

## Antarctic expedition sets sail from Hobart

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**Australian and international scientists have sailed from Hobart on the Aurora Australis to investigate the break-up of a major Antarctic glacier.**

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Almost 80 kilometres of the giant Mertz Glacier, on Antarctica's east coast, broke off after being hit by a massive iceberg a year ago.

Oceanographer Dr Steve Rintoul says the six-week expedition is a chance to examine sections of the ocean and coastline previously hidden by ice.

"Once we get down to Antarctica, we'll be going to one of the few places in the world ocean where the conditions are right for water sitting at the sea surface to sink down, all the way to the sea floor four or five kilometres below the sea surface," he said.

"That'll tell us a lot about how the ocean transports heat and effects the climate system."

The expedition has taken on extra significance after flights to the continent were suspended due to safety concerns.

The Australian Antarctic Division says ice temperatures on its runway are too warm for planes to land safely.

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