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PRESS RELEASE

LONGEST & DARKEST NIGHT

Tasmania Celebrates its Antarctic Heritage on the Winter Solstice

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Like to take a dip in the Derwent? Want to gain greater understanding of the role Australia plays in Antarctica by training as a 'new expeditioner' in a range of field training activities?

The shortest day and the longest night on the Southern Hemisphere calendar, the 'Mid-Winter' day celebrated all over the frozen Antarctic continent, will be marked for the first time in Tasmania with special events on June 21.

While traditional celebrations will be marked at research stations resupplied from Hobart, Australia's three Antarctic stations: Casey, Davis and Mawson; French base Dumont d'Urville, and Tasmania's subantarctic Macquarie Island, a number of mid-winter events have been planned for Hobart.

The event is an initiative of a diverse range of Tasmanian based groups focussed on the development of Tasmania as the world's richest centre of Antarctic expertise.

Acting Director of Tasmania's Office of Antarctic Affairs, Mr Bill Bleathman says the day has been organised to emphasise the significant role Tasmania plays in Australia's and other nations' Antarctic affairs, and to provide greater understanding of the importance of Antarctica to Hobart, Tasmania, Australia and the world in general.

"The promotion of the Antarctic is fundamentally important for the Tasmanian community to gain a greater appreciation of the roles played by many organisations and stakeholders, either operating through or out of Hobart," said Mr Bleathman.

The Australian Antarctic Division will be setting up a training camp in Salamanca Square linked to a field camp in the grounds of Parliament House. The general public and school students will be encouraged to participate in a range of field training activities.

Planned events for Antarctic Tasmania- Mid-Winter Celebrations include:

- Leading Antarctic scientists report on science projects through special ABC radio program with Tim Cox based in the cold room of Antarctic Adventure at a temperature of minus 5 degrees
- Field Training Display by the Australian Antarctic Division
- Mid-Winter swim in the Derwent by Australian Antarctic Division members and the general public
- Special Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery exhibition of Treasures from the Museum's Collection displayed at Antarctic Adventure
- Polar Pathways Guided Walk of the dock area by John Williamson
- Special concessional day by Antarctic Adventure with all proceeds to Camp Quality-gold coin admission from 9-12noon. Organised school tours
- Polar books 10% off all day at Hobart Bookshop



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"This is a wonderful opportunity for students to achieve a unique insight into Antarctica and Tasmania's relationship with the frozen continent. Expeditioners will be on hand in both Salamanca Square and the gardens of Parliament House helping students to learn how to cross a glacier in safety, set up a polar pyramid, use a satellite phone and what to do in a blizzard."

"In Salamanca Square there will be morning and afternoon sessions for school groups with the general public catered for at lunchtime."

"We're hopeful of achieving significant community recognition for this special one day of the year on 21st of June and look forward to eager participation by a wide cross section of the public," Mr Bleathman said.

For further information contact:

www.antarctic-tasmania.info

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