



THE HON JOSH FRYDENBERG MP
Minister for the Environment and Energy

MEDIA RELEASE

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**AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL CHILDREN
TAKE THEIR PLACE IN ANTARCTIC HISTORY**

A group of Australian school students have made history becoming the first children to fly to and set foot on Antarctica as part of the Australian Antarctic Program.

The twelve students, who won a competition to name the nation's new Antarctic icebreaker RSV *Nuyina* (noy-ye-nah), flew the 6,000 kilometre round-trip from Hobart to Australia's Wilkins Aerodrome yesterday.

It was an exhilarating experience for the children from St Virgil's College in Hobart, Tasmania, and Secret Harbour Primary School near Perth in Western Australia, when the Airbus A319 touched down on the blue-ice glacial runway.

The Years 5-8 students and their teachers spent three hours on the ice meeting Australian scientists and expeditioners.

They visited an Antarctic field camp with polar pyramid tents and drilled an ice core, learning more about the important role Antarctica plays in the global climate system.

A tracked snow vehicle, called a Hägglunds, transported the children to the Antarctic Circle where they took in the breathtaking enormity of the white continent.

The students are following in the footsteps of early Antarctic explorers, like Australia's renowned Sir Douglas Mawson, who ignited the nation's passion for the great icy continent.

Unlike some of the challenging blizzard conditions faced by Mawson during his expedition more than a century ago, the weather was kind for the student's visit on Wednesday, with light winds and the air temperature hovering around -11°C.

The experience of crunching across the Antarctic ice will no doubt stay with the children long into the future.

Hopefully, they will now share their Antarctic adventure with their schools and communities, inspiring the next generation of Antarctic expeditioners to work on the continent or on RSV *Nuyina*.

Nuyina means 'Southern Lights' in *palawa kani* the revived form of the Tasmanian Aboriginal languages, continuing the tradition of naming Australian Antarctic ships after the atmospheric phenomenon known as the southern lights or aurora australis.

Mawson's ship was called SY *Aurora* and our currently-serving icebreaker is named RSV *Aurora Australis*.

RSV *Nuyina* is due to arrive in Hobart in 2020.

Multimedia pack available: <https://cloudstor.aarnet.edu.au/plus/index.php/s/HLZRzVnQTTsDkVZ>

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