

MEDIA RELEASE

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LOOKING FOR LOVE

SUB-ANTARCTIC PENGUIN BREEDING PROGRAM AT MELBOURNE AQUARIUM

Feathers were ruffled at Melbourne Aquarium this week as Australia's only king and gentoo penguins preened themselves to perfection in anticipation of some very special new friends.

Three king and five gentoo penguins travelled to Melbourne Aquarium on Wednesday night to increase potential breeding partners among the aquarium's sub-Antarctic penguin population.

Since arriving, there has been much singing, puffing out of chests, dancing around the exhibit and zooming through the penguin pool as all put their best webbed-foot forward to attract the new beauties.

"Introducing the new penguins into the exhibit was a strategic step in Melbourne Aquarium's penguin breeding program," said Melbourne Aquarium's Bird Curator, Tristen Bird.

"The smooth transition of the new penguins is testament to the hard work and dedication of Melbourne Aquarium staff and a tribute to the success of thier state-of-the-art display."

The penguins were obtained from Kelly Tarlton's Antarctic Encounter and Underwater World in Auckland, New Zealand, making the trip across the Tasman Sea on board a temperature-controlled air freighter.

"The state-of-the-art Antarctica exhibit is a fully-functioning Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) approved facility. The penguins will spend 36 days in quarantine blissfully unaware of the tough regulations surrounding them – another example of Melbourne Aquarium's commitment to the welfare of the animals," said Mr Bird.

Penguin keepers hope to welcome the first Australian sub-Antarctic penguin chicks to Melbourne Aquarium later this year.

NEW PENGUIN PROFILES:

Name	Tahi
Gender	Male
Age	10 years
Breed	Gentoo
Likes	Rock climbing and eating squid
Dislikes	Penguin pedicures

Name	Dottie
Gender	Female
Age	2 years
Breed	King
Likes	Diving in the penguin pool and singing with her mates
Dislikes	Tropical weather

NEW PENGUINS JOIN EXISTING FRIENDS:

GENTOOS

Two Year Olds	Crumpet, Bico, Nella, Tuna, Mushroom, Polly and Macquarie
Three Year Olds	Sheep, Possum, Apple, Barney, Pyke, Bucket, Roxy, Gibson, Finn, Gus and Pickle
Five Year Old	Herbert
Seven Year Old	Hedgehog
Ten Year Olds	Aroha and Kellogg

KINGS

Two Year Old	Pip
Three Year Old	Phoenix
Four Year Olds	Billy, Terry and Egg
Five Year Olds	Skipper and Ernie
Six Year Old	Donnie
Seven Year Old	Burger
Eight Year Old	Blake

TOP TEN FACTS ABOUT ANTARCTICA AT MELBOURNE AQUARIUM:

- \$28 million development that was 5 years in the making – from conception to completion. It is a completely unique tourism experience for Australia - as it is the only venue in the nation to feature sub-Antarctic penguins
- Stars of the show are a collection of two species of sub-Antarctic penguins – 5 King and 13 Gentoo Penguins
- The King Penguins are more regal and majestic. They weigh about 15 kilograms and stand almost 1 metre tall
- The Gentoo Penguins have playful and cheeky personalities. They are smaller – standing about 80 centimeters and weighing about 7 kilograms

- The penguins were obtained through aquarium-bred stocks from Kelly Tarlton's Antarctic Encounter and Underwater World in Auckland, New Zealand.
- Innovative techniques and state-of-the-art technology has been used to recreate the penguin's natural environment
- A temperature controlled environment that can be set a different levels between minus 10 and plus 5 degrees Celsius
- Installation of a light cycle that changes to replicate the Antarctic seasons – with very short days in winter and very long days in summer
- Provision of a 100,000 litre pool that allows the penguins to dive for food – as they would in the wild
- In addition, the exhibit has succeeded in becoming a fully functioning, Level 3 Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) approved facility

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