



The Last Great First

– A journey for the future of our planet

2,600km in 110 days across Antarctica

Imagine walking from Adelaide to Cairns! Now imagine the journey is across snow and ice, up glaciers and through unexplored mountains.

The temperature around you will average from -10°C to -40°C with wind chill. Storms are frequent and dangerous with wind speeds that can exceed 150km/hr, lasting for days.

The sled you drag behind you is your life raft, packed full of all the gear and food needed to survive this 110 day expedition. It weighs over 200kg. To make it you must average a distance of 24km per day. Bad weather or storms cannot hold you up, or the food will run out.

There are no rest days

That is what doctors Gareth Andrews and Richard Stephenson from The Last Great First, will be doing. They are planning to change polar history by being the first to ski across Antarctica from coast to coast.

Their first major expedition for both Gareth and Richard was to the Magnetic North Pole and since that time the magic of the polar regions has kept calling them back.

Doctors in Antarctica

Gareth and Richard are both full time doctors working on the frontline of the COVID-19 response. Gareth is a Consultant Anaesthetist at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney and has just returned from a year in Cardiff where he was working for the NHS. Richard is an Emergency Physician in Dunedin, New Zealand.

They are both specialists in expedition and retrieval medicine and have been exploring and adventuring together for over ten years.

The Last Great First - Climate Science Program

Antarctica is the engine room of Earth's climate and weather systems, profoundly influencing our planet through its oceans and atmosphere. The science of human impact on our environment is precise.

Accurate predictions of our future climate will inform the changes required for a sustainable future, supporting the flourishing of the generations yet to come.

Mobile climate stations for 110 days

Our expedition will work through The Antarctic Science Foundation with researchers across the Australian Antarctic Program to transform our pulks (or sledges) into mobile weather stations.

Equipped with state of the art, lightweight scientific equipment, the team will gather atmospheric and meteorological data during a never before traversed 2,600km transect of Antarctica.



Data collected will include air temperature and barometric pressure, cloud characteristics and patterns, ice surface properties, solar radiation, moisture content and wind speeds.

The longitudinal data set accumulated over 110-days will be uploaded to the Landsat 8 satellite. This unique data set will provide researchers with new factors and increased granularity for modelling and analysis of future climate scenarios.

The last great polar journey yet to be achieved

Most Antarctic crossings to date have traversed the land mass at its narrowest point, missing out the vast permanent ice shelves, or have been wind assisted with the use of kites.

The Last Great First team will start their Trans-Antarctic expedition in mid-October 2022 from the Bay of Whales on the outer edge of the Ross Ice Shelf. They will first cross the ice shelf, then explore a new route across the Transantarctic mountains before turning towards the South Pole and onwards across the continent.

The greatest challenge of this expedition however is not the physical element but the psychological.

For much of the journey the doctors will feel like they are adrift on a great white ocean, spending days on end travelling across a desolate, featureless plateau. It is their mental resilience that will see them keep moving forward day after day..

Human Performance Data

As Critical Care Doctors, human physiology is at the core of Gareth and Richard's work.

Using state of the art technology, the two doctors will collect and study their physiological responses and performance under extreme conditions.

As no one has ever skied further or for longer, this unique data set will inform a research project on remote and extreme medicine via The Antarctic Science Foundation

Inspired by the great polar explorers

As schoolboys, their imagination was captured and hunger for adventure sparked by the tales of daring from over a hundred years ago. Nansen's Farthest North, Scott and Amundsen's race for the South Pole, Shackleton's quest to be the first to cross Antarctica.

These stories of courage and resilience, of triumph and tragedy have helped the team forge their own paths to the poles.

It was the great Sir Ernest Shackleton who first conceived and attempted a crossing of the Antarctic continent, describing it as **'the last great adventure in South Polar exploration...'**

Working with Scouts of all ages in Australia and internationally, Gareth and Richard hope to inspire the next generation of explorers to reach for their goals and achieve their own remarkable aspirations, just as Shackleton has inspired them.

THE LAST GREAT FIRST

Help the team achieve this world first

Dr Gareth, Dr Richard and The Last Great First team invite you to become part of this historic world first expedition by going directly to the team's website at www.thelastgreatfirst.com.au where you'll find a range of sponsor and donation options that will make The Last Great First possible.

Thank you for your support.



Key Dates and Expedition Stats

Start of Antarctic traverse	October 2022
Team Members:	2
Expedition Planning:	Eric Philips, AO
Total distance in Antarctica:	2,600km
Days on the ice:	110
Sled Weight each:	200Kg
Average daily temp:	-10°C to -40°C
Calories consumed each	700,000
Expected body weight loss:	20%
End of Antarctic traverse:	February 2023
Total budget:	\$1.7 million

