



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

AUSTRALIA'S 2040 VISION

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 an 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 and enable scientific research, development and discovery.



THIS SYSTEM WILL PROTECT AND ADVANCE AUSTRALIA'S INTEREST BY SECURING OUR SOUTHERN APPROACHES, PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND ENSURING A STABLE, RULES-BASED APPROACH TO THE ANTARCTIC REGION

Antarctica is of great importance to Australians. The Australian Antarctic Territory occupies a unique place in our national identity, and Antarctic science will continue to be one of our national priorities. The modernisation of Australia's Antarctic program, through the enactment of the Antarctic Environmental Treaty and Australian-led Science Program is critical to enabling Australia to continue our strong support for the peaceful assertion of territorial claims, to deliver world-class scientific and environmental research and programs, and run our Antarctic operations safely and efficiently. The Antarctic Environmental Treaty will ensure the preservation and sustainment of the Antarctic region by reinforcing the designation of Antarctica as a scientific preserve, while also establishing freedom of scientific investigation and enhanced cooperation in environmental sciences.

POLICY MILESTONES



1. Launch of Antarctic **public awareness campaign**
2. Release of the Australian Government's **Antarctic Environmental and Climate Change Policy**, aligned with the Australian Antarctic Strategy and 20 Year Action Plan
3. Machinery of Government change - Department of Environment and Energy to take on broader science functions and be renamed the **Department of Science**



1. Launch of the **Antarctic Scientific Grants (ASG) program**, to support specialised research and innovation projects, and encourage private sector investment in Antarctic capabilities
2. Commence **international consultation** on the development and adoption the Antarctic Environmental Treaty
3. Official opening of the **year-round airstrip at Davis Station**



1. Commence the **drafting of the Antarctic Environmental Treaty**
2. Continue **international consultation and lobbying** for 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 scientists to and scientific investment in Australia



1. Australia becomes a **signatory to the Antarctic Environmental Treaty**
2. Original 12 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

ACCEDED 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.



STAKEHOLDERS

- Department of Energy and Environment
- Australian Antarctic Division
- Geoscience Australia
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Treasury
- Department of Finance
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Foreign Governments
- Private Industry
- Universities and research organisations
- Australian media organisations



ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION TO REVERSE THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN 2040

STRATEGIC RISKS TO POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Political



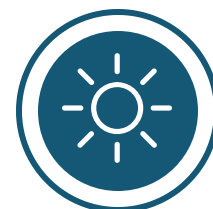
Risk: Lack of political will
Mitigation: Appointments of a senior Minister for Science and dedicated Assistant Minister for the Antarctic, as part of the Machinery of Government changes
Mitigation: Public awareness campaign, in partnership with blockbuster movies on the Antarctic to ensure public buy-in

Resourcing



Risk: Lack of funding for policy implementation
Mitigation: Environmental taxation, colloquially know as the 'Penguin Tax'
Mitigation: Commercialising private sector interests in Antarctica to encourage investment in Antarctic capabilities

Environmental



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 and 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

