reflect the AAD's visions and responsibilities. The updated policy is now posted throughout the AAD's Tasmanian sites, and will be placed on our ships and in the stations on the first voyage south next season.

To ensure the EMS stays on track a series of external surveillance audits are scheduled over the next three years, prior to recertification. The first audit was undertaken in March this year and NCSI, the auditing body, again noted the AAD's positive commitment to the environment and the EMS.

Further information on the AAD's EMS is available at <http://www.aad.gov.au/default.asp?casid=46>

BELINDA HARDING, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT UNIT, AAD

Inspecting the new aquarium (from left) are Antarctic Marine Living Resources Program Leader Dr Steve Nicol, Parliamentary Secretary for the Antarctic Dr Sharman Stone and AAD Chief Scientist Professor Michael Stoddart

New Antarctic marine research aquarium equals best in world

The new Antarctic Marine Research Aquarium at the Australian Antarctic Division was officially opened in May by the Parliamentary Secretary for the Antarctic, Dr Sharman Stone.

The state-of-the-art aquarium and laboratory cost nearly $1 million and is part of a multi-million dollar upgrade of AAD's facilities at Kingston, Hobart. The facility is now equal to any laboratory in the world used for the study of Antarctic krill and other marine organisms.

Dr Stone said that AAD scientists could now continue research in the land-based laboratory that was previously limited to the ocean-caught organisms that did not always last long or reproduce in holding tanks.

"This innovative aquarium and laboratory complex means that large numbers of krill can be bred allowing scientists to study their reproduction, growth, behaviour and larval biology. Understanding Antarctic krill in particular is critical to understanding the interdependencies and vulnerabilities in the Antarctic food chain." Dr Stone said.

Research on krill has been especially challenging in the past, since krill are extremely sensitive to environmental conditions. Longer term and more detailed studies of the Antarctic's unique marine life will now be possible, with krill given their own 'home away from home' in a specially chilled and carefully lit environment.

This research will provide vital information for helping to plan a sustainable fishery for the future. This planning and management is critical as over-exploitation of krill would pose an enormous threat to the Antarctic ecosystem.

"Australia plays a pivotal role in Antarctic research, and these new facilities will allow the AAD to continue to be a key international centre for the study of Antarctic marine organisms," Dr Stone said.

'Antarctic Impressions' on show at Parliament House

An exhibition showcasing Australia's Antarctic Humanities Program was held at Parliament House in Canberra from 1 May to 25 June.

In opening 'Antarctic Impressions', Parliamentary Secretary for the Antarctic Dr Sharman Stone said that the Humanities Program was a perfect vehicle to help promote Australia's vital role in the protection of Antarctica and of our science program.

"Each year, through its Humanities Program, the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) offers the chance of a berth to Antarctica for visual artists, writers, historians, journalists, poets, musicians, film makers, teachers and those from similar occupations. So far, almost 70 have participated in the scheme," said Dr Stone.

This is the first exhibition to bring together an extensive range of artistic and other works that have resulted from the AAD's Humanities Program since it began in 1984, and included paintings, photographs, educational resources, books, travel guides, histories, video excerpts from documentaries and interactive exhibits.

Unusual mortality investigation kits assembled

Although staff at the Australian Antarctic Division had been considering the occurrence of a disease outbreak among Antarctica's wildlife we were unprepared when an unusual mortality event occurred among the Adélie penguins near Mawson. The event initially appeared to be caused by infectious disease however we were fortunate that it proved otherwise for we were ill prepared for such an occurrence. We had no contingency plan to activate, no protective clothing, no suitable sanitising agents and very little sampling equipment. However the *Protocols for collection of samples for pathological analysis in the event of disease being suspected among monitored species of birds* published by CCAMLR (1997) proved particularly useful in the collection and storage of samples.

We have now published a response plan for an unusual mortality event and have assembled investigation kits which are located at each of the Australian Antarctic stations and Macquarie Island and carried on ships used by Australia in Antarctica. The kits contain protective clothing, sanitising agents, media for the culture and transport of microorganisms and sampling and post mortem equipment. The container is a lockable waterproof plastic case (see photo above). Also included is a copy of the response plan and instructions on carrying out an investigation. A video will be added later which shows among other things how make up the culture media and carry out a post mortem on a bird.

A copy of the response plan, all documentation relating to the contents and use of the kit are available at <http://www.aad.gov.au/default.asp?casid=2993>.

It is planned that the kits will be updated every three years and the antibiotics replaced. New diagnostic kits will be added as they become available.

KNOWLES KERRY, ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES PROGRAM, AAD