



UNIVERSITY of  
**TASMANIA**



SOUTHERN OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

Thursday, 10 August 2023

## Eyes of the World on the Southern Ocean

More than 250 people from 25 nations will meet in Hobart next week for the first-ever global conference of the Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS) since its establishment in 2011.

[SOOS](#) is an international initiative that enhances the coordinated collection of observations in the Southern Ocean and shares knowledge amongst the research community and policy makers, with the central hub located in the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) in Hobart.

Executive Officer Dr Alyce Hancock said that the theme of the SOOS Symposium – [‘Southern Ocean in a Changing World’](#) – is particularly timely given current events.

“With Antarctic sea ice at record low levels during winter, and new research charting shifts in critically important deep currents, this is a useful time to bring the world together to focus on the global climate engine that is the Southern Ocean,” said Dr Hancock.

“As a gateway city to eastern Antarctica, home port to Australia’s national research vessels, and host of the SOOS International Project Office for 12 years, Hobart is the perfect venue for the inaugural SOOS Symposium.”

“We can’t wait to welcome attendees from every continent, from Somalia to South Korea, from Brazil to Belgium, Ghana to Georgia,” she said.

Co-chair of SOOS, Dr Sian Henley from the University of Edinburgh, sees the Symposium as one of the world’s most important scientific gatherings about an ocean central to the Earth system.

“The Southern Ocean is unlike any other on the planet: nobody lives there permanently; it has no defined boundaries; it is managed under the Antarctic Treaty rather than a single nation; and multiple nations work there with their own regions of interest,” said Dr Henley.

“On top of that, the Southern Ocean is an extremely challenging environment, which makes it difficult for science to monitor and observe unless nations and disciplines work together.”

“As a science initiative centred on the Southern Ocean, SOOS is shaped by the unique nature of the ocean itself,” she said.

SOOS supports multi-disciplinary, multi-national research programs that combine new and novel observations of the physics, chemistry, biology and geology of the Southern Ocean system with cutting-edge innovative technologies, such as saildrones, underwater gliders and robotic floats.

Executive Dean of the University of Tasmania’s College of Science and Engineering, Terry Bailey, said he was proud that the University will continue to host the SOOS International Project Office in Hobart.

“As a leading university for climate and marine research, it is important that the University of Tasmania sponsors and hosts SOOS, as we have for the last 12 years,” he said.

“A vibrant and active SOOS is fundamental to our understanding of the Southern Ocean and Antarctic environments, and essential to maintaining IMAS’s status as a global leader in Southern Ocean research.”

SOOS is a joint initiative of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research ([SCAR](#)) and the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research ([SCOR](#)), with core sponsorship from IMAS, CSIRO and the Tasmanian State Government. The SOOS Symposium is sponsored by the Australian Antarctic Program Partnership, the Australian Centre for Excellence in Antarctic Science, K.U.M. Umwelt-und Meerestechnik Kiel GmbH., the Korean Polar Research Institute, CSIRO, the Tasmanian Polar Network, Business Events Tasmania, Antarctica New Zealand, COLTO and ITU/WMO/UNESCO-IOC Joint Task Force for SMART Cables.

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