



Australian Government

IT'S AN HONOUR

Australia Celebrating Australians

Australian Antarctic Medal

The Australian Antarctic Medal, previously called the Antarctica Medal is awarded for outstanding service in scientific research or exploration in connection with an Australian Antarctic expedition or for support of such work.

About the award

Australia has been involved in scientific exploration of Antarctica since the expeditions led by Sir Douglas Mawson in 1911-1914. The Australian Antarctic Territory was declared in 1933.

The Australian Antarctic Medal was established on 2 June 1987 by Letters Patent. The medal replaced the British Polar Medal and its variations which date back to 1857.

How it is awarded

The Governor-General awards the Australian Antarctic Medal on recommendation from the Australian Government Minister responsible for the Antarctic Territory.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances recipients of the medal have worked in the Antarctic region for 12 months or more.

The medal may be awarded to people who are not Australian citizens but have given outstanding support to Australia's Antarctic endeavours.

The medal may also be awarded posthumously.

Announcements are made on 21 June in a special Midwinter's Day honours list. It is a day of traditional significance for Antarctic expeditioners.

Past recipient story

Dr Patricia Selkirk studies mosses and liverworts and has been a member of 17 Antarctic expeditions. She was first to recognise the importance of the Sub-Antarctic region - at the outer edge of the Antarctic Zone - in monitoring climate change.

Dr Selkirk received the Australian Antarctic Medal in 2004 for her pioneering research. She has also played a major role in helping to train future Antarctic scientists.



Medal design

The Australian Antarctic Medal is an octagonal nickel-silver medal ensigned with a hexagonal ice-crystal device which links the medal to the suspension bar.

The obverse depicts the Southern Hemisphere showing Australia and the Antarctic enclosed by the inscription 'For Outstanding Service in the Antarctic'.

The reverse of the medal shows an Antarctic expeditioner leaning into a blizzard to use an ice-axe outside Mawson's hut. The ice-crystal device is repeated on the reverse of the medal.

A clasp to the medal is awarded for further outstanding service.

Medal ribbon

The 32 millimetre-wide ribbon is snow-white moiré. At the edges three shades of blue merge into the white.

Fast facts

POST NOMINAL:

AAM

INTRODUCED INTO THE AUSTRALIAN HONOURS SYSTEM:

1987

NOMINATIONS:

Nominations are put forward by the responsible minister.

More information

IT'S AN HONOUR WEBSITE: www.itsanhonour.gov.au