



observing a pair of penguins

In 1998, the *Aurora Australis* became stranded in ice and was towed into clear water by the Japanese icebreaker *Shirase*.<sup>[5]</sup>

On 8 May 2011, *Aurora Australis* was chartered by the [Department of Defence](#) for a two-month deployment (ending 30 June) as an amphibious transport ship supporting the [Royal Australian Navy](#).<sup>[4]</sup> The charter, costing A\$3.375 million, was to assist in the Australian government response to humanitarian crises and natural disasters that occurred while the naval heavy lift ship *HMAS Tobruk* undergoes maintenance.<sup>[4]</sup>

In December 2013, *Aurora Australis*, Chinese research vessel *Xuě Lóng* and French icebreaker *L'Astrolabe* attempted to rescue *Akademik Shokalskiy*, trapped in an outbreak of old glacial ice in the [Antarctic Ocean](#). *Xuě Lóng* reached within 6NM of the ship before being forced to turn back. *L'Astrolabe* failed to reach that far before turning back to open water. *Aurora Australis* reached within 10 nautical miles (19 km; 12 mi) before also being forced to turn back.<sup>[6]</sup> After failure of all three icebreakers to reach the beset vessel, the personnel aboard *Akademik Shokalskiy* flattened a helipad on the ice to prepare for helicopter evacuation when the weather cleared. On January 2, 2014, the heli-rescue was performed by *Xuě Lóng*'s helicopters, directly transferring people from *Akademik Shokalskiy* to a makeshift helipad prepared on the sea-ice near the *Aurora Australis*, the boat transfer having been cancelled due to excess ice around *Xuě Lóng*; left aboard were 22 crew members to attempt to free the ship when winds clear the ice, or when a Russian heavy icebreaker arrives to clear a path. The rescued people are expected back in Hobart, Australia, in mid-January, after *Aurora Australis* completes her scheduled resupply of Casey Station which was interrupted for the rescue mission.<sup>[7]</sup>

On 5 January 2014, the 399-foot (122 m) [USCGC Polar Star](#) departed Sydney to assist in freeing the Chinese icebreaker and the Russian ship.<sup>[8][9]</sup> On 7 January 2014, a change of wind direction which loosened the icepack around the ships enabled *Xuě Lóng* and *Akademik Shokalskiy* to work their own way free before the American ship arrived.<sup>[10]</sup>

## References [edit]

- ↑ <sup>*abcde fgh*</sup> "Aurora Australis" . Australian Antarctic Division. 18 April 2011. Retrieved 13 May 2011.
- ↑ <sup>*ab*</sup> Barlow, Karen (25 January 2011). "Revhead heaven in icebreaker's engine room" . ABC News Online. Retrieved 13 May 2011.
- ↑ <sup>*ab*</sup> "Departmental investigation into the engine room fire onboard the Australian Antarctic Research and Supply Vessel Aurora Australis at the Antarctic ice edge on 22 July 1998" . MIU. Retrieved on 2012-04-02.
- ↑ <sup>*abcd*</sup> "Amphibious Ship Update"  (Press release). The Hon. Jason Clare MP Minister for Defence Materiel. 11 May 2011. Archived  from the original on 26 May 2011. Retrieved 13 May 2011.
- ↑ http://classroom.antarctica.gov.au/\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0010/99496/international-coop.pdf
- ↑ *American Morning* (CNN TV). 2013-12-30 @ circa 7h25.
- ↑ *American Morning* (CNN TV). 2014-01-02 @ circa 9h20 EST.
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- ↑ "U.S. Icebreaker to Assist Stuck Russian, Chinese Ships" . *news.usni.org*. U.S. NAVAL INSTITUTE. 6 January 2014. Retrieved 6 January 2014.
- ↑ "Antarctic ships escape from ice trap as weather changes" . *www.bbc.co.uk*. The BBC. 7 January 2014. Retrieved 7 January 2014.

## External links [edit]

- Media related to **Aurora Australis (ship, 1990)** at Wikimedia Commons
- Webcam aboard *Aurora Australis*
- Breaking the Ice*  - blog from *Aurora Australis* by [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) reporter **Karen Barlow**, during the January–February 2011 scientific trip to [Mertz Glacier](#)
- P&O Maritime Services

Categories: [Icebreakers of Australia](#) | [1989 ships](#) | [Australia and the Antarctic](#) | [Ships of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company](#) | [Research vessels of Australia](#)

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