## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS

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A member organization founded in 1991 to advocate, promote and practice safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic

## Statement from IAATO regarding the Akademik Shokalskiy -**Australasian Antarctic Expedition**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 25 December 2013, 1130 UTC.

December 25, Providence, Rhode Island. USA. The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators has received reports that the vessel, *Akademik* Shokalskiy, is currently trapped in pack ice off East Antarctica, in the vicinity of Mertz glacier. We understand that there is no immediate threat to life and no threat to the environment but the vessel has asked for icebreaker assistance. Three icebreakers are now en route to the area and are anticipated to arrive in the next couple of days.

Onboard is the Australasian Antarctic Expedition 2013-14, "The Spirit of Mawson" a group of scientists and science volunteers, who had paid their own way on the trip. Although this is not an IAATO Member expedition, we are following the situation. The vessel is due to be operated by IAATO Member, Heritage Expeditions, next month on a voyage to the Ross Sea.

For news updates and ongoing information please contact Australian Maritime Safety Authority Telephone: +61 1300 624 633, and see http://www.amsa.gov.au/media/

Additional information on the Spirit of Mawson Expedition can be found at: http://www.spiritofmawson.com

Issued by the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators.

## **About IAATO**

IAATO is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate, promote and practice safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic. IAATO currently has 110 members. IAATO Members work together to develop, adopt and implement operational standards that mitigate potential environmental impacts.

Numerous guidelines have been adopted over the last 20 years that have proven to be successful methods in avoiding such impacts. These include but are not limited to: site specific guidelines, site selection criteria, passenger to staff ratios, limiting numbers of passengers ashore, boot washing guidelines and the prevention of the transmission of alien organisms, wilderness etiquette, garbage policy, ship scheduling and vessel communication procedures, emergency medical evacuation procedures, emergency contingency plans, reporting procedures, marine wildlife watching guidelines, station visitation policies and more.

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