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**Media release**  
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## **EREBUS TRAGEDY REMEMBERED IN ANTARCTICA**

Residents at Scott Base and nearby McMurdo station today remembered all those aboard flight TE901 who died in Antarctica on Mt Erebus 25 years ago.

A commemorative service was held at Scott Base led by the Very Reverend Dean Peter Beck from Christchurch Cathedral with support from Father Ron Bennett, Priest at the Chapel of the Snows, Antarctica.

Antarctica New Zealand CEO Lou Sanson said that the Erebus tragedy had touched every New Zealander with the loss of so many lives in such an isolated place.

“The beauty of that mountain will forever be associated with a nation’s grief. The impact on families, friends, colleagues and recovery crews was immense.”

“I remember vividly when they switched the lights on at Invercargill airport and the plane was long overdue. Our hearts were sinking but we still held out hope that somehow it would return. Then the news came that no-one wanted to hear. Today in Antarctica we remember all those who rest in peace on Mt Erebus.”

The church service included messages of remembrance from relatives of those who died, and from Air New Zealand staff and crew. It also included readings and reflections from Sir Edmund Hillary, the Hon Phil Goff, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antarctica New Zealand staff and the US National Science Foundation representative Dave Bresnahan, who was at McMurdo in 1979 when the crash occurred.

Poet laureate Bill Manhire wrote the poem “*Erebus Voices*” especially for Sir Edmund Hillary to read at the church service. In the poem, Mt Erebus speaks and the people respond. Composer Christopher Cree Brown also created a musical piece especially for the occasion.

Earlier in the morning, a small group from Scott Base flew up to Mt Erebus to lay wreaths at the cross site and conduct a brief ceremony which included sprinkling water from Aoraki Mt Cook onto the ground at the memorial site in remembrance of all those who died.

A new volume of private remembrances for those affected by the Erebus disaster is being compiled by Antarctica New Zealand. A collection of messages from the families of the 257 killed in the 1979 crash were compiled for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and are now kept in a locked cabinet at Scott Base.

**For further information please contact:**

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(Bill Manhire poem follows on next page)

## **EREBUS VOICES**

### **The Mountain**

I am here beside my brother, Terror.  
I am the place of human error.

I am beauty and cloud, and I am sorrow;  
I am tears which you will weep tomorrow.

I am the sky and the exhausting gale.  
I am the place of ice. I am the debris trail.

I am as far as you can see.  
I am the place of memory.

And I am still a hand, a fingertip, a ring.  
I am what there is no forgetting.

I am the one with truly broken heart.  
I watched them fall, and freeze, and break apart.

### **The Dead**

We fell.

Yet we were loved and we are lifted.

We froze.

Yet we were loved and we are warm.

We broke apart.

Yet we are here and we are whole.