



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment

STATEMENT

13 January 2016

Death of Antarctic helicopter pilot David Wood

On behalf of the Australian Government, I extend my deepest condolences to David Wood's family, friends and colleagues.

David Wood was a very experienced helicopter pilot who loved the natural environment, particularly the polar regions, having spent a number of seasons in Antarctica and the Arctic.

He has worked for the Australian Antarctic program for the past few seasons, employed as senior helicopter pilot with Helicopter Resources which is contracted to the Australian Antarctic Division.

In his time with our Program, David has been admired for his passion, dedication and professionalism and had the strong respect of his fellow expeditioners. Antarctic colleagues and friends are deeply saddened by his passing.

David died last night as a result of injuries sustained after falling around 20 metres into a crevasse on the Antarctic West Ice Shelf while undertaking fuel reloading work on Monday night.

A response team of three specialist search and rescue officers was dispatched from Davis station and arrived around three hours after David fell down the crevasse. He was then transported to the Antarctic Division's medical facility at Davis station in a critical condition, but passed away last night.

I would like to thank the rescue team that worked to rescue David from the crevasse, and the medical specialists who cared for him.

David's tragic death is a reminder of the hostile, remote and inherently dangerous environment in which our dedicated Antarctic teams carry out their important work.

We value David's contribution to the Australian Antarctic program. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and colleagues at this very difficult time.

The incident has been reported to both the ACT Coroner and Comcare. The Australian Government will also carry out a range of thorough investigations led by the ACT Coroner.

(ENDS)