



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILLARD

**AUSTRALASIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION
1912 - 2012**

With this time capsule, the Government and people of Australia in 2012 pay tribute on the centenary of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition and send our greetings 100 years hence to those who follow in our footsteps.

We celebrate the expedition's leader, Sir Douglas Mawson, a man of generous and intrepid spirit who was drawn by what he called "the passion of a great adventure."

We remember and acknowledge his colleagues of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition who freely shared long months of unremitting effort and hardship, including those who lost their lives so far from home. After the deaths of his companions Xavier Mertz and Lieutenant Belgrave Ninnis during the Far Eastern Sledging Party, Mawson travelled some 160 kilometres back to base alone. His survival was astonishing.

Mawson and his colleagues undertook their epic journey not for profit or fame but to extend the boundaries of human knowledge and to advance the cause of science. Through their eyes Australia and the world were shown a truly unique continent whose ancient records had - and still have - much to tell us.

This collection of messages and objects seeks to capture the significance of the achievement of Mawson and his colleagues. I trust that those who open it in 2112 will find the passage of a century has done nothing to diminish the courage and integrity of those great men. The Australasian Antarctic Expedition was the last expedition in the heroic age of exploration, a feat of human endurance the like of which we may never see again.

I record with pride our nation's immense and lasting gratitude.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Julia Gillard'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underlining the name.

The Honourable Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister of Australia

8 January 2012