

Antarctic researchers take icy plunge to mark solstice

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Expeditioners stationed at Australia's Davis station marked midwinter's day by taking a chainsaw to the ice, cutting a small pool and taking a dip in water with a temperature of -1.8 degrees Celsius (28.76 Fahrenheit)

Antarctic researchers welcomed the winter solstice with an exhilarating plunge into icy waters Wednesday as they look forward to brighter days after weeks of darkness.

Expeditioners stationed at Australia's Davis [station](#) marked midwinter's

day by taking a chainsaw to the ice, cutting a small pool and taking a dip in water with a temperature of -1.8 degrees Celsius (28.76 Fahrenheit).

Davis station leader Kirsten le Mar said it was the halfway point for those wintering on the continent and a highlight of the Antarctic calendar.

"After three weeks of darkness, today marks the beginning of longer days in Antarctica, although it will still be 19 days before the sun starts to peek above the horizon here at Davis," she said.

One of those who took the plunge was electrician Bryce Daniels, who described his quick swim as "amazing".

"There is the briefest of briefest moments where you slightly feel warm and then you work out that you are actually freezing instead," he said.

The [winter solstice](#) is the shortest day of the year and celebrations to mark the start of longer days date back over 100 years of exploration on the continent.

Many of the 68 researchers working for Australia's Antarctic program joined in with the chilly festivities, which also included a sea-ice golf competition and theatrical performance.



An expeditioner stationed at Australia's Davis Station takes the plunge to celebrate the winter solstice

Several countries have territorial claims on Antarctica—viewed as a potential future source of huge mineral resources—although under a 1949 agreement the frozen continent is designated a scientific preserve.

About 30 nations operate permanent research stations on the [continent](#).

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