



New clothing suits Antarctic expeditioners

A new range of polar clothing hit the ice-walks this season, giving Antarctic expeditioners a smart, modern look, coupled with improved functionality, ruggedness and safety.

Designed by Damian Flynn, the Australian Antarctic Division's (AAD) Clothing and Field Equipment Officer, the polar range incorporates the best features of modern mountaineering clothing, adapted for the harsh Antarctic environment and each garment's specific purpose.

'One of the main changes I've made is to use six ounce canvas, which is a cotton-nylon blend fabric, rather than Ventile, which is an ultrafine weave of 100 percent cotton,' Damian says.

'The canvas is cheaper than Ventile and more robust than Gortex, and should give us at least one winter and up to five summers of use.'

Damian has also reinforced all the 'wear' areas – elbows, knees, cuffs, shoulders and seat – with cordura, to improve durability. Other subtle touches include zips sewn such as to provide a flush finish, and a 'drop seat' inserted into the freezer suit to easily accommodate the call of nature.

The bright yellow-orange clothing, with its black reinforced patches, provides the best colour contrast in snow. Reflective piping and tape sewn in strategic areas, also increases visibility in low light and around vehicles, aircraft and heavy equipment. The Australian Government crest, embroidered on the pockets of jackets, provides a more corporate look than earlier, un-badged jackets.

'My brief has been to design technical clothing that can be used in the field and for support activities around station,' Damian says.

'But I've also tried to standardise the range so that we present a professional image that doesn't look overly institutionalised or industrial. The clothing is designed to make wearers feel safe and secure and to allow them to carry out their work efficiently and comfortably, but let's face it, most people like to look good in it too.'

—WENDY PYPER
Information Services, AAD

The new range of polar clothing helps expeditioners perform their Antarctic training and duties in safety and comfort.

MARTY BEAUVENUE

Queen's Baton visits Antarctica

The Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton experienced what many would consider the trip of a life time when it visited Antarctica as part of its 180 000 km journey across 53 countries and 18 territories of the Commonwealth – the longest, most inclusive relay in the Games' 76-year history.

The well-travelled baton, ably escorted by Shannon Stacey, and Games mascot 'Karak', the South Eastern Red-tailed Black cockatoo, were farewelled by Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery and Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) staff, on board the *Aurora Australis* last December. A week into the voyage the baton sighted its first iceberg, an impressive 500 m-long tabular berg, glimmering softly in the twilight.

The baton and Karak were kept busy throughout the voyage, meeting expeditioners and crew members who posed for official photos, some of which were posted on the Games website. On its arrival in Antarctica, the baton participated in a range of extreme sight-seeing activities, including a dive under the sea ice near Casey station and a helicopter flight. Antarctic expeditioners also escorted it on visits to Shirley Island and Browning Peninsula, where it encountered penguins and seals, and a trip to the abandoned Wilkes Station.

The Antarctic leg of the Queen's Baton's journey was coordinated by the AAD, while the Australian Government provided \$15 million to fully fund the international and Australian legs of the relay. The baton's trip to Antarctica provided an opportunity to showcase the work of the Australian Antarctic programme to the world, and to reaffirm Australia as a major participant in the Commonwealth.



Dr John Runcie, an environmental scientist working at Casey station on a human impact project took the Queen's Baton on its first trip under ice at Brown Bay.

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