



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

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## **Minister on historic flight to Antarctica**

Environment Minister Peter Garrett will travel with scientists on the inaugural passenger flight to Antarctica, aboard the Airbus A319.

Weather permitting, the flight is expected to depart from Hobart late this evening and will touch down on the new Wilkins ice runway near Casey, about four and a half hours later.

Mr Garrett will be accompanied by the Director of the Australian Antarctic Division Dr Tony Press, Chief Scientist Professor Michael Stoddard, senior project leaders, researchers and support and operational personnel.

The Airlink A319 was cleared for passenger operations earlier this week, by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

“This is a tremendously exciting time in Australian Antarctic history,” Mr Garrett said.

“A permanent direct air link with Antarctica has been a long-held dream

“To be able to fly scientists and other Antarctic personnel to Antarctica in a matter of hours, rather than 10 or more days by ship, opens up a whole new chapter in our scientific effort on the frozen continent.”