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MEDIA STATEMENT For Immediate Release

Sir Edmund Hillary

Antarctica New Zealand was saddened by the passing of Sir Edmund Hillary today. Sir Ed, as he was affectionately known, holds a special place within the New Zealand Antarctic programme. He was largely responsible for the creation of Scott Base which has recently celebrated 50 years of continuous operation.

CEO of Antarctica New Zealand Lou Sanson said "Ed was a towering legend in New Zealand's identity with Antarctica. I was greatly privileged to accompany him to Antarctica on two separate occasions. The most recent visit was for the Scott Base 50 year anniversary celebrations where Ed was the centre of attention. He was able to visit the Dry Valleys, the historic huts and spend a night in the A frame hut where he recalled many stories. He was especially popular at Scott Base for sharing his life's stories with others. On his last night at Scott Base he was able to entertain the flight crew of an RNZAF P3 Orion who were attached to the squadron which he was member of during the Second World War. During an earlier visit to Scott Base in November 2004, Sir Ed gave a talk at the United States McMurdo Station where the entire base turned out to hear his account of the trek to the South Pole as part of the 1957/58 Trans-Antarctic Expedition."

Prime Minister Helen Clark invited Sir Ed back to Scott Base to celebrate 50 years since he successfully arrived at the South Pole at 12.30pm on 4 January 1958, the first person to do so overland since Roald Amundsen and Robert Falcon Scott. Failing health meant that Sir Ed had to decline this invitation.

Sir Ed will be sadly missed by all those with connections with Antarctica.

Ends

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