



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

Australian Antarctic Division

General Information for Applicants

Australia's Antarctic Program 2018/19

Expeditioner Employment

Thank you for your interest in employment with the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD).

Working in Antarctica is not for everybody. This document provides you with general information to enable you to make an informed decision about whether to apply. Please note that for the purposes of this document, Antarctica is inclusive of Macquarie Island.

The AAD requires people with a wide range of skills and abilities to undertake and support science programs and maintain our three continental stations Casey (including the Wilkins Blue ice Runway site), Davis, Mawson and our subantarctic station on Macquarie Island. You could be considered for employment at any one of our four stations. We require people who can live and work together harmoniously in often harsh and inhospitable conditions. The AAD places great importance on this aspect and not only assesses a person's technical capability but also undertakes rigorous assessment of applicants' personal qualities, medical and psychological suitability.

Successful expeditions depend on expeditioners being content with their decision to leave their homes and families to live and work in Antarctica. Separation can be extremely difficult for both the expeditioner and his or her family and you should think carefully about what effect separation from your loved ones might have. We encourage you to discuss your potential application with them before you submit it.

If after reading the information in this document, and the relevant job description, you believe you meet our requirements, please complete the online application form.

If the timing is not right for you at the present, but you may be interested in applying in the future, we would encourage you to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) after the close date for current applications. Further information on submitting an EOI is available [here](#).

ELIGIBILITY

Only Australian citizens, Australian residents with proof of eligibility to work in Australia and New Zealand citizens are eligible to apply.

BACKGROUND

The AAD, a Division of the Department of the Environment and Energy, leads the Australian Antarctic Program (AAP) in accordance with the following government priorities:

- Lead and collaborate internationally to further Australia's research and policy interests;
- Enhance Australia's capability to deliver on Antarctic priorities, and derive optimum benefit from our assets in the region;

- Gain recognition as an international leader in Antarctic science and environmental management; and
- Maintain and reinforce Australian sovereignty in the Australian Antarctic Territory.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

An attractive set of employment conditions are available for expeditioner employees, including:

- job-related salary - payable during training and while in Antarctica;
- Antarctic Duty Allowances while in Antarctica (totalling up to \$58,026 per annum).
- generous employer superannuation payments.

Normal PAYG taxation arrangements apply. The only taxation concession that may be available is a Special Zone A rebate for expeditioners wintering in Antarctica.

The AAD generally meets the cost of:

- airfares to and from Tasmania (a pre-embarkation reunion travel entitlement may also apply);
- accommodation while in Tasmania;
- a daily allowance for miscellaneous expenditure (currently \$19.05);
- transport to and from accommodation in Hobart and the AAD at Kingston (usually by bus);
- accommodation, protective clothing, food and some sundry items (e.g. toiletries) while in Antarctica;
- for wintering expeditioners, transportation of 1 cubic metre (up to 250 kg) of personal goods to Hobart and then onwards to Antarctica or Macquarie Island and on return, to your home location; and
- in some cases, storage of household goods and a motor vehicle.

When working on one of our stations, expeditioners can normally expect to work a minimum 8 hrs per day (excluding lunch) Monday to Friday and about 4 hours on Saturday morning in their primary role (e.g. carpenter, mechanic, etc). In addition, Saturday afternoon typically requires all expeditioners to take on community duties. Sunday is usually a rest day. However, expeditioners should also recognise that there will be occasions where additional work is required, including some weekends.

DIVERSITY

The AAD values diversity in our station communities, which tend to be highly diverse in terms of background, age and gender, interests and much more.

Although voluntary, your completion of the Diversity questions when completing the on-line application will provide useful information to ensure that AADs recruitment processes continue to be appropriately focussed.

MERIT

Employment decisions in the Australian Public Service (APS) are based on merit and require an assessment of the relative suitability of the candidates for the advertised duties. This is a competitive selection process with assessments based on the candidates' work-related qualities and the qualities required for the job.

QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

How long will the application and selection process take?

The application and selection process for Antarctic Expeditioner positions is a long process and usually starts in December and can take between 8 - 11 months before offers of employment are made. During this time, unsuccessful applicants will be notified as soon as possible throughout the process.

While every effort is made to run selection processes within the timeframes listed under the heading "**The Selection Process**" - these timeframes are approximate. Applicants who have not received a letter notifying them of an unsuccessful application should consider their application as progressing until they hear otherwise.

How long will I be employed for?

Periods of employment will vary depending on the type of job but the total employment period is generally in two phases:

- a) a pre-departure period in Hobart, Tasmania for preparation and training (ranging between 2 weeks and 3 months depending on the job type); and
- b) employment in Antarctica (on Station or in transit) as follows:
 - Summer jobs are generally offered for periods between 3 and six months (between early October and March–April of the following year).
 - Winter jobs can commence as early as July and run through until November/December of the following year. Generally those employed in a winter position will spend between 10 and 15 months on station.
 - Shorter winter opportunities may arise between January and November/December in the same year.

Individual job descriptions provide information on the duration of each role.

What happens between starting employment and leaving for Antarctica?

During the pre departure period (between two weeks and three months) you will be required to complete a mandatory training program which ensures that you are ready to undertake your job in Antarctica and will not put yourself, others or the environment at risk. Training may be on or offsite and may include residential components.

If you are recruited from outside Southern Tasmania, you will be accommodated in twin-share commercial accommodation in Hobart, Tasmania arranged and paid for by the AAD.

How do I get there?

The AAD uses ice-strengthened ships to conduct resupply and research voyages, and also transfers personnel between Hobart and Antarctica by aircraft. *Rotary* and small, fixed-wing aircraft are deployed each season to transfer expeditioners between the ship and stations

depending on ice conditions at the time, and for movement out to field locations and between stations.

Access to the continental stations is possible only in summer, so when the last ship or aircraft leaves Antarctica in March/April, there is no way to return to Australia until the following summer (usually in October).

Macquarie Island is usually only visited at the end of each summer by an AAD resupply vessel, when the changeover of winter personnel is undertaken. Access to the island at other times (usually only by passing tourist vessels) is very limited.

What are the living quarters like?

Buildings are comfortable and functional for living and working. They are insulated and strengthened to withstand low temperatures and fierce winds. The layout of the stations varies, but each has scientific laboratories, powerhouses, workshops, a small medical facility, stores, communication facilities, kitchen, mess, recreation and expeditioner living quarters. There is a mixture of shared and single accommodation at each station. Accommodation is allocated according to numbers on station and accommodation space is usually in demand during a busy summer.

What clothes and personal items do I have to take?

The buildings are well heated and comfortable, so everyday casual clothing and shoes are all you require for indoors. All specialised Antarctic and subantarctic clothing is supplied soon after arrival at the AAD. Expeditioners are provided with personal items (e.g. toiletries and health care products, however you may choose to take some preferred 'special' toiletry items.

What will I eat?

Each station has its own Chef. The food supplied is similar in variety to that obtained in Australia. Fresh vegetables are available for the first few weeks after the ship's departure. Limited hydroponic produce may also be grown on station. We will endeavour to meet any special dietary requirements wherever possible. Emphasis is placed on providing a balanced nutritional diet. You will also have plenty of opportunity help out in the kitchen.

How do I get paid?

Your pay is transferred fortnightly to your nominated financial institution. Payslips are available at least the day before payday via the AAD intranet Employee Self Service facility. You will be provided with access to this facility on commencement.

Do I need any cash on station?

Everything on station is provided except for alcohol. You can pre-purchase a limited amount of alcohol and AAD will transport it to station for you. Cash is required to make purchases on the ships travelling to and from Antarctica, although the range of goods is generally very limited. Tourist vessels may visit the station during the summer period, many of which have souvenirs for sale. Credit cards and cheques are not usually accepted. It is recommended that about \$300 is sufficient for shorter employment periods and \$500 for longer employment periods.

Will I have the opportunity to "explore" Antarctica?

Once field training has been completed and subject to work commitments, opportunities may arise where expeditioners can participate in field trips to outlying huts and areas of special

interest. Please note that field trip opportunities may be limited over the summer period due to very tight work schedules.

What do I do after work?

A range of recreational facilities are provided on stations. Libraries of books, films, records, CDs and DVDs are available. Other recreational equipment on stations may include dart boards, billiard and table tennis tables, gymnasium equipment, spa, sauna and cross country skis. Photography and computer based activities are popular.

Expeditioners are required to perform their own 'housework' as well as help out with station duties such as kitchen hand, garbage runs and major cleaning. It is often possible for expeditioners to pursue their hobbies in Antarctica; some hobbies will require expeditioners to provide their own materials.

Who will I be working with?

The mix of people involved in the AAP will vary according to the station and the time of year. Each station has a station leader, medical practitioner, chef, Australian and international scientists, communications support employees, mechanics, field training employees and building trades employees.

How cold is it really?

At continental Antarctic stations, maximum daily temperatures average around -1°C to +3°C during summer. Winter temperatures average between -20°C and -30° C. The climate is characterised by very low temperatures, fierce winds, dryness and frequent blizzards. The Macquarie Island climate varies little through the year, being wet and windy, with temperatures of around -2°C to +12°C.

How can I contact home?

Email and telephone access is available. During summer, mail is delivered to the stations by ship once or twice each season dependant on shipping schedules. Modern satellite communications allow ready telephone access between Australia and the stations. Rates are comparable to Australian STD charges. Phone calls to or from ships can be very expensive. Email provides a cheap and effective means of communication if you have the requisite set up at home. Please note that Skype is not available on any of our stations.

How might the time away affect my family?

Our brochure entitled 'Antarctic Separation' will provide you with more information. It is available by telephoning the Expeditioner Liaison and Training Coordinator on free call 1800 030 680 or you can access it [here](#).

Take a look at our [Expeditioner Handbook](#) for further useful information.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All jobs require you to complete the online application form.

We are not seeking exhaustive information about your work history, but it is important that you provide us with clear information about your recent work (particularly the last five years) to enable our assessors to make a preliminary assessment of whether you have what we want or not.

Some resumes are very brief and do not provide sufficient information for our needs. Please make sure that you fully complete the questionnaire and attach copies of licences and certificates or further information where required.

It is important that you provide us with a current telephone contact number that we can reach you on during normal business hours i.e. 8:30am - 5:00 pm eastern daylight saving time. If you are not contactable during these hours, please provide an email address that you regularly access.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

The following is a brief explanation of the expeditioner selection process to assist applicants to understand how their applications will be assessed. It is intended as a guide only.

The AAD uses selection centre methodology for the assessment of most applicants' personal qualities. This involves bringing applicants who pass initial technical screening to a central location, where individuals' personal qualities are assessed by an independent panel over a 24 hour period (overnight). **It is expected that selection centres will be held in Hobart, Brisbane and Adelaide from mid March to mid May 2018.** Shortlisted applicants who have not had recent Antarctic employment with the AAD, or have not attended a selection centre within the last three years, are required to attend. A separate process applies to Antarctic Medical Practitioners and Watercraft Operators.

Stage 1 - Registration and shortlisting

- On submission of online applications, an acknowledgment email is sent to the applicant immediately.
- Technical experts assess each application against the advertised requirements of the job. Only those applicants considered to best meet these requirements are shortlisted for further consideration. Performance reports are considered for past participants in the Australian Antarctic Program.
- Some applicants may be contacted by telephone during this stage to discuss technical aspects of their application.
- For those who are shortlisted for further consideration, a *Confidential Checklist of Medical History* is assessed by the AAD Polar Medicine Unit to identify any medical conditions which may preclude selection.
- This stage is usually completed 1-2 months after the closing date for applications.

Stage 2 - Assessment

- Individual technical interviews will usually be held shortly after the completion of stage 1 and are generally conducted in conjunction with selection centres, to minimise inconvenience to candidates. Separate arrangements will be advised for those not required to attend selection centres.
- Applicants who are unsuccessful following selection centres are advised in writing.
- Applicants being considered further will then complete a medical examination, psychological (adaptability) assessment and other pre-employment checks. It should be noted that an invitation to attend these assessments is not a guarantee of getting a job.
- Psychological assessment will usually be aimed at assessing suitability for "winter" participation, unless you advise the AAD prior to your assessment of a preference for summer participation only.
- This assessment stage may take several weeks to complete.

Stage 3 – Selection Outcomes

- All information obtained through the selection process is taken into account to enable final selection recommendations to be made to an approving Delegate. Once approved by the Delegate those applicants who have been selected for a position will be made an offer of employment. Applicants who have not been selected will be advised in writing.
- Applicants who were considered suitable but did not receive an offer due to not being as competitive as other applicants, may be identified as a Reserve. Applicants who are identified as a Reserve will be advised of their status in writing and **may** receive an offer of employment should a position become available.
- The full selection process can take up to 6 months to complete, but we aim to provide successful applicants with as much notice as possible to ensure they have sufficient time to prepare for their employment with us. Reserve applicants who are given an offer of employment at a later date, may receive only minimal notice prior to commencement of employment

If we do not attract enough suitable applicants, the AAD may re-advertise or canvass interest from former successful applicants.