In what ways can Australia continue to advance its key national and geopolitical interests in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean region?

**ANTARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL TREATY AND AUSTRALIAN-LED SCIENCE PROGRAM**

This policy proposal was developed by the winning Blue Team of the Futures Thinking workshop, delivered during the Institute for Regional Security’s Future Strategic Leaders’ Congress on Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in June 2019.

To ensure Australia can continue to advance its key national and geopolitical interests in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, it is proposed that the Australian Government advocate for the establishment of the Antarctic Environmental Treaty by 2040. This Treaty will be on the evolution of the current Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). It will regulate the sustainable use of the Antarctic territory and its resources, and enhance scientific and environmental cooperation. Regulation will be informed by cooperative scientific research with fellow Treaty parties, to manage the effects of climate change. Australia’s Antarctic Scientific Research Program is critical to enabling Australia to continue our strong scientific preserve, while also establishing freedom of scientific investigation and enhanced cooperation in environmental sciences.

**AUSTRALIA’S 2040 VISION**

To enable Australia to continue to advance its key national and geopolitical interests in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, it is proposed that the Australian Government advocate for the establishment of the Antarctic Environmental Treaty by 2040. This Treaty will be on the evolution of the current Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). It will regulate the sustainable use of the Antarctic territory and its resources, and enhance scientific and environmental cooperation. Regulation will be informed by cooperative scientific research with fellow Treaty parties, to manage the effects of climate change.

**ACCENDED SIGNATORIES**

Acceded Signatories to the Antarctic Environmental Treaty will be entitled to participate in consultative meetings with claimant states, by demonstrating their interest in preserving and protecting Antarctica’s environment and ecosystems, and participation in designated scientific research programs.

**POLICY MILESTONES**

1. Launch of the Antarctic public awareness campaign
2. Release of the Australian Government’s Antarctic Environmental and Climate Change Policy, aligned with the Australian Antarctic Strategy and 80th Antarctic expedition
3. Machinery of Government change – Department of Environment and Energy to take on broader science functions and be renamed the Department of Science
4. Official opening of the Antarctic to ensure public buy-in

**ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION TO REVERSE THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN 2040**

**ENVIRONMENTAL TAXATION**

**STAKEHOLDERS**

- Department of Energy and Environment
- Australian Antarctic Division
- Government Australia
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Defence

**RESOURCING**

- Scientific and industrial research organisations
- Universities and research organisations
- Australian media organisations

**STRATEGIC RISKS TO POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

- Risk: Lack of political will
  - Mitigation: Appointments of a senior Minister for Science and a dedicated Assistant Minister for the Antarctic, as part of the Machinery of Government change

- Risk: Lack of funding for policy implementation
  - Mitigation: Environmental tax, colliquially known as the ‘Penguin Tax’

- Risk: Acceleration of climate change and climate-related disasters that affect the Antarctic and the South Ocean region
  - Mitigation: Australia will become a leader in promote best practice in environmental stewardship in Antarctica and focus environmental research on ways to mitigate against climate-related disasters in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean region.

**POLITICAL**

- Risk: Lack of political will

**SAGEHOLDERS**

- Department of Energy and Environment
- Australian Antarctic Division
- Government Australia
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Defence
- Peace-Maintaining
- Private Industry
- Universities and research organisations
- Australian media organisations

**2025**

1. Launch of the Antarctic public awareness campaign

**2030**

1. Continue consultation on the development and adoption of the Antarctic Environmental Treaty
2. Official opening of the Antarctic

**2035**

1. Commence the drafting of the Antarctic Environmental Treaty
2. Continue international consultation and lobbying to the Antarctic Environmental Treaty
3. Australia hosts the 2035 World Expo, with an innovation and science focus
4. Review the ASG program and increase funding, to attract private sector investment in Antarctic capabilities

**2040**

1. Australia becomes a signatory to the Antarctic Environmental Treaty
2. 39 original signatories to the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) sign the Antarctic Environmental Treaty
3. The 42 other countries that have acceded to the ATS to commence the signatory process