

## Antarctic Approvals Online – a 'one stop shop'

The Antarctic Approvals Online (AAO) system, when fully developed, will be the new face of Antarctic approvals and support processes administered by the Australian Antarctic Division, providing a 'one stop shop' for environmental and science approvals and operational and logistical support. The AAO system, which is being jointly developed by IT Services and the Antarctic Approvals Project Team, will be the first system of its kind in Australia, and is expected to commence full operation in mid 2004.

The AAO system will use the same platform as the Australian Antarctic Research Applications, which currently caters for scientific and some operational projects. Important features of the research applications system will be maintained, but its functionality will be increased and it will cater for a wider audience.

The AAO system proposes to include the following features:

- **single entry point** – the AAO system will cater for all applicants for Antarctic approvals and/or support, including all scientists, operational and support personnel, VIPs and humanities program applicants with the Australian Antarctic Program, as well as tourists and others participating in non-government activities;
- **a tracking system for approval and support** – to allow applicants and administrators to keep track of relevant approval and support, and culminating in a virtual 'boarding pass' for applicants;
- **two-stage application process** – to increase flexibility, information will be gathered when it is needed; broad level information needed to start advance planning and assessment tasks will be gathered earlier than more detailed information;
- **personal and project profiles** – to integrate the collection of information required for a number of approvals and support processes and therefore reduce the time spent by applicants filling out forms and prevent duplicate requests for information;
- **twelve month availability** – to cater for a broader range of applicants, a two-stage application process and variations to proposals;
- **formalised process for variations** – to provide for a fair, predictable, transparent process for the variation of proposals; and
- **comprehensive reporting capability** – to help meet the AAD's international and

domestic reporting requirements and to increase utility for applicants and administrators.

If you would like to know more about the AAO system, you can contact Ian Hay on (03) 6232 3509.



ROB BRYSON

## Antarctic science and operations go on tour

A concerted drive to get the message across to key beneficiaries in major Australian centres about recent developments to enhance the value of Australia's Antarctic program has been rated a great success. In each State capital in April and May, about 200 people with a strong stake in Antarctic research attended briefings by senior Australian Antarctic Division representatives.

The AAD Chief Scientist, Prof Michael Stoddart, its General Manager of Operations, Kim Pitt, and the manager of the air transport project, Charlton Clark, provided the audience with an overview of the science program and details of the operational support provided to scientists, including dedicated marine science voyages and the future implementation of a comprehensive air transport system.

Each group consisted of scientists who regularly participate in the Antarctic program, university staff, younger scientists and interested members of the public. Around half of the audience in each city was new to the program, with many graduate students keen to find out how to become involved.

Scientists at the meetings agreed that the proposed air transport system would greatly improve the prospects of both research success and their capacity to be involved. Several senior scientists said they had not participated in the Australian science program but had used New Zealand or U.S. air support to fly to the Antarctic. Scientists welcomed both the prospect of flying from Hobart to Casey and the intra-continental transport. The latter would be particularly valuable for atmospheric chemistry research.

Many questions raised at the meetings concerned logistics, such as how air transport changes affect getting equipment in and sam-

ples out. Marine scientists were reassured that the introduction of air transport would not have a negative impact on ship-based research but would provide some notable benefits.

The sessions enabled many scientists already in the program to meet each other for the first time, including some who discovered they had colleagues in their own department conducting Antarctic research. In response to audiences requests, the AAD is preparing email lists to help scientists make contact with others. Scientists were urged to contact the AAD with any thoughts, ideas or comments to help improve the air transport service.

The presentation is now available in portable document format (PDF) on the Australian Antarctic Division web site at <<http://www.aad.gov.au/default.asp?casid=10220>> or in hard copy by emailing <[planning@aad.gov.au](mailto:planning@aad.gov.au)>.

*GWEN FENTON, SCIENCE PLANNING &*



DAVE KILICK

## Defibrillator trialled at Commonwealth Bay

With advancing medical technology the Australian Antarctic Division's Polar Medicine Unit is continually reviewing procedures and remote area medical equipment to ensure appropriate medical and emergency care for Australian Antarctic expeditioners. Dr Geoff Couser, the 2002 Mawson's Hut expedition doctor, trialled a new MRL automatic external defibrillator and heart monitor during the expedition at Commonwealth Bay.

This type of equipment can be used for possible complications of unexpected heart conditions or even the effects of accidental electrocution on the heart. Although not used in anger on this occasion, it was comforting for this small extremely isolated field camp to have available as part of the comprehensive medical kit this small battery powered defibrillator and heart monitor unit. Successful testing occurred at operating temperatures of minus 7°C and storage temperatures as low as minus 24°C. Similar equipment may be used in future Antarctic field operations.