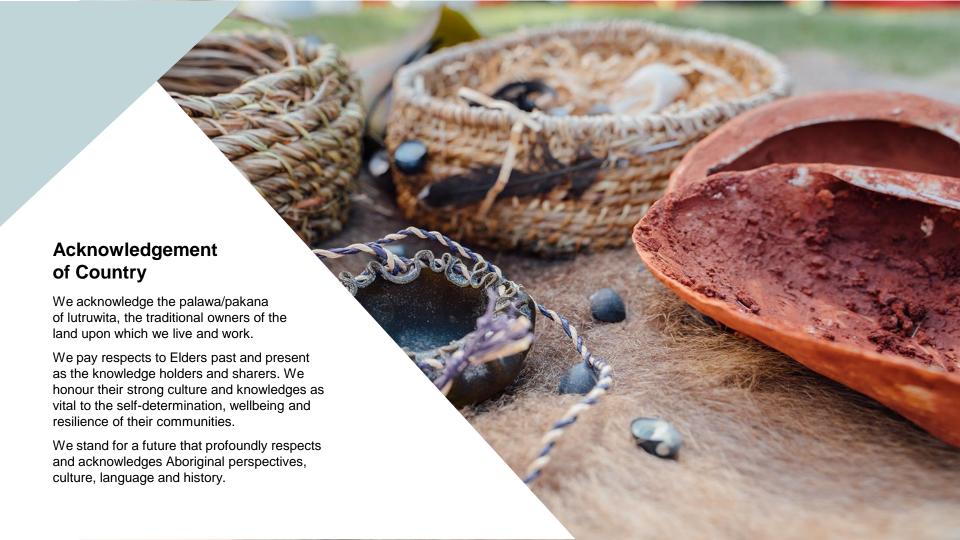




Antarctica Day 2023 Conference Report

Public Engagement with Antarctica: Connections from Afar





Introduction

On 1 December 2023, the third annual Antarctica Day conference was held in Hobart, Tasmania, with the theme of *Public Engagement with Antarctica: Connections from Afar.* Almost 100 people participated from a range of backgrounds, including government, NGOs, cultural organisations, and the University of Tasmania.

The program explored the topics of Antarctica at Home; Indigenous Perspectives; Engaging Science, Engaging Arts; and Antarctica Then and Now: Curating Antarctic Stories.

Two interactive workshops focussed on questions such as, why is Antarctic engagement important? And how can we forge connections into the future?

This was followed by an international panel discussion, *More than Just Penguins? Bringing Antarctica alive for people back home*, sharing the diverse successes, obstacles and opportunities related to connecting with a place that most of us will never visit.

The conference generated new insights into how the Antarctic community can build engagement with new audiences, especially in Hobart, as a Gateway City. This report captures these insights to enable coordinated conversations and actions between Antarctic stakeholders.

Special thanks to all our presenters and panellists, particularly our international visitors, Assoc. Prof. Cilla Wehi and Dr Gabriela Roldan; to our sponsors – the University of Tasmania and the City of Hobart; and to our assistants Maggie Zheng and Vini Drozdowski.

Dr Hanne Nielsen and Prof Elizabeth Leane Co-organisers, Antarctica Day 2023



1

Key themes from Antarctica Day 2023

Key themes from Antarctica Day 2023



Making personal connections

What happens to
Antarctica is important
for the rest of the world
and personal
connections enhance a
sense of responsibility



Reaching new audiences

Building greater engagement with the wider community, especially young people



Technology

Digital technology creates many new possibilities, but real materials and oral histories will always be valued



Hobart's role

Hobart has an important role to play as a Gateway City and steward of Antarctic stories



Making personal connections

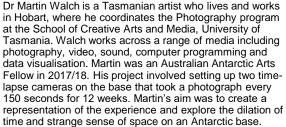
- Participants expressed a desire that more people recognise the value of Antarctica and feel connected to, and responsible for, this place. How can we connect Antarctica to our daily lives, so that its significance is *personal* as well as global?
- Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. Indigenous people living on the 'Southern Rim' have
 known the region to their south for many thousands of years and in diverse ways, such as weather,
 auroral phenomena and migrating animals. Associate Professor Priscilla Wehi, Director, Te Pūnaha
 Matatini Centre of Research Excellence in Complex Systems, University of Otago emphasised the
 ways stories connect people and create relationships with place. Priscilla shared insights into her
 partnerships with Indigenous communities in their joint work on Antarctica, and the ideas of relationality
 and connection that matter to these communities, that are shared with many other Indigenous
 communities.
- **Story telling** is a valuable way to build connections. People want to listen to stories. Sharing personal experiences is important and there is fascination with the "how" behind an Antarctic expedition. Who made the clothes? What is base life like? How many potatoes are on board?
- The Creative Arts enable unique forms of emotional and aesthetic connection to Antarctica. See Case studies: Engaging Science; Engaging Arts, p7.
- Climate change is another way to understand Antarctica's impact on our lives. The effects of climate change on the Antarctic region impact the rest of the world. As one group of participants said, "Antarctica is the beating heart where the rubber meets the road for climate".



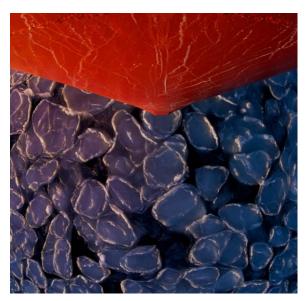
Case studies: Engaging Science; Engaging Arts







Prof Dana Bergstrom is an applied Antarctic ecologist focused on mitigating risks to Antarctic ecosystems. Dana worked for 22 years at the Australian Antarctic Division and founded the not-for-profit, Pure Antarctic Foundation with the goal of bringing Antarctica to the world. *Antarctica, A New Musical,* which premiered at Hobart's Theatre Royal in 2016, was co-written by Dana with composer/librettist Dugald McLaren, to invite others to feel emotional connections to Antarctica. As the project developed, it became more about scientists and climate change. The podcast/album version of the work, *Antarctica, Beneath the Storm* is soon to be released.



Dr Frederique Olivier is a freelance documentary natural history cinematographer and IMAS research associate with a diverse career in marine and Antarctic science. She has been regularly involved with Antarctic logistics and voyage management with both the French and Australian programs. Frederique has captured an enormous amount of Antarctic imagery over the years, that she is now using to create a baseline record of what's there, to enable us to see what things are changing. This image comes from a project titled Sonification of Antarctic sea ice — a science and art collaboration with a sound producer.

Case studies: Antarctica Then and Now – Curating Antarctic Stories



Sherrie-Lee Evans is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania who has been using archival research and oral history interviews to uncover the history of the conservation of the Mawson's Huts Historic Site, and the development of the Replica Hut in Hobart, to explore larger questions around the key drivers of cultural resource management in Antarctica, and how these have changed over time. The project is titled Australian Cultural Resource Management in Antarctica: the Case of Mawson's Huts.

Presenter: Sherrie-Lee Evans, Heritage PhD, University of Tasmania



Caitlin Harvey is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania and heritage professional who has been investigating the climate change impacts on Antarctic and subantarctic heritage. Her research aims to use climate data to assess the vulnerability of heritage places and their values to climate change and make recommendations for adaptation and mitigation measures that managers can realistically put into place.

Presenter: Caitlin Harvey, Heritage PhD, University of Tasmania



Vini Drozdowski is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania. Her research focuses on domesticity, homemaking, and masculinity on the Australasian Antarctic Expedition (1911-1914) and interrogates how expectations of manliness, whiteness, and nationalism were recreated or subverted in an extreme, isolated environment.

Presenter: Vini Drozdowski, Antarctic PhD, University of Tasmania



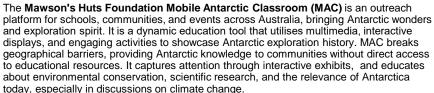


Reaching new audiences

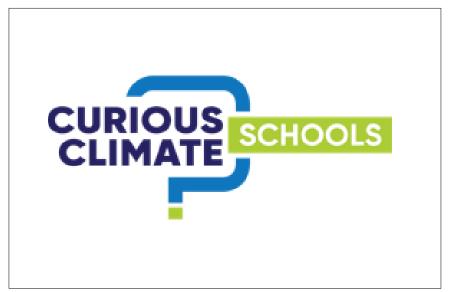
- How can we build greater engagement with Antarctica among the wider community? David Tayler, Head of Christchurch Antarctic Office, shared some suggestions:
 - Understand our audiences and tailor messages appropriately.
 For example, Explore Antarctica Day is popular with children 12 and under, but upon review, they identified a gap in communication for school kids aged 12 to 18.
 - **Curate content.** Avoid overwhelming the audience with too much content. The Christchurch Antarctic Office successfully staggers events throughout year, every 2-3 months, rather than packed into a single week.
 - **Define success and measure impact.** What do we want from improved public engagement? It could be an increased pipeline of scientists, individuals eager to work in Antarctica, or a more engaged and climate conscious community.
- Children and youth are especially passionate about climate change, which opens exciting possibilities for engagement. See Case studies: Antarctic engagement with young people, pp10-11.
- Tourists could connect with and become ambassadors for Antarctica through innovative additions to our city, such as VR/AR experiences, a 'Polar Pathways' app, storytelling events, or citizen science activities.

Case studies: Antarctic engagement with young people





Presenter: Lara Colrain, Mawson's Huts Foundation https://www.mawsons-huts.org.au/antarctic-bus/



Curious Climate Schools answers students' questions about climate change. A team of climate scientists, conservation biologists, fire scientists, chemists, lawyers, engineers, psychologists, social scientists, oceanographers, Indigenous knowledge specialists and health experts answered 167 questions about climate change in 2023. This included Tasmanian children's questions about Antarctica, such as "Antarctica is melting – is there a chance that it can refreeze?" and "What does the melting of glaciers in Antarctica mean for Tasmania and our climate?"

Presenter: Chloe Lucas, University of Tasmania

https://curiousclimate.org.au/ https://curiousclimate.org.au/schools/

Case study: Bonjour Expeditioner!

- Bonjour Expeditioner! was an exhibition with more than 700 postcards and
 drawings on display in the Central Gallery of TMAG and attracted over
 17.000 visitors. These cards present the interactions between primary
 school students and international Antarctic expeditioners who were in
 quarantine for two weeks due to strict COVID-19 protocols.
- Writing the postcards was an exciting opportunity for the children to communicate with and learn from the expeditioners. In turn the expeditioners replied to the students with their own postcards and drawings. They kindly shared their expectations and experiences of what it is to live and work on the ice.
- The cards from the children and expeditioners conveyed wonder, marvel, awe, imagination, and inspiration. These interactions as well as the shared feelings of curiosity for Antarctica determined the atmosphere and the design of the exhibition. An artistic videographic work based on the cards was part of the exhibition and later shown on international Quantas flights. What started with a small postcard resulted in a global outreach.

Presenter: Miranda Nieboer, University of Tasmania



Case studies: Engaging with policy makers and the public



In October 2023, more than 200 scientists from 19 countries released the **Marine Ecosystem Assessment for the Southern Ocean (MEASO)**, the first comprehensive assessment of trends in Southern Ocean ecosystems, in a report written specifically for policy makers. MEASO describes this ecosystem of global significance: a heat and carbon sink; a place that captures the imagination of people around the world; and one that supports fisheries and tourism. Using infographics to illustrate the report's findings, MEASO considers two possible futures for the Southern Ocean ecosystem: a world limited to 1.5 degrees of warming; and warming beyond those limits.



Linda Hunt is a Lecturer in Media and Communication and a former broadcast journalist for ABC News. Linda has reported from Antarctica, and this experience inspired her research into **communicating Antarctica**, with an emphasis on the interplay between news media, science and politics on the continent. While her research has so far focused on Australian media, it has wider implications for research into public understanding of Antarctica. This project demonstrates the importance of news media in engaging the public with Antarctica and the vital role news plays in communicating the critical climate science conducted there. Linda's research argues for the elevation of media studies in future scholarship concerned with public engagement with the continent.

Presenter: Linda Hunt, University of Tasmania

Presenter: Jess Melbourne-Thomas, Sustainable Marine Futures, CSIRO Environment Marine Ecosystem Assessment for the Southern Ocean: Summary for Policymakers (zenodo.org)



Technology

- New technologies are enabling the preservation and sharing of Antarctica's cultural heritage as never before.
- The New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust is bringing Antarctic cultural heritage to the public through Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and digital collections. See Case studies: Virtual, digital, and physical collections, p14.
- Social media amplifies the potential audience reach. For example, a story about a 100-year-old fruit cake found from the Scott expedition generated 1800+ media mentions in 91 countries and 34 languages, with an audience reach of 2 billion people.
- Archives and collections preserve the artefacts that bring these stories to life. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery is using creative floor design and colour palettes to layer information and enhance flow in its permanent 'Islands to Ice' exhibition.



Case studies: Virtual, digital, and physical collections





ISLANDS THE GREAT SOUTHERN OCEAN & ANTARCTICA

In partnership with Auckland University of Technology (AUT), the NZ Antarctic Heritage Trust has developed the **Sir Edmund Hillary's Antarctic Hut Virtual Reality Experience** to celebrate New Zealand's first presence in Antarctica. So far it has reached 40,000 members of the public, including through community events and an education programme at kura/schools. The VR experience incorporates artefacts to bring the virtual world to life in vivid detail.

Icy Heritage provides public access to the NZ Antarctic Heritage Trust's growing image collection. It was established in 2023 to showcase the work of the Trust, and new items are added frequently to the digital collection. NZ Antarctic Heritage Trust cares for the expedition bases of the early Antarctic explorers and shares the legacy of exploration through outreach programmes and expeditions to engage and inspire a new generation of explorers.

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's long-term 'Islands to Ice' exhibition uses a modern brand application and digital colour palette to layer information and maximise people's engagement with exhibits (e.g. provocations, call to action). A new floor plan will enhance flow and visitor favourites – such as the Ice Map – are being re-designed.

Presenter: Gabriela Roldan, NZ Antarctic Heritage Trust https://nzaht.org/share/virtual-reality/

Presenter: Gabriela Roldan, NZ Antarctic Heritage Trust https://antarctic-heritage.recollect.co.nz/

Presenter: Dee Dzelalija, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery https://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/whats on/exhibitions/longterm/is lands to ice



Hobart's role



- Many people in Hobart already feel a strong sense of connectedness to Antarctica, but there is scope to expand and deepen this.
- Local and State Government are aligned in their focus on Tasmania's and Hobart's relationship to Antarctica. One of the City of Hobart's priorities is growing our civic Antarctic Gateway identity. The Tasmanian Government has launched a new <u>Tasmanian Antarctic</u> <u>Gateway Strategy 2022-27</u>.
- Hobart's relationship to Antarctica goes beyond its logistical role as a port. Rather, Hobart has a role as a steward, promoting Antarctic values of science, international cooperation and environmental protection, and celebrating Antarctic stories. See *Case study: Australian Antarctic Festival, p18.*
- Hobart has much to share with and learn from other gateway cities; each has its own distinct relationship with Antarctica as well as commonalities with the other gateways.
- Hobart's future as a gateway and steward depends on the community understanding, supporting and contributing to this role. Public engagement is not an optional extra but a core activity.

What's happening in Hobart?

A non-exhaustive list of Antarctic-related institutions in Hobart

Visitors

- · Antarctic tourists
- International meeting attendees

Visiting Antarctic programs

Public spaces

- · Civic banners and Gateway branding
- · Public art and artefacts
- Antarctic-themed commercial outfits (e.g. Institut Polaire, Hadley's Hotel)

Events & activities

- · Opening of the season
- Antarctica Day
- Australian Antarctic Festival
- Public engagement with international icebreakers (students, public exhibitions, ship tours)

Upcoming:

- · Women in Antarctica exhibition
- Voices of the Southern Ocean (UNESCO City of Literature)

Networks & collaborations

- Antarctic Women's Network
- Antarctic Gateway collaboration
- Tasmanian Polar Network

Cultural organisations

- · Mawson's Huts Foundation
- Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery (TMAG)
- Royal Botanical Gardens

International Secretariats

- Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)
- Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS)

Research & Government

- Antarctic Tasmania (Tasmanian Government)
- · Australian Antarctic Division
- University of Tasmania
- CSIRO
- Bureau of Meteorology
- Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science (ACEAS)
- Australian Antarctic Program Partnership (AAPP)



Quick Facts: Hobart as a Gateway City







People in Hobart already feel a strong sense of connectedness to Antarctica. In a 2018 City of Hobart survey:

- One third of respondents had participated in a form of Antarctica cultural-related activity in last year
- 42% were 'very concerned' about Antarctic issues, particularly relating to climate change
- News media was the most common source of engagement

Presenter: Georgie Branch, City of Hobart

https://www.hobartcity.com.au/Council/International-relations-and-Antarctic-Gateway/Our-Antarctic-Gateway

The Antarctic sector makes a significant contribution to the Tasmanian economy, generating more than \$183 million each year, according to a Tasmanian Government report released in November 2023. The sector, which provides research, training, and support services to Australian and international Antarctic research, now employs nearly 1000 people in Tasmania.

Presenter: Tara Martin, Antarctic Tasmania

https://www.antarctic.tas.gov.au/why is tasmanias antarctic_sector_important/economic_impact_

On Antarctica Day 2022, a one-day Future of Work and Workforces in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean conference was held in Hobart. The conference aimed to facilitate discussion and 'future thinking' about the changes that might occur over the next 20 years to the science, research, engineering, tourism, policy and artistic work conducted in, or related to, the Antarctic and Southern Ocean, and the workforces that do that work. Read the full report below.

Presenter: Megan Woods, University of Tasmania https://cast-collaboration.org.au/antarctic-conference-report/

tps://cast-collaboration.org.au/antarctic-conference-report

Case study: Australian Antarctic Festival

- The only event of its kind in Australia, the biennial Australian Antarctic Festival brings Antarctica to the Hobart waterfront. The Festival provides visitors with the opportunity to enjoy a fascinating program of Antarctic science and discovery. We also celebrate the rich international connection with the Antarctic and Hobart's position as an Antarctic gateway city.
- Focal points of the Australian Antarctic Festival are art (artist in residence program, AAD art fellowship exhibition; exhibitions at TMAG and Salamanca Arts Centre); industry (Princes Wharf Exhibition); tourism; international links (engagement with schools internationally for Penguin Rookery Project; Embassy project engagement); engaging activities (e.g. Family Fun Day); networking opportunities; and deepening audience appeal to increase visitation and collect data from visitors.
- The structure of the 2024 festival is:
 - Pre-Festival: Mobile Antarctic Classroom (MAC) touring regional areas
 - · 22-23 August: School Engagement Focus
 - 24-25 August: General Public Focus
 - · Pre and Post festival exhibitions
- The festival receives funding and support from Mawson's Huts Foundation, Events Tasmania, City of Hobart, TasPorts, and Embassies. Valuable in-kind support is provided by the Australian Antarctic Division, CSIRO, Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) – University of Tasmania, Antarctic Tasmania, Tasmanian Polar Network, William Adams, Helicopter Resources, Elphinstone Engineering, and many volunteers.



22-25 AUGUST 2024 • HOBART TASMANIA







Contact: info@antarcticfestival.com.au or director@antarcticfestival.com.au

Antarctica Day 2023 Workshop Outcomes

Participants were divided into groups and asked to brainstorm:

Workshop 1: What does Antarctic engagement mean?

- What do we want people to see, think or feel in relation to Antarctica?
- Why do you think engagement is important?
- What do you see as your role in relation to engagement?
- · What are the limits of engagement?
- Flash forward to Hobart in 10 years:
 - What do you think/feel about Antarctica?
 - · How will it feel in the City of Hobart?
 - How will you feel connected to Antarctica?
 - · What do you do with those thoughts and feelings?
- What things support thinking, feeling and doing?
- What are the measures for successful engagement?
- How could we work with counterparts in NZ?

Workshop 2: Forging connections into the future

- How do we build connections with the far south and with each other?
- How do we engage with young people?
- · What does the future look like?
- What examples of best practice do we have to refer to?





Workshop 1 responses: Why is Antarctic engagement important?

There are strong levels of connectedness to Antarctica in Hobart.

But there is a bubble, where knowledge is not widely spread across the community.

Antarctica can be perceived as being exclusive. Barriers include:

- Lack of interest
- · Few people can go there and experience it first-hand
- Communication challenges (e.g. language, distance)
- Images and narratives of a hostile, depopulated, alien place
- Idea that "someone else is looking after it" (closed off community)
- Associated with whiteness, maleness, loneliness

One reason for engagement is to maintain the conservation of Antarctica as a continent for peace and science by increasing understanding in the community about Antarctica, thereby engendering support for its protection. The more that people know about Antarctica, the more support they will have for policies, actions, workforce, and research.

Many messages and many techniques. Resourcing engagement is important.

Why is
Antarctic
engagement
important?

Workshop 1 responses: How can we build Antarctic engagement?

Story-telling

- Narratives of Antarctica are often about isolation, last untouched wilderness – but it is geographically relatively close. Stories can help shift Antarctica's reputation to a place that is connected
- Give people a space to share their stories and perspectives – one that engages locals and visitors also preserves the material heritage that helps us to "imagine" Antarctica. Example: Australian War Memorial
- Optimistic messages that switch people on, not off (e.g. celebrating diverse wildlife)
- Present a range of historical genealogies that feed into what exploration is, not just the Heroic Era – e.g. Indigenous knowledges, fishing, technology

Link to climate change

- Build broader understanding of Antarctica's role in the global climate system, and how it affects us locally.
- Children and youth are especially passionate about climate change. The Antarctic sector could connect more with young climate activists.
- · Advocates to "speak for the ice"

Infrastructure and events

- Antarctic Science Precinct
- Antarctic Facility Zone
- Winter polar experience
 Action of the Action of t
- Antarctic-MONA crossover (e.g. mid-winter festival?)

Policy awareness

- Governments respond to what they think people care about (policies and funding)
- Aim to create a base level understanding of the national and international context e.g. Antarctic Treaty System, impacts of mitigation policies on Antarctica

Invest in workforce development

- Build a diverse, non-science workforce that is focussed on Antarctica but not necessarily there.
- For example, a public works department that builds social housing in summer, works in Antarctica in winter (Antarctic tradies)
- Expand the scope of who is considered an Antarctician e.g. your neighbour
- · Normalise the cold and working in the cold

Entertainment and media

- TV, comedies and books set in Antarctica that people can relate to
- Inclusive stories that bust the myth of the expeditioner
- Engage the public with Antarctic science through news coverage. The Emperor Penguin chicks story (2023) was particularly evocative



Workshop 2 responses: Forging connections into the future



What is your vision for Hobart, in ten years' time?

- Higher Antarctic literacy. People feel personally connected to Antarctica. Citizens understand how important Antarctica is to their daily lives.
- Strong community. Successful community initiatives to mitigate climate change locally and in Antarctica. A buzzing, well-connected Hobart activist movement. Sense of belonging to a Hobart Antarctic community.
- **Technology** enables people to immerse in Antarctic experience (e.g. VR, drones)
- At the same time, collections grow in relevance, as people value the "real thing"
- · Public is informed on policy impact of votes
- Strong Antarctic industry with economic benefits flowing to society
- Opportunities to share personal experiences and stories
- · Freedom of engagement by artists, media, creators
- · Greater links with the Arctic
- More Antarctic-set entertainment



Measures of success

- · Engaged artistic communities
- · Empowered climate activists
- · Economic contribution to broader society
- · Level of Antarctic literacy in the community
- Increase in tourism to Hobart



Indigenous knowledge

- Deconstruct how we learn about Antarctica did not start with European settlers
- Open views and perspectives with other forms of engagement



Lessons from other Gateway Cities

- Have fun
- Opening celebrations for season
- Staggered events throughout the year every 2-3 months
- Different activities for different audiences (e.g. businesses, families)
- Palawa and Māori connection and differences exchange enhancement
- · Touring exhibitions
- Images of Antarctica at airports (e.g. Christchurch)
- Sharing Gateway City lessons and resources

Presenters and Panellists



Antarctica at Home

- Georgie Branch, City of Hobart
- Tara Martin, Antarctic Tasmania
- Dave Tayler, Christchurch Antarctic Office

Indigenous Perspectives

 KEYNOTE: Associate Professor Priscilla Wehi, Director, Te Pūnaha Matatini Centre of Research Excellence in Complex Systems, University of Otago

Engaging Science, Engaging Arts

- Jess Melbourne-Thomas, Science Engagement, CSIRO
- Chloe Lucas, Curious Climate, University of Tasmania
- Linda Hunt, Antarctica & Media, University of Tasmania
- Anne Hardy, Citizen Science, University of Tasmania
- Fred Olivier, Filmmaker
- Martin Walch, Arts Fellow, University of Tasmania
- Dana Bergstrom, Pure Antarctica Foundation

Antarctica Then and Now: Curating Antarctic Stories

- KEYNOTE: Gabriela Roldan, NZ Antarctic Heritage Trust
- Dee Dzelalija, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- Lara Colrain, Mawson's Huts Foundation
- Miranda Nieboer, Bonjour Expeditioner, University of Tasmania
- Andrew Brassington, Australian Antarctic Festival
- Sherrie-Lee Evans, Heritage PhD, University of Tasmania
- Caitlin Harvey, Heritage PhD, University of Tasmania
- Vini Drozdowski, Antarctic PhD, University of Tasmania

More Ways We Connect: UTAS Research Showcase

- Indi Hodgson-Johnson, Impact, University of Tasmania
- Jeff McGee, Geopolitics, University of Tasmania
- Megan Woods, 2022 Antarctica Day Recap, University of Tasmania

Public Panel: More than Just Penguins? Bringing Antarctica alive for people back home

 Dr. Gabriela Roldan, Dr. Martin Walch, and Dr. Cilla Wehi. Chaired by Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Helen Burnet







Report prepared by Lorraine Ingham, University of Tasmania

Contact: Elizabeth.Leane@utas.edu.au or Hanne.Nielsen@utas.edu.au