

INTERNATIONAL

Australian heads environment body

Australian Antarctic Division Director, Dr Tony Press, has been elected to chair the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP). This was agreed at the 5th meeting of the CEP, held in conjunction with the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) in Poland.

The Chair is elected from members of the CEP for a two year period. The inaugural Chair of the Committee, Dr Olav Orheim of Norway, stepped down at the end of the Warsaw meeting having completed two terms as Chair. Dr Orheim had previously chaired the Transitional Environmental Working Group and thus had a lead role in establishing the CEP's role within the Antarctic Treaty system.

The CEP was established by Article 11 of the Madrid Protocol and has a number of critical functions to undertake in advising the ATCM. The Treaty's environmental decision-making is based on the advice of the CEP, and addresses issues such as environmental impact

assessment, conservation of flora and fauna, waste management and marine pollution. An increasingly important part of the CEP's agenda is the development of measures to protect areas of special significance.

The role of the Chair of the Committee is an important one, and will involve Australia, through the AAD, in facilitating intersessional communication between the Parties on environmental issues, and providing various information services to support the group's work. In the AAD, this will be coordinated by Tom Maggs of the Environmental Management and Audit Unit, who has extensive experience in the CEP.

Dr Press and the Committee expressed warm thanks to the outgoing Chair for his skills and enthusiasm, which have been a significant factor in the effectiveness of the CEP during its formative years. In appreciation of Dr Orheim's contribution, Australia hosted a reception to honour his

personal and professional efforts during his two terms as Chair. ■

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Newly elected Chair of the CEP, Australian Dr Tony Press, with outgoing Chair, Norwegian Dr Olav Orheim.