

# Wayne Papps Antarctic and wilderness photographer

**Born Christchurch 14 December 1959, died in a cliff fall, Cloudy Bay, Tasmania, 1 June 2003**

*Cloudy Bay on Tasmania's Bruny Island is aptly named. The rocky headlands flanking its beautiful beach are frequently enveloped in mist and rain sweeping up from the subantarctic. It faces south, across the stormy Southern Ocean toward Antarctica. There can be no better reminder of Australia's ancient affinity with the southern continent.*

*No-one would have appreciated this more than Wayne Papps, whose death while photographing on this lonely coast brings to an abrupt end an artistic life that promised something truly special in the long history of Antarctic and wilderness photography.*



Those lucky enough to have worked closely alongside Wayne in Australia and Antarctica knew this. They knew that such dogged determination as his, such vision, such an unerring eye for the extraordinary lifted Papps above the pack of Antarctic photography and into the company of the very best.

Powerful images of wild New Zealand landscapes (a beloved subject to which he frequently returned over the years) and Australian and European streetscapes were evidence of Wayne's photographic skills when he first came to the Australian Antarctic Division in Tasmania in the mid-1990s. There was a hint of the extraordinary in the gaze and grave demeanour of this compact, intense man.

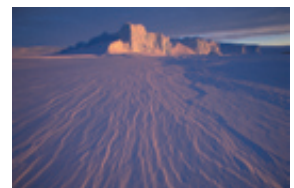
Antarctica seems always to have been in his sights. From Christchurch he went to live in Melbourne, and from there moved to Hobart. His all-too-brief Antarctic experience was limited to ship travel and visits to Australia's Casey and Mawson stations, but the quantity and quality of his output of a few weeks ashore suggested a stay of a full summer or a year.

Short-term visitors are usually treated with scant respect in Antarctica, but Wayne was an exception. This visitor truly knew his trade, and even the most hardened Antarctic veterans responded to his passion to give him the support he needed. That support could be demanding: ever-conscious of the severe constraints of time, weather and light, Wayne regularly rose at 3 am to catch that matchless moment.

*Wayne Papps had the heart of a polar poet – simple and unadorned. He respected Antarctica's implacable indifference to human visitors but was never overawed by it. His images are uplifting and challenging, but never frightening: they celebrate Antarctica's colour and light and life, and the sheer joy of every moment spent there.*

Technical excellence was integral to Wayne's artistry. A traditional film photographer, he relished the opportunities presented by digital technology. His outstanding 'virtual reality' panoramic images gave people everywhere the chance to 'be there' via their computer screens. At the Australian Antarctic Division he dealt with others' images – few of them approaching his own standards – with the utmost respect, applying the highest technical standards to their digital reproduction.

The powerful images that resulted from his short Antarctic sojourns have placed Wayne Papps in the vanguard of contemporary Antarctic and wilderness photography. His work is featured in the Australian Wilderness Photography Gallery as it is at the Vivendi Corporation's international headquarters in Paris. It has enjoyed successful showings





Wayne discovered Antarctica through new eyes. He uncovered and captured the beauty of Antarctica like no other photographer before or currently. His keen sense of nature's beauty is reflected in his photography – around you is Wayne's photographic story for the world to see.

*Kevin Bell, Multimedia Unit Manager, AAD*



in Sydney and Melbourne and has for several years graced the walls of Canberra's Parliament House.

Wayne's photographs enriched his Hobart community's Antarctic experience in last year's annual Midwinter Festival. This midwinter, Wayne was to be especially celebrated for his unique contribution to our collective vision of the south, with his images adorning a full gallery in the State art museum. The occasion will tragically be remembered by his absence. We are all immeasurably poorer.

*(The author, Peter Boyer, is a Tasmanian writer and a former Australian Antarctic Division manager)*



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