

AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP Communications Strategy 2019-2021

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The Australian Antarctic Program Partnership (AAPP) is an Australian Government's Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources funded initiative through the Antarctic Science Collaboration Initiative program.



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1. Overview

This *Communications Strategy* has been prepared as a guide for communications and stakeholder engagement activities by the Australian Antarctic Program Partnership (AAPP).

Consistent with the objectives of the *AAPP Commonwealth Grant Agreement* (ASCI000002) and *AAPP Formal Collaborative Agreement*, the document sets out the goals, key messages, outputs, and planned activities for raising the public profile of the AAPP and its work. These activities will also be supported by communications personnel from AAPP partner agencies.

The *Communication Strategy* and its implementation will be reviewed after two years.

2. Background

The AAPP is an Australian Government funded initiative through the Antarctic Science Collaboration Initiative (ASCI) Program bringing together leading Australian research agencies to work together on pressing issues in Antarctic Science. Core participants of the AAPP are the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), CSIRO, the University of Tasmania (UTAS), and the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM). Geoscience Australia (GA), the Tasmanian State Government and Australia's Integrated Marine Observing System (IMOS) are Associate Participants within the AAPP.

The principal drivers for the AAPP derive from the fact that it is:

- a multi-institutional Antarctic scientific collaboration (unincorporated joint venture);
- funded by the Australian Government;
- reliant on in-kind contributions and logistics by partners; and
- operating within the *Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan* guided by the Australian Antarctic Science Council.

Research themes

The primary focus of AAPP communications will be on the scientific activities undertaken by the partnership, which are organised into three inter-dependent themes:

- Antarctica's Influence on Climate and Sea Level;
- The Nature and Impacts of Southern Ocean Change; and
- The Future of Antarctic Sea Ice, Krill, and Ecosystems.

Antarctica, the Southern Ocean, its sea-ice cover and overlying atmosphere influence the entire globe. The Southern Ocean is the dominant ocean sink of anthropogenic heat and carbon dioxide. Ocean currents also influence the ice shelves that stabilise the Antarctic Ice Sheet. Nutrients exported from the Southern Ocean support 75% of marine productivity north of 30°S, while the availability of iron and other trace elements regulates the productivity of Antarctic marine ecosystems. Antarctic sea ice influences the climate of the Earth, the global overturning circulation, ocean–ice shelf interaction, biogeochemical cycles, and provides unique habitat for the keystone species krill and many other organisms. Antarctic ice cores provide a unique long-term perspective on global environmental change, allowing recent and projected change to be placed in context.

Given the global reach of Antarctic and Southern Ocean processes, knowledge of how and why the region will change in the future is essential to provide an informed response to the challenges of a changing and variable climate. Indeed, the present generation of earth system models is recognised to have substantial biases in the region, limiting confidence in global model projections. These changes in Antarctica are occurring in concert with expanding human interest and activity in the region. The AAPP will provide the environmental and ecological understanding essential to sound stewardship of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. It will build on

achievements of the ACE CRC and its predecessors to tackle critical unknowns in Antarctic and Southern Ocean science, as identified by fora such as the Antarctic Treaty System, the SCAR Horizon Scan, and the IPCC Special Report on the Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate.

The geographical scope of the AAPP extends from the Antarctic continent to the Southern Ocean. The AAPP research strategy spans and integrates multiple disciplines to answer key questions in Antarctic science, including atmospheric science, physical oceanography, marine biogeochemistry and ecology, and glaciology through the study of sea ice, ice shelves, and continental ice. While the scope is broad, the AAPP science plan has been carefully targeted to invest resources where they will deliver the most impact, by filling key gaps and providing critical connections between disciplines and agencies.

3. Goals

The goals of this *Communication Strategy* necessarily align with the objectives established under the AAPP *Commonwealth Grant Agreement*, which calls for the “[t]argeted delivery of research to decision-makers in government, industry and the community.” Given the limited communication resources available to the AAPP, it is important that these goals are clearly defined and understood, with the majority of resources going to where they can achieve maximum impact.

The goals of AAPP-related communications are as follows:

1. To create a differentiated set of communication products that complement the communication activities already being undertaken by partner agencies and the two ARC SRI’s ACEAS and SAEF
2. Communicate AAPP research activities and outputs widely and effectively.
3. Demonstrate how AAPP research delivers against Australia’s long-term strategic science goals.
4. Show how AAPP is helping realise a science return on Australian investments in infrastructure.
5. Promote productive engagement with local, national and international stakeholders.
6. Highlight the achievements of a wide range of staff within the program.
7. Emphasise the important economic role of Antarctic science in Hobart.

Commonwealth Grant Agreement

Under the *Commonwealth Grant Agreement*, funding of \$50 million over ten years for the AAPP has been provided by the Australian Government’s Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER) through the ASCI program. The agreement outlines the AAPP’s focus on research on the Australian Antarctic Territory and adjacent Southern Ocean, addressing the priorities identified in the *Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan*. The objectives of the ASCI program are as follows:

- To support research that aims to understand the role of the Antarctic region in the global climate system and the implications for marine ecosystems.
- To enable the Australian Antarctic Program Partnership to undertake collaborative science, research and innovation activities under the *Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan*.
- To secure Antarctic science jobs in Hobart.

The intended outcomes of the ASCI are:

- Continued scientific research activity in the Australian Antarctic Territory, aligned with the objectives and science outcomes of the *Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan*.
- Employment and funding certainty for experts, students and early career researchers to strengthen Antarctic science capability in Australia.

Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan (AASSP)

The AAPP directly addresses 3 of the 4 streams of the [AASSP](#) that are relevant to understanding the role of the Antarctic region in the global climate system and the implications for marine ecosystems: Environmental

Protection and Management; Ice, Ocean, Atmosphere and Earth Systems; and Digital Integration. External communications activities will seek to highlight how AAPP collaborative field and marine activities align with the objectives identified in the AASSP, including science and monitoring, observations and experimental studies, process studies, data synthesis, and decision support tools.

The AAPP research strategy has been designed to take advantage of significant new opportunities, including substantial investments in infrastructure made as part of the AASSP. External communications activities should therefore seek, wherever possible, to highlight how the AAPP investment is helping to realise the science return on these investments in infrastructure. This includes:

- Utilisation of *RSV Nuyina*, which will bring unprecedented capability in atmospheric and marine science.
- Over-ice sheet traverse capability, making it possible to obtain deep ice cores with the potential to provide records of past climate exceeding a million years.
- Construction of a new, more efficient research station on Macquarie Island and upgrading existent Antarctic research stations.

4. Key Messages

Where it is appropriate, the following concepts should be incorporated into published materials relating to AAPP activities.

1. AAPP research is enhancing our understanding of the role of the Antarctic region in the global climate system, and the implications for marine ecosystems.
2. AAPP research is aiding decision-making by government, industry and in the community.
3. The AAPP is supporting Australia's long-term strategic science objectives in Antarctica.
4. Multi-institutional collaboration is essential to achieving high-impact Antarctic research outcomes.
5. Investments in research infrastructure are helping to deliver science dividends for Australia.
6. The AAPP is continuing to build a vibrant Antarctic research community in Hobart, to grow Tasmania and Australia as a global Antarctic research hub.
7. AAPP provides open access to all data and data products produced and will be responsible for designing, developing and facilitating the implementation of a comprehensive digital model for Antarctica.

5. Challenges

Operating environment

The AAPP operates in a multi-institutional environment with the University of Tasmania as the lead agent for the partnership and with other core partners AAD, CSIRO and BoM, and associate partners IMOS, Geoscience Australia and the Tasmanian Government. The AAPP exists within a complex communications environment. A key challenge is ensuring that end-users, stakeholders and partners do not become neglected, and that each partner receives timely information relevant to their requirements.

Role clarity

A lack of understanding over the organisation's role in the Antarctic science sector presents a range of communications challenges. The complex nature of the organisation's relationships with other dominant players in the sector (AAD, CSIRO, UTAS and BoM) requires careful explanation to stakeholders and media representatives. Preparation of a diagram or visual aid will assist in this task.

Media skills

Researchers with an ability to communicate complex climate science to a general audience are highly valuable. A researcher who can clearly articulate a complex idea in a television or radio interview will always be in

demand. Ongoing training will be required to up-skill lower profile researchers and ensure the AAPP has a wide talent pool covering a range of fields.

Funding

The *Commonwealth Grant Agreement* expires 30 June 2029. The AAPP Management Committee will be actively considering, over the term of this strategy, future funding opportunities and business models to continue the important high latitude climate and ecosystem science it is renowned for.

6. Audience

The AAPP's research program is directed at informing responses to a society-wide challenge in a world in which the climate is changing in unprecedented ways. The AAPP is therefore concerned to communicate its research outputs as widely as possible, delivering maximum impact. In this respect it will build upon the long-standing, proactive and regular engagement with end-users established by the previous Antarctic Climate & Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre, with a continued focus on the critical interface between climate science, government and industry.

The AAPP's audience may be grouped into five categories:

- Commonwealth and State Government
- Partner institutions and associate participants
- International organisations
- Staff and students
- General public including industry

7. Platforms

The AAPP will employ a wide variety of communication channels and platforms to deliver timely assessments of recent developments in climate science and policy issue. Face-to-face briefings of relevant Government bureaucrats and politicians by senior staff will continue through forums like "Science Meets Parliament". Plain-English publications of the latest research in particular fields will be circulated to Government policy-makers and planners and the wider community about our current state of knowledge and the implications for the future. Researchers will use workshops, seminars, and science conferences to discuss their findings. There will be ongoing engagement with the broader public through traditional and social media, via science blogs during fieldwork, and through participation in educational programs and events.

These channels are briefly described below.

AAPP website

The AAPP website at www.AAPPpartnership.org.au serves as the primary platform for communications with a widest-possible audience. The website includes pages for news, publications, staff, contacts, partner organisations, and current vacancies. The website is managed by the AAPP Office.

Printed publications

Position Analyses and Report Cards will provide synopses in plain English of the latest research in particular fields to inform Government policy-makers and planners and the wider community about our current state of knowledge and the implications for the future. Technical reports will be published and distributed to key stakeholders and publicly available on the AAPP website.

A publications list will be made available on the website to provide easy access to outputs and impact statements of the Partnership.

Traditional Media

Where appropriate, the AAPP will issue media releases to mainstream news outlets to promote activities such as fieldwork, scientific publications, public events, international visits, awards, and any stories that might be of interest to a broad audience.

Conferences, meeting and workshops (including sponsorship)

Regular conferences (annual, biennial etc) are a major means of communication within the scientific community. The AAPP will establish and maintain its profile through attendance, abstracts, presentations, and posters.

Attendance at conferences will be agreed on an annual basis.

The AAPP may provide cash sponsorships to conference organisers as per the *AAPP Sponsorship of Events* guidelines.

AAPP meetings, workshops and events

The AAPP community has created its own schedule of meetings and workshops:

- The bi-annual planning meeting is the major focus, and has become valued as the one opportunity we have to bring all of the partners together with the office staff and the Management Committee.
- The Management Committee meets at least quarterly.
- Theme and Project meetings are self-managed by the AAPP community.
- Workshops and seminars for collaborators and industry will be held.

Networking

Effective networking will be an important element of building the profile, particularly through the membership of significant committees and boards. It is expected that the AAPP Program Leader will need to hold certain memberships, but also that Management Committee members, and in some cases Theme and Project Leaders, would also be playing a key role in building the profile of the AAPP through the various positions they hold. Face-to-face briefings of relevant Government bureaucrats and politicians by senior AAPP staff will continue through forums like "Science Meets Parliament".

Social media

Social media is a powerful vehicle for the public exchange of information and views. The AAPP recognises its stakeholders' use of, and participation in, online communities to learn, advocate, collaborate, exchange and contribute for professional and personal development.

The AAPP has established a presence on Twitter (@Ant_Partnership).

Participating in social media offers the AAPP a way of being engaged with its communities and staying in touch with sentiment, attitudes and current thinking around Antarctica and Southern Ocean science, research infrastructure and related issues.

Broadly speaking, AAPP content in social media should be related to Antarctica and Southern Ocean issues. It should be apolitical and not aligned with views of any one collaborator in preference to, or in opposition to, views of another. Content posted in social media should enhance the reputation of the AAPP and not put it at risk.

The AAPP Office is the administrator of the Twitter account and is authorised to post on behalf of the AAPP. Administrative access is also important for the communications role.

Community outreach

Community outreach will mainly be through science blogs hosted by scientists and linked to the AAPP website, during fieldwork and through visits by schools to its research facilities and by AAPP staff presenting their work in schools, hosting work experience students or public events such as National Science week, Festival of Bright Ideas and local initiatives such as “Beer Aquatic”.

8. Protocols

The AAPP’s multiple partnership arrangements present a unique set of challenges with respect to branding and publicity. A co-ordinated approach to co-branding is essential to ensure that both the AAPP and its partner institutions receive appropriate recognition for their role in research activities.

AAPP Formal Collaborative Agreement

Sections 32 to 35 of the *AAPP Formal Collaborative Agreement* establish clear protocols for AAPP-related communications activities, including the role of the AAPP Program Leader and partner agencies. These are summarised as follows:

- The AAPP Program Leader is responsible for making and/or delegating public announcements relating to the AAPP.
- Contributing partners should receive clear and prominent acknowledgement of funding and/or technical input in any AAPP published materials or events.
- Where appropriate, partners institutions should receive the option of including a logo or name mention in the AAPP published materials prior to release.
- Where appropriate, ensure that contributing partners are provided the opportunity for branded materials (such as clothing items and pull-up banners) to be placed prominently at any publicity events.
- Written permission is required for the use of any name or logo of a partner in published materials or public events.
- Journalists and media representatives should be properly briefed on the nature of the partnership arrangements and parties’ involvement in projects.
- Partners wishing to publish any Australian Antarctic Division materials (i.e. photos or video) must comply with the *Australian Antarctic Program Media Communication and Attribution Policy*.
- Any Intellectual Property is not to be released to any third party.

ASCI Grant Opportunity Guidelines

The Commonwealth Government’s *ASCI Grant Opportunity Guidelines* set out the following requirements:

- Public statements about a project funded under the program must acknowledge the grant by using: ‘This project received grant funding from the Australian Government’.
- If signage is erected in relation to the project, the signage must contain an acknowledgement of the Australian Government.

9. Evaluation

Success will be measured by:

- Monitoring performance against the bi-annual action plan to ensure that all milestones are met.
- Analytics from the AAPP website and social media.
- Obtaining feedback from key stakeholders.

10. Two Year Action Plan

Date	Activity
Dec 2019	Develop Twitter account
Jan-Mar 2020	Develop AAPP website
Mar 2020	AAPP Launch (postponed due to COVID-19)
Apr 2020	AAPP Planning Day (postponed due to COVID-19)
June 2020	Website launch
July 2020	AAPP e-newsletter (Jan-June 2020)
August 2020	Theme workshops
September 2020	Cross-theme workshop
January 2021	AAPP e-newsletter (Jul-Dec 2020)
May 2021	Science Meets Parliament
March 2021	Bi-annual meeting to develop detailed workplan for the forward two years of the project, including budget (due May 2021)
July 2021	AAPP e-newsletter (Jan-June 2021)
Ongoing	Twitter posts (twice weekly if possible) Program Leader updates to staff (monthly) Email and AAPP Teams for specific issues and community wide communication Production of news items for the website (avg 2 per month)