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Media Statement

For Immediate Release

Antarctic Science Scholars Announced

Antarctica New Zealand today announced the recipients of four post-graduate research scholarships to Antarctica. Each scholar is awarded \$10,000 plus logistical support in Antarctica for the 04/05-summer season.

The research scholarships programme was initiated in 1994. Since this time 28 masters and doctoral students have investigated subjects as diverse as Antarctic silverfish, McMurdo Sound beaches, sea-ice properties, Adelie penguin mitochondria (cells), penguin lice, mosses and lichens, geological formations and Antarctic bacteria.

Antarctica New Zealand CEO Lou Sanson said “the programme provides excellent opportunities for a new generation of researchers to conduct investigations in Antarctica that would not otherwise be possible due to logistical costs.”

The sponsor support from New Zealand Post and Kelly Tarlton’s Antarctic Encounter and Underwater World, allows students to experience hands-on Antarctic research at a developmental time in their academic careers, said Mr Sanson.

“We are excited to offer four scholarships this year for Antarctic research and are delighted with the high quality and calibre of the proposals received” said Dr Dean Peterson, Antarctica New Zealand Science Strategy Manager.

The first recipient of the newly established Latitudinal Gradient Project Scholarship is Erica Hofstee of Waikato University. She will study the soils and hydrology of the Cape Hallett LGP site area.

Andrew Martin of Victoria University of Wellington has been awarded the New Zealand Post Scholarship for his Doctoral work on the role of bacteria on Antarctic sea ice.

The Kelly Tarlton’s Antarctic Encounter and Underwater World Scholar, Esme Robinson, a Masters student from the University of Canterbury will work on the adaptability of Antarctic fish to changes in water temperature.

Andrew Clifford, a Masters student at the University of Otago, has been awarded the Sir Robin Irvine Scholarship. He will investigate the influence of a remnant volcanic crater under the Southern McMurdo Ice Shelf using ground penetrating radar.

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Background to the Antarctic Research Scholarship programme

- Scholarship programme commenced in 1994 with the Ross Dependency Research Committee (RDRC) Antarctic Science Award
- New Zealand Post became a sponsor for the 1995/96 season
- Kelly Tarlton's Antarctic Encounter and Underwater World became a sponsor for the 1995/96 season
- The RDRC award was renamed the Sir Robin Irvine Scholarship to commemorate and honour Sir Robins' contribution to the RDRC and to the establishment of Antarctica New Zealand. Sir Robin was the first Chair of the Board of Antarctica New Zealand.
- Scholarship proposals go through a comprehensive peer review assessment
- Scholarships are offered to Masters and Doctoral students studying any aspect of Antarctic and/or Southern Ocean related research
- Scholarships are awarded for \$10,000 per scholarship per year