment. The TPN members have the capacity to develop and supply specialised goods and services. It is this flexibility and adaptability that make Tasmania a true International Antarctic Gateway," said Mr Lawson.

"The benefits to flow from the Airlink would be significant both in costs and time saved in transporting expeditioners and scientific personnel. From a State perspective, having the Airlink based in Hobart would also provide increased economic and employment opportunities."

"We have a long and proud history in matters Antarctic and the possibility of an Airlink between Tasmania and the Antarctic continent is the next great challenge. Tasmania is the centre for Australia's Antarctic program and, indeed is significant in a world context for Antarctic research, science and logistics."

"Antarctic business is a major industry for Tasmania, one that continues to provide a positive impact on the State's economy. The industry generates in excess of \$90 million in economic activity per annum," said Mr Lawson.

"With the ongoing support of the State Government, the Tasmanian Polar Network will continue to work with the Antarctic community, through the Office of Antarctic Affairs on a range of Antarctic programs that benefit our State."

"While the final decision rests with the Federal Government, it is now up to State Government, the Tasmanian Polar Network through the Office of Antarctic Affairs, and the general community, to convince Canberra that Hobart is the best option."

Mr Lawson paid compliments to the tri-partisan nature of the State's support for Antarctic matters generally.



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"It clearly shows the special place Antarctica holds in the minds of Tasmanians when Governments of all political persuasions are able to work together to achieve a benefit for the State."

"Hobart is ideally suited and recognised as the nation's Gateway to the Antarctic for shipping, and we need to ensure that it is the same for air transport."

"Let's hope that the Airlink project becomes a reality and departs from Tasmania, thereby opening another unique chapter in the State's relationship with this majestic frozen continent," Mr Lawson said.

For further information contact:

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