



What's it like to work in Antarctica?

Emry Thaggard Crocker worked as a Technical Officer—Engineer at Casey research station in Antarctica in 2014. He recounts his experiences of life, friendship and work in this unique environment.

Coming from Fiji I always wondered what colder climates would be like. In finding my way to Antarctica I acquired a greater sense of appreciation for the great outdoors and a whole new understanding of the meaning of the word 'cold'.

My role saw me participate in the observations program and a multitude of other engineering works. The technical nature of my work in Antarctica allowed me to be involved with various science programs and travel into some of the more remote areas. Being able to get out and explore in Antarctica was an exhilarating experience. I also had the opportunity to become familiar with the Bureau's sophisticated equipment, maintaining it to ensure that no meteorological data was compromised.

Some of the biggest highlights for me working down south have been the beautiful untouched scenery, the amazing wildlife and the brutal weather the Antarctic can throw at you at a moment's notice. Seeing some amazing weather phenomena, including the bright lights of the Aurora Australis, was something truly special. It was well worth enduring the cold long enough to take that perfect Instagram photo.

Living and working in isolation for such a long period gives you a great appreciation for some of the simpler things in life, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, beach days, and hanging out with friends and family. Despite (or even because of) these challenges I found a wonderful new family and formed lasting friendships down south. There's also a great (but limited) supply of fresh food from hydroponics, and the occasional 'beach' day ... which lasts for approximately 30 seconds of swimming!

Following my trip to Casey I was been inspired to be more involved with the Bureau's Antarctic operations, so I returned to do another winter—at the sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island in 2017 for 12 months. Since my return to Hobart I have been employed as the Antarctic Lead at the Hobart Observing Operations Hub, which is a dream job come true!

All the remarkable scenery, wildlife and weather phenomena make Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands truly unique places and I have taken some great memories home with me. This has been, and still is, a unique chapter of my life with all the amazing people I have met through this journey.

