

AUSTRALIAN ARCTIC EXPLORERS RETURN HOME

On Thursday 7 August, after 70 days alone in the Arctic, two young Australians completed an epic journey to become the first people to traverse the largely unexplored Victoria Island. On Monday 25 August, they will finally return home to Sydney.

In May, Chris Bray (25) and Clark Carter (24) began hauling, paddling and dragging 500kgs of equipment and supplies behind them in unique carts they designed and built themselves. Their mission: to cross 600kms of snow, frozen lakes, mud plains, boulder fields, tundra, endless jagged ice, shattered rock and even rapids.

Their remarkable journey is a world first, with the duo passing through regions that have likely never before been seen by human eyes. "The wildlife out here knows no fear of humans," says Chris. "Arctic wolves, muskox and caribou have curiously walked right up to us."



Overcoming countless setbacks, the pair was forced to make do with what limited resources they had to repair and even re-build their carts along the way. But that's what makes it an adventure. "Out here, life becomes both brutally honest and wonderfully simple," says Chris. "A bit of responsible risk taking and ingenuity is what it's all about," adds Clark.

No strangers to adventure, Chris (Australian Geographic Society's 2004 Young Adventurer of the Year) and Clark had already been to Victoria Island, traversing the first 300km in 2005 before the approaching winter forced them out. On this trip, the pair had a heart-stopping yet magical encounter with a polar bear – an experience that, despite the danger, they were keen to repeat.

"We passed through the important polar bear breeding ground at Hadley Bay but didn't even see a single bear footprint, let alone the real thing. It was only at the very end of our journey, as we were savouring one of our last dehydrated meals on the island's western shore, that one of them came our way," says Chris.

It was a short-lived encounter. "Once he got within 250 metres, I think he took one whiff of us and took off in the other direction. I guess I don't blame him – we hadn't showered in over two months!"

The expedition has been followed by 13,000 people worldwide via www.1000HourDay.com, with live tracking of their progress displayed on a map as well as daily updates complete with photos.

Their principle partner, iiNet, also developed an education package based around the expedition, enabling teachers and students from around Australia to ask questions by email and weave the journey into facets of the modern curriculum.

Backed by major sponsors ASUS, GORE-TEX®, Australian Geographic, Paddy Pallin and Citizen Watches, the pair will be officially welcomed home at an event hosted by the Canadian Consulate in Sydney later this month.

For images, footage and interviews please contact Chris Bray directly:
Phone: (M) 0403 823 418 **Email:** contact@1000hourday.com