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ORION EXPEDITION CRUISES HELPS

CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC HUTS

Orion Expedition Cruises, the Sydney based luxury expedition cruise line, has come to the rescue of a conservation project at Cape Denison in the Antarctic by agreeing to transport insulated panels and other equipment for a special laboratory to treat artefacts at historic Mawson's Huts which were the base of the 1911-14 Australasian Antarctic Expedition.

The company's flagship, M.V. Orion, will carry the prefabricated laboratory on its 18 day Antarctic Expedition to Mawson's Huts departing Hobart on December 12. Carrying 100 guests it will be one of the ships to visit the historic site at Commonwealth Bay this summer.

The laboratory will be used by specialist conservators to recover, photograph and treat the thousands of artefacts that remain as Sir Douglas Mawson's team left them inside and outside the huts in December 1913. These include food, clothing, books, magazines and personal effects which have been uncovered with the conservation of the huts.

Sarina Bratton, Managing Director of Orion Expedition Cruises, says she is delighted to be involved. "This is an important and historic project. The huts are heritage listed and are an integral part of Australia's Antarctic heritage.

"The Cape Denison site is the birthplace of Australia's Antarctic heritage and of great importance to the country's history. Sir Douglas Mawson was a truly outstanding Australian and claimed 42 per cent of the Antarctic Continent for Australia."

Orion has further assisted the efforts of Mawson's Huts Foundation by hosting Charity auctions onboard voyages in 2006 and donating the value of a \$40,000 Antarctic Expedition to the foundation in 2007.

The Mawson's Huts Foundation which is organising the construction of the unit in co-operation with the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) has a team of eight specialists onboard the French Government's Antarctic supply vessel "La Astrolabe". They will spend five weeks erecting the laboratory and return home at the end of January after completing the unit and other conservation projects at the site.

This will be the seventh major expedition to Cape Denison since the Foundation was established in 1997 and has secured a Commonwealth Government grant of 1.3 million dollars for expeditions to the huts for the next four years. All work carried out is done with the full support of the AAD which is also providing logistical support.

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