

The Australian Antarctic Medal

Formal recognition of outstanding service

Nomination Guide

About

The **Australian Antarctic Medal** is part of the Australian honours and awards system.

It is awarded by the Governor-General on Midwinter's Day (21 June) as a day of significance for Antarctic expeditioners.

The award was established in 1987.

Purpose

The award recognises individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service in scientific research or exploration in connection with Australia's Antarctic program. This includes those who were part of an Australian Antarctic expedition or anyone who represented an Australian government agency or organisation while working in Antarctica.

Outstanding service could be shown through:

- Exceptional leadership and innovation
- Significant achievements that advance the objectives of the Australian Antarctic Program
- Enhancing knowledge and understanding of Antarctica
- Supporting and enhancing the Antarctic community.

"Outstanding service" refers to work that exceeds the expected requirements of a person's role.

It also recognises sustained high-level performance by individuals who focus on outcomes that result in benefits and advances to the Australian Antarctic Program.

Long service should not be used as a basis for nominations.

The Australian Antarctic Medal can be awarded to the same person for a second and subsequent occasion. There is no limit on the number of awards per year.

Recipients of the Australian Antarctic Medal are entitled to use the post-nominal letters "AAM" to show that their outstanding service has been formally recognised.

Award criteria

1. Time in Antarctica

Generally, nominees should have spent at least **12 months in Antarctica**, which can be accumulated over multiple trips. This includes areas south of latitude 60° South or elsewhere in the Antarctic region where the rigours of Antarctic climate and terrain prevail.

- **Cumulative time:** The 12 months of service in Antarctica does not need to be completed in a single continuous stay. Instead, it can be gathered through various expeditions, allowing individuals to participate in different seasons or projects over the years. This flexibility recognises the diverse roles and contributions of personnel involved in the Australian Antarctic Program.
- **No requirement to winter:** It is not necessary for nominees to have wintered in Antarctica. Many valuable contributions occur during the summer months when research activities are often at their peak. This provision broadens the pool of eligible candidates, acknowledging that significant service can take place during shorter visits.
- **Variety of roles:** The time spent in Antarctica can include a range of roles, from scientific research to logistical support, field operations, or administrative functions. Each role contributes uniquely to the overall success of the Australian Antarctic Program.

Exceptional circumstances

While the standard requirement is a minimum of 12 months of service in Antarctica, there are provisions for **exceptional circumstances** that may allow individuals who do not meet this standard to be considered for the medal.

These exceptions recognise outstanding contributions or unique services that significantly enhance the Australian Antarctic Program. This flexibility ensures that exceptional service to the Australian Antarctic Program is acknowledged and rewarded appropriately.

2. Signification contribution to the Australian Antarctic Program

Nominees must have made a **significant contribution** to the Australian Antarctic Program. Examples of how nominees demonstrated their contributions could include one or more of the following:

- **Unique and meaningful impact:** The nominee made contributions that are unique and impactful to the program. This might involve innovative approaches to research, exceptional problem-solving skills, or initiatives that lead to significant improvements in operations or safety in Antarctica, or our scientific knowledge and understanding of the region.
- **Facing challenges:** The nominee overcame challenges during their service. This could include navigating extremely complex situations or dealing with multi-faceted difficulties that required innovative thinking and adaptability.
- **Going above and beyond:** The nominee went above and beyond the expected requirements of their role. This could include a range of actions such as, mentoring team members, fostering a positive and respectful culture or improving safety, initiating projects that enhance the Antarctic community and its operations, or developing partnerships that deliver impactful science outcomes.
- **Demonstrating leadership and innovation:** The nominee inspired others through their actions, fostering teamwork and collaboration while also introducing new ideas or methods that advance the goals of the Australian Antarctic Program.
- **Lasting benefits:** The nominee's contributions have provided enduring benefits to the program that positively reflect on Australia's national interests.

3. Positive Attitude and Community Spirit

Nominees should have demonstrated a positive attitude and a strong work ethic, making them a valuable member of their team. They should have actively contributed to fostering a safe, supportive and inclusive Antarctic community.

Key aspects of this contribution could include:

- **Contributing to safety and culture:** The nominee engaged in building a safe culture and delivering safety outcomes within the Antarctic community.
- **Encouraging teamwork:** The nominee inspired collaboration and camaraderie among team members, helping to create a cohesive and motivated group.
- **Embracing diversity:** The nominee recognised and valued the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of fellow team members, which enriched the cultural environment and enhanced teamwork.
- **Promoting wellbeing:** The nominee actively attended to the well-being of their colleagues, offering support and encouragement during challenging times.

By demonstrating these qualities, nominees not only excelled in their roles but also played a vital part in nurturing a thriving Antarctic community. This commitment to community spirit is crucial for the overall success of the Australian Antarctic Program.

Citizenship

The medal may be awarded to people who are not Australian citizens but have given outstanding support to Australia's Antarctic endeavours.

If the nominee is not an Australian citizen, the nomination should clearly indicate this. The Australian Government, in accordance with honours convention, must seek the agreement of the government of the country of citizenship before the award can be made.

Posthumous awards

The medal may be awarded posthumously.

Nomination format

Anyone may nominate an individual for an Australian Antarctic Medal.

All nominations should be prepared in Word format, using the Australian Antarctic Medal Nomination Form.

As the Australian Antarctic Medal is part of the official national honours system, it is important to provide:

- Full personal details of the nominee, including the full name and home address. Note, all information provided is treated as confidential and is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act.
- Full position details of the nominee are required so that nominations can be assessed against the duties that would normally be expected of the role/s. This is important when comparing nominations.
- The Australian Antarctic Medal Nomination Form must contain comprehensive information on the Antarctic service or achievement for which the nomination is being made. A list of positions held over a number of years is not sufficient.
- The nomination will be considered alongside other nominations in a competitive process. A clear articulation of the nominee's outstanding contribution is required.

Referee reports

All nominations must be accompanied by referee statements which comment on the service of the nominee.

- Referee reports should be limited to a maximum of two pages per report.
- A minimum of three referee statements is required.

Assessment

The Australian Antarctic Medal Committee will consider nominations for eligible individuals.

After considering the nominations, the committee recommends a list of proposed recipients to the responsible Minister, who then makes a recommendation to the Governor-General who has the authority to approve the awards.

Responsibility for contacting the proposed recipients' rests with the Honours Secretariat at Government House, which arranges for the announcement of the awards to appear in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette.

Proposed recipients may decline an award if they wish. Sometime after gazettal, the recipient will be notified by Government House of the arrangements for them to receive their medal at an official investiture.