

Hi folks,

I don't know if our transfer from the still beset Akademik Shokalskiy to the Australian Antarctic supply ship Aurora Australis has made the news in your part of the world or not.

Since my last email the saga continued, we had an enjoyable new year on the Shokalskiy then on 2 January we were transferred to the Aurora. This was made using the huge helicopter from the Chinese icebreaker Xue Long. The helicopter landed on an ice flow near our ship, then, after a 15 minute flight over the now solid ice, landed on an ice flow near the Australian ship and from there we were lifted by crane onto the Aurora.

The Aurora Australis is a much larger and more powerful ship but was unable to cut us free; in fact the ice was so thick that she never got within 20 km of us. Now the Russian crew remain on the Shokalskiy awaiting the arrival of the USA icebreaker Polar Star in 10-14 days.

We are now on our way to Casey Station, an Australian station 4 days by ship from here where the annual resupply of fuel and heavy goods will be completed before we then set out for Hobart. We expect to get to Hobart about 20 January. Life aboard this ship is good; it is a more modern ship, with a friendly Aussie crew.

It was sad leaving the Shokalskiy, we had been so well looked after by the crew and we had had such an enjoyable and scientifically successful voyage up to the time we got caught in the ice. However, we are now off on a new set of adventures with an unexpected opportunity to see more of this beautiful continent.

Please reassure anyone that may be concerned that everyone is OK and most of us enjoying this unexpected extension to our Antarctic travels. When I do eventually get back to NZ I will have to detour to Bluff to get my car which is parked on the wharf close to where we expected to return.

Best wishes to all

Kerry-Jayne