

## FIRST ANTARCTIC FLIGHT FOR THE AIRBUS A319

After a 5.2 hour flight from Christchurch, New Zealand, the Australian Antarctic Division's Airbus A319 touched down in Antarctica – at America's McMurdo base – for the first time, on the 19 November 2007.

On arrival, passengers and crew were greeted by the US National Science Foundation representative at McMurdo, Mr Mike Scheuermann, and representatives of the New Zealand Antarctic Program, from Scott Base. In keeping with the tradition of not arriving empty handed on a first flight to Antarctica, the A319 delivered 1500 kilograms of mail and parcels to McMurdo.

While in Antarctica the aircraft undertook further take offs and landings to give the aircrew



A319 parking at McMurdo.

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additional experience of the local conditions, before departing on the 4.5 hour return flight to New Zealand. On 22 November the A319 flew to McMurdo again, and returned directly to Hobart. Both flights were conducted without incident and demonstrated the capability of a modern, commercial, twin engine jet to provide an effective air service to Antarctica. All objectives of the flights were met and the performance and handling of the aircraft on the McMurdo ice runway exceeded the expectations of the aircrew.

The A319 flight to McMurdo was planned 12 months in advance and was an important part of preparations leading up to the first landing on Australia's new Wilkins Runway, expected in December. The ability of the aircraft to conduct

two return trips to Antarctica in a period of four days highlights the flexibility and efficiency that intercontinental air travel can provide to operations in Antarctica.

Many thanks must go to Skytraders, the US Antarctic Program and Antarctic New Zealand, for the conduct and support of such a significant operation. Congratulations must also go to the aircrew, consisting of Captain Garry Studd and Captain Rex Booth of Skytraders and Captain John Quinnell of Airbus. Lt Colonel Jim McGann, the US Airforce Antarctic C-17 Commander, also participated as an observer on the flight.

CHARLTON CLARK  
*Manager, Antarctic Airlink Project*

## Women wired for Antarctic experience

In a first for the Australian Antarctic Division, Mawson station will have an all-women telecommunications team in 2008, and three of the four communications operators working in Antarctica this summer are women. With their diverse backgrounds, the five women bring a wealth of experience to the Australian Antarctic programme.

Supervising Telecommunications Technical Officer, Jodi Wruck, is a skilled radio frequency technician. Jodi joined the Australian Army in 1994, training and later working in radio communications and equipment testing. In 2006 she spent 12 months on Macquarie Island as the Communications

Technical Officer – an experience which inspired her to leave the Army earlier this year and head south again for Mawson.

Jodi will be working with Communications Technical Officer, Roselin Bali, from Sydney. After training as an electrical engineer, Roselin specialised in network engineering with Cisco Systems, where she gained experience working with routers and switches.

Over summer, Narelle Rawnsley, Jane Leggate and Clare Ainsworth, will support the season's air and field operations programmes. Their work will involve providing a safety radio net for

helicopters, C212 aircraft, the new A319 Airbus, and scientific research parties living and working in the field.

Narelle is an operational planning officer with the Country Fire Service in South Australia. Operationally responsible for 87 fire stations, Narelle has specialised in incident preparedness and management, and risk planning. She will be based primarily at Casey, but will also work at Davis and briefly at Mawson.

Jane is an air traffic controller with Airservices Australia. Based in Melbourne, she first became interested in Antarctica several years ago during preliminary discussions between the Australian Antarctic Division and Airservices Australia about an Australian-Antarctic air link, as planes destined for Antarctica fly through Australian airspace. Jane will be based at Casey.

Clare moved to Western Australia three years ago from the United Kingdom, where she worked as a search and rescue officer with HM Coastguard. She was responsible for coordinating all civil maritime search and rescue operations for boats, people and aircraft. Clare has also crewed a sailing ship around Cape Horn and into the Southern Ocean. She will spend most of her time at Davis.

ANNIE RUSHTON  
*Operations Branch, AAD*



The communications team (from left): Roselin Bali, Narelle Rawnsley, Clare Ainsworth, Jane Leggate and Jodi Wruck.

ANNIE RUSHTON