

IN BRIEF

New Minister, new name

In the wake of ministerial and portfolio changes in January, the Australian Antarctic Division is now under the stewardship of the Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Minister for the Department of the Environment and Water Resources, and Assistant Minister, the Hon John Cobb.

Australia Day Awards

This year's Australia Day Achievement Medallions were presented to the Australian Antarctic Division team responsible for the development, implementation and management of Assessment Centres – used as part of the selection process for Antarctic expeditioners. The citation reads: *In recognition of the team's significant role in the successful introduction of selection centres for the recruitment of Antarctic expeditioners, which has led to employment of people with much improved personal attributes and a corresponding increase in station harmony, quality of life and work effectiveness in Antarctica.*

AAD



On behalf of the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Water Resources, Australian Antarctic Division Director Tony Press (second from right), presented Australia Day awards to (from left to right) Noel Backhouse, Jeremy Bonnice and Richard Mulligan. Tina Maher was also part of the winning team.

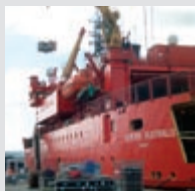
Antarctica features in Year Book Australia

To mark the International Polar Year, the 2007 *Year Book Australia*, released on 24 January, contains a feature article on Antarctica written by the Australian Antarctic Division's Chief Scientist, Professor Michael Stoddart, and Dr Tom Griffiths of the Australian National University.

Dr Griffiths' essay discusses the major phases and trends in the history of Antarctica over two centuries, while Professor Stoddart provides a contemporary picture of life in Antarctica, including a description of what it is like to work in Antarctica and an outline of Australia's programme of scientific research. Shorter articles on specific aspects of Australia's involvement in Antarctica - administration, fishing, tourism, waste management - are contained in relevant chapters of book.

The book is published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, costs \$97, and can be ordered online from www.abs.gov.au or 1300 135 070.

NICKI GHILCOTT



Budget update

This year's budget saw \$21.6 million allocated to the Australian Antarctic programme. Of this, the Australian Antarctic Division will receive \$20.3 million over four years to cover the cost of rising fuel prices and shipping

contract costs, providing some welcome relief to our increasingly stretched operational budget. The Mawson's Huts Foundation will receive \$1.3 million to continue the preservation of Mawson's Hut.

Correction

On page 21 of the last issue of the magazine we published a photo purported to be of Ken Assender. The photo was in fact of Viv Hill who was also stationed at Mawson in 1960. Apologies to Viv and to the families and friends of both men.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN MINT



Polar Series coin

The Royal Australian Mint released the first of four *Polar Series* coins during the launch of the International Polar Year at the Royal Society of Victoria in Melbourne on 1 March. The uncirculated \$1 coin features the Australian Antarctic Territory. It precedes

three \$5 silver proof coins which will be released over the next three years. More information www.ramint.gov.au

Antarctica under threat



Climate change will impose a complex web of threats and interactions on the plants and animals living in the ice-free areas of Antarctica. Increased temperatures may promote growth and reproduction, but may also contribute to drought and associated effects. These scenarios are explored in a new book, *Trends in Antarctic Terrestrial and Limnetic Ecosystems: Antarctica as a Global Indicator*, co-edited by Australian Antarctic

Division biologist, Dr Dana Bergstrom. The book is available by contacting Dana.Bergstrom@aad.gov.au.

IGY films online

Thirteen films about the International Geophysical Year of 1957-58 are now online thanks to a team from the University of Colorado and the US National Academy of Sciences. The 29 minute films include: *The Inconstant Air*, which describes studies of the atmosphere and the greenhouse effect; *The Flaming Sky*, which describes research on auroras; and *The Secrets of the Ice*, which describes research on glaciers and ice caps and their role in the Earth system. The films can be downloaded from http://lasp.colorado.edu/igy_nas/

National Oceans Office moves in

Staff of the National Oceans Office, part of the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Water Resources, moved into new offices constructed at the Australian Antarctic Division in Kingston, on June 18. The National Oceans Office is responsible for implementing Australia's ocean policy.

GLENN JACOBSON



Wollemi planted for World Environment Day

A Wollemi Pine was planted in the Antarctic garden at Kingston to mark World Environment Day on June 5. The planting was presided over by Professor Pat Quilty – the driving force behind the Antarctic garden – and Australian Antarctic Division Deputy Director, Virginia Mudie.

The pine is an appropriate addition to the garden because fossil remains have been discovered throughout Australia, New Zealand and Antarctica – including pollen fossils collected by Professor Quilty in the Prydz Bay region of Antarctica.

Wollemia nobilis belongs to a 200 million-year-old plant family, the *Araucariaceae*, and was thought extinct until bushwalker, David Noble, discovered a stand of them in the Wollemi National Park, near Sydney, in 1994. About 100 trees have since been found in the wild, and thousands have been cloned and sold around the country – the Antarctic Division tree is number 72 000.