Trekking in the Antarctic Plateau

Just when you thought there was nothing new left for the world's greatest trekkers, along comes the Southern Traverse Antarctic Expedition, promising a great adventure and a serious endurance trial. As the seventh continent, the Antarctic covers almost 14 million square kilometers, or about 10 per cent of the Earth's land surface. This is roughly twice the size of Australia.

Trekking in the Antarctic Plateau has only been accomplished by three other teams, and this will be an Australian first for the trekking team. The journey will take 16 months on skis and home made sleds, and will cover 4780 km. There will be no dogs or mechanised transport to help cover the distance.

The three man team will set up at the first Australian base at the South Pole and will stay there for eight months until the light and weather improve enough for the expedition. The team members will have to live in close quarters for the 16 months, and will not have anything around them but the fragile wilderness. From this wilderness, the team will carry out scientific and psychological studies.

The team will be moving through areas of Antarctica that are difficult to access and seldom visited. For this reason, anything that is recorded by the team will be significant. This will mean a boost to Australia's history as Australia claims more than 40 per cent of the Antarctic Continent, which it established as an Australian Antarctic Territory in 1933. It is one of twelve original nations to sign the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, and with France, used this position to campaign in 1989 for a mining ban in Antarctica.

This has resulted in a tentative 50 year prohibition on mineral exploration.