



# Cystic Fibrosis South Australia Inc.

# NEWSFRONT

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*Time is precious, travel is profound, travel for travel's sake and inhale life!*

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## Mel and Tim's (Purple Soup) trip to Antarctica

My little dog Lilly watched me with sad eyes as I finished packing the bare essentials into my suitcase. Travelling again! I've been very lucky and had lots of adventures in the 35 odd countries I've visited. I've white water rafted the Zambezi River, swum with Great White Sharks, ridden Russian motorbikes through Vietnam to the Chinese border and snowboarded in southern France.

I zipped my bag up and gave it a test drag! Oh \*\*\*\*! Heavy! 28 kgs of expedition snow gear, heavy water proof boots, enough thermal underwear to start a small retail shop, 2 months of medications, 3 novels, my travel neb, doctor's letters, high heels and hair dryer.. and of course 3kgs of Allen's lollies – snakes and red frogs.

Since I was.... well let's just say 'younger', I have dreamt about Antarctica but the distance, the price, my health and my lifestyle were barriers to going, but I was determined!

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Ball  
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# Support CF - Entertainment books now available

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I believe that everybody has the ability to achieve, to challenge themselves and to conquer new feats. I had met a great Australian climber and explorer, Greg Mortimer, who founded 'Aurora Expeditions'. Greg is a true adventurer, who was the first Australian to summit Mt Everest. His company is at the cutting edge of adventure expeditions to Antarctica, using small ships of up to 100 people, as well as upholding strong environmental values and practices. Aurora Expeditions believes in the spirit of adventure travel and he and his company were closely aligned with my beliefs. Greg not only spent time with me but he helped my endeavour by making me an offer that allowed me to believe it could happen....and happen it did!

I had asked Terry Stewart of Cystic Fibrosis Australia to give me a flag that I could take and plant in the ice of Antarctica. As I folded the little white cloth with red rose emblem, I realised that I was actually about to leave to conquer the last frontier ... Antarctica.

This is the first time ever that anybody with Cystic Fibrosis has gone to Antarctica! Having only been married for a few months, this was also to be

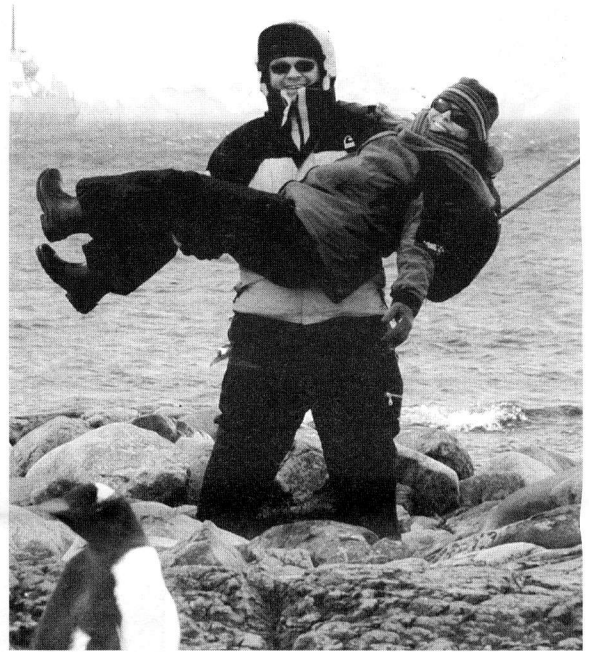
our (tropical) honeymoon. Including the rest of my travels over the last few years, this meant that I would be the first person with CF to travel to every continent on the earth. I had announced that I was going to do this for all the families that have been affected by CF. My message was to promote the ever changing journey of the Cystic Fibrosis community and especially to focus on the increasing world of possibilities that are now available to anybody living with CF.

On the 23rd of November 2008, I left Australia for South America and five days later I boarded our tiny ship, the 'Polar Pioneer' in Ushuaia, the southern-most city in the world. It was already a cold 7 degrees, and I resembled a Michelin woman dressed in my 'Antarctica best.' I felt like a little girl on her first day at school, full of anticipation of the 1700 nautical mile journey over the roughest stretch of water known to man. I just kept thinking **'I am about to plant this in the snow, and for the first time in history, a person living with CF will arrive in the most barren and unforgiving place in the world'**.

Three long days of rolling seas, we crossed the Antarctic convergence and soon saw our first iceberg...wow. They are massive, beautiful and magnificent!

On the 1st of December, we saw land and I boarded the Zodiac in the wildest of driving wind and sea spray. My eyes welled with tears and my body shook with anticipation as I finally stepped foot onto Antarctic soil. My dreams were now in front of me for my eyes to really digest. There were thousands of Gentoo penguins, Weddell seals, lots of snow, and lichen covered rocks. With sounds of the wind howling, the waves lapping, the squeaks and squawks of the mating penguins was surreal.

I looked up at the summit above



Mel and Tim in Antarctica

us and started to make my way upward. After a quick chat with the ship's doctor, I was given the all clear to climb to the point where I was going to place the flag. Huffing and puffing, I walked through hip deep snow and fell to my knees. When I planted the flag, I cried when I was given a book of over 100 telegrams from family and friends in the CF community who had supported me through this journey.

That was the golden moment for me. All the hours spent in hospitals getting breathers, tune ups, needles, procedures, infections, coughing and the tears were now behind me. I embraced that moment and I truly understood that dreams are possible.

Like lots of other adventurous CF's, I have travelled to lots of great places in our world, but now I had earned the right to say 'we have conquered you'. The roughest, toughest land in the world has now been ticked in the passport and now the future is even brighter in the CF world.

At 10.30 at night it was a chilly zero degrees but still daylight when I went sea kayaking. I am a qualified kayak instructor and this is something I love and do often at work, but this was something very special. It was the stillest conditions I have ever seen. The water was shrouded in mist and fog but reflected the mountains like

## Staff Days and Office Hours.

The office is open to the public from 10am – 3pm, Monday – Friday.

### CEO

Kate Hartwig.....Mon–Thurs

### Office Manager

Robyn Craig.....  
..... Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri

### Marketing Manager

Cassandra Young..... Tues–Fri

### Promotions Officer

Brad Taylor..... casual

**Counsellor** – Several available, individually organised, phone the CF Office for details.

