

Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in 2067: what future will we choose?

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Abstract

We speculate on the future of Antarctica under two plausible scenarios, from the perspective of an observer looking back from 2067. In the first scenario, greenhouse gas emissions remained high, while complacency and inaction characterised the policy response. In the second scenario, ambitious action was taken to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to establish systems and policies that reduced the pressure on Antarctica from anthropogenic environmental change. Choices made in the next decade will determine which of these trajectories is realised. Lack of action to curb emissions and strengthen Antarctic governance will commit us to large, wide-ranging and irreversible changes to Antarctica, with global consequences.

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