

WELCOME TO THE ANTARCTIC RIGHTS FESTIVAL

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
30th Nov - 4th Dec 2026

You are warmly invited to join us for five days of celebrations, as we honour Antarctica's inherent rights, and stand together for the signing of the Antarctica Declaration.

Through ceremony, assembly, art, testimony, science, intuition, ancestral jurisprudence and wisdom, the Festival invites us to imagine and practice other ways of relating to the Earth community.



GARN
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR
THE RIGHTS OF NATURE



Dzomo la Mupo



INTERNATIONAL
RIGHTS OF NATURE
TRIBUNAL



WILD LAW
INSTITUTE



About the Festival

The Antarctic Rights Festival is a gathering unlike any other: a city-wide celebration of life, law, ceremony and the wild world we are part of.

Convened by the Antarctic Alliance, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN), and allied organisations from around the world, it brings Cape Town alive with creativity, ecological debate, ancestral knowledge and Earth-centred legal discourse.



Declaration & Tribunal

At the heart of the week is the **public signing of the Antarctica Declaration**: a visionary but legally grounded document that recognises Antarctica and the Southern Ocean as a living entity with inherent rights, among them the right to a voice in the international decisions that shape her future.

The week also convenes the **International Rights of Nature Tribunal**, hearing testimony on the plight of krill, alongside the inaugural in-person **gathering of the Antarctic Alliance**, uniting members from every corner of the world in a shared commitment to her protection. Evenings turn to **Wild Talks** of intuitive, interspecies listening, rooted in African ancestral knowledge that has long understood animals, water and land as kin to be heard, before the week closes at the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium, where the Declaration is carried into the international legal stage.



Programme



Day 1 Monday 30/11/2026

17h30

Ritual Assembly and Reunion of the Waters

Delegates bring Waters from their home shores, pouring them together at the tide's edge.

18h00

Remembrance of the Lost Species

A candlelit vigil honouring extinct animals, plants and habitats, wreath-laying and dance in tribute to the more-than-human lives once held.

St James Beach, at the Tidal Pool

20h00

Gathering in Kalk Bay

As the vigil closes, we gather for a sunset picnic on the water's edge to hold what has been honoured, and turn towards hope for what is still to come.

St James Beach, on the grass lawn

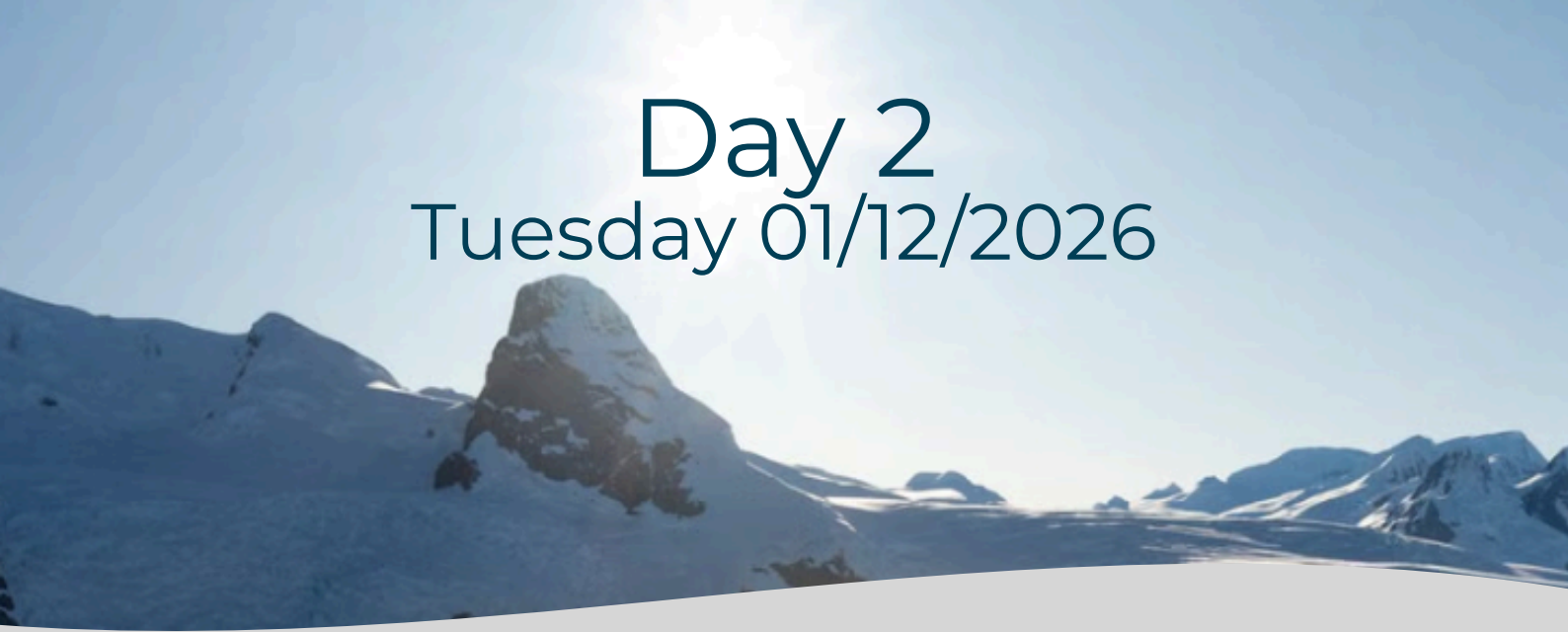
Tuesday to Friday 01/12 - 04/12/2026

10h00–20h00

Antarctica: Elemental Dialogues - Art Exhibition

A polyvocal exhibition using art and the senses to draw a distant, ice-bound continent into closer emotional and cultural proximity. This is an invitation to feel what Antarctica asks of us.

Centre for the Book



Day 2

Tuesday 01/12/2026

10h00

Indigenous Prayers: Opening in Honour of Antarctica

A multicultural ceremony of prayer, song and connection, opening our hearts to Antarctica as kin rather than territory.

Company Gardens

10h30

Procession: Towards the Declaration

A symbolic procession giving voice to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, moving to the rhythm of the more-than-human. African drums, the voices of Cape Town Opera, and multispecies puppets embodying whale, ice, krill and birds, as Antarctica's presence is carried through the Gardens towards the signing of her Declaration.

Company Gardens

11h30

Public Signing of the Antarctica Declaration

A historic moment in the rise of Earth jurisprudence: witness the signing of a Declaration affirming Antarctica's inherent rights and calling for her meaningful representation in every decision that shapes her future. Simultaneous signing of personal pledges to stand up for Antarctica.

Centre for the Book

14h30 – 16h30

Antarctica as Blueprint: Panel Discussions

Scientists, lawyers, academics and knowledge-holders explore how Antarctica offers a blueprint for a global shift towards the Rights of Nature.

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18h00 – 20h00

Wild Talk I: Antarctica, the Living Being

An evening talk exploring how we can listen to, and learn from, Antarctica.

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A photograph of a large, jagged iceberg floating in deep blue water under a clear sky. Several smaller icebergs are visible in the background. The image is used as a background for the top half of the poster.

Day 3
Wednesday
02/12/2026

10h00 – 12h30

International Rights of Nature Tribunal: The Antarctica Case

A tribunal hearing testimony about alleged violations of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and of the rights and freedoms recognised in the Antarctica Declaration. This will include evidence from experts on the impact of the industrial krill fishery (the tiny keystone species whose survival underpins the entire Southern Ocean food web), and the impacts of climate change on Antarctica and Antarctic beings.

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14h00 – 17h00

**International Rights of Nature Tribunal hearing continues
and interim findings of the Tribunal**

The Tribunal continues, hearing evidence and concludes with the panel of judges handing down their preliminary findings and recommendations for next steps.

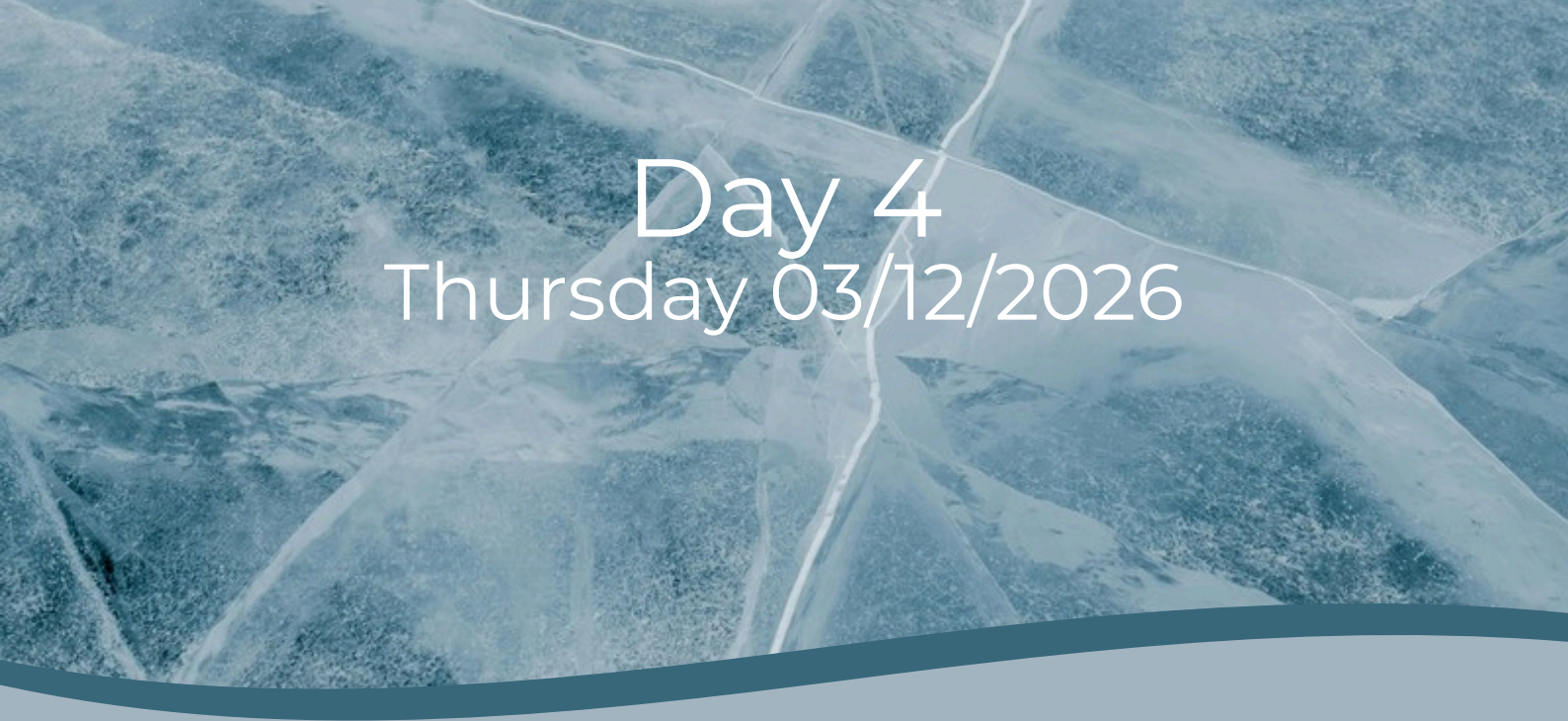
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18h00 – 20h00

**Wild Talk II: Ancestral Listening and
Intuitive Interspecies Communication**

An evening of intuitive, interspecies listening, grounded in science, and in the African ancestral knowledge that has long understood animals, water and land as kin to be heard.

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Day 4

Thursday 03/12/2026

10h00 – 17h00

Gathering of the Antarctic Alliance

Alliance members gather to discuss and agree on the structure of the Alliance and its strategy and objectives.

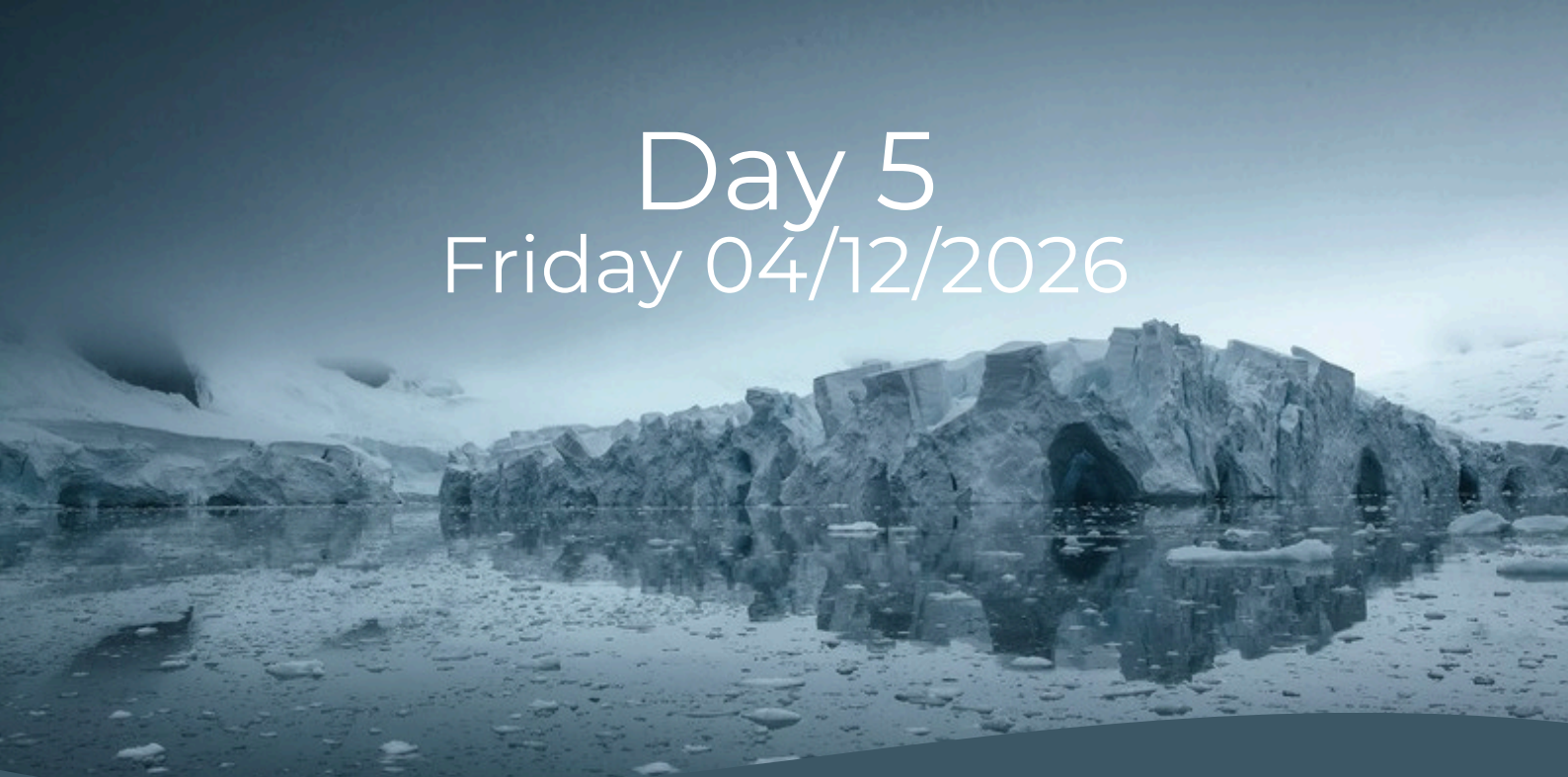
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18h00 – 20h00

Antarctica as Kin: Film Screening

Films exploring Antarctica as a relative and source of wisdom, followed by a panel discussion on more-than-human perspectives.

Labia Theatre



Day 5
Friday 04/12/2026

14h00 – 16h00

Recognising Antarctica as a Living Community

What does it mean to recognise Antarctica as a living community with rights, agency and a future of its own? Challenging the human-centred assumptions that shape the way we understand and govern the Earth and considering what this recognition demands of us.

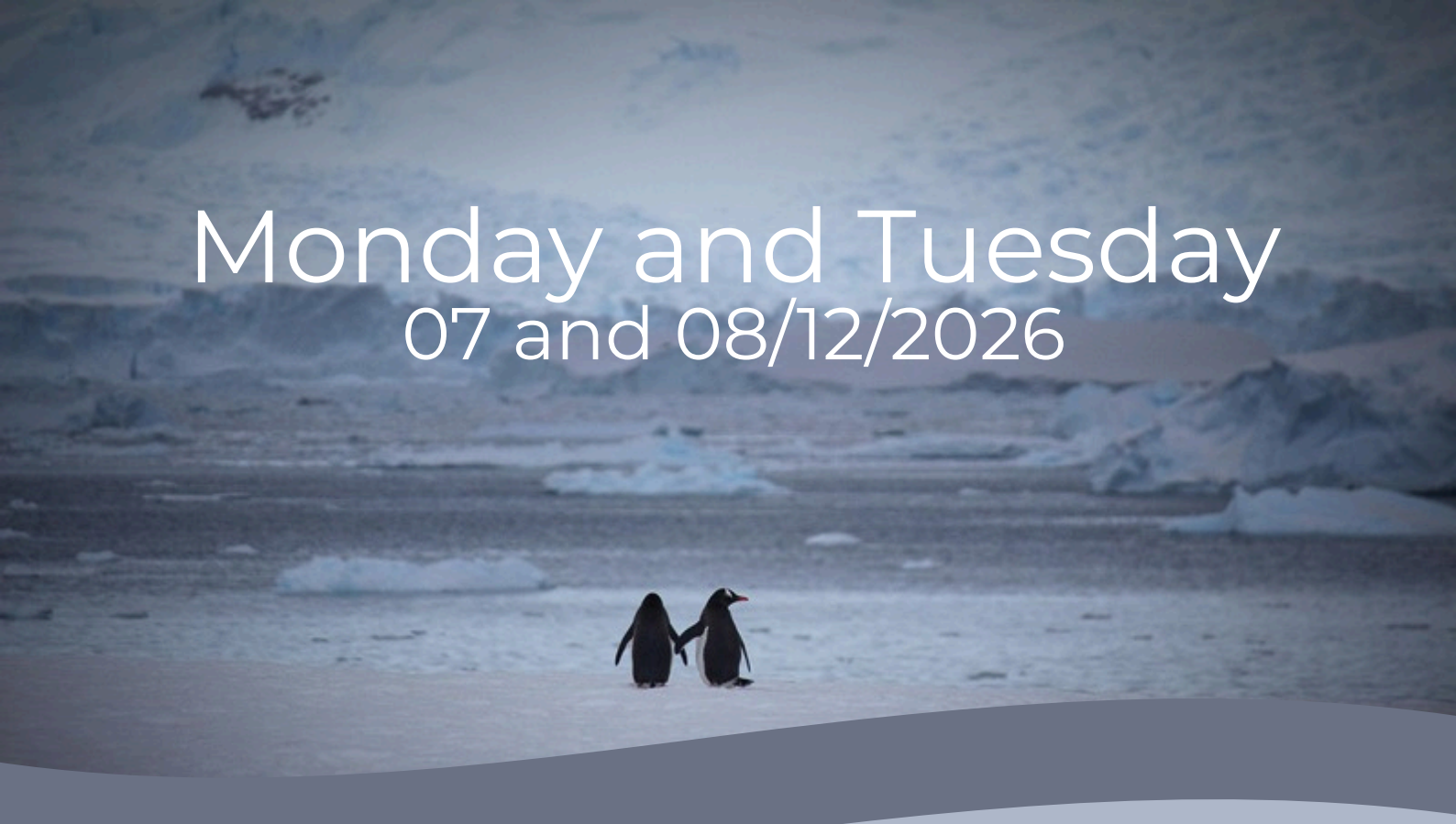
Centre for the Book

18h00 – 20h00

**Imagining 2126: A Flourishing Southern Ocean,
a century from now.**

Walking backwards from a thriving future: the cultural, institutional and political steps needed to imagine a flourishing Southern Ocean in a century. Envisioning a pathway to implementation as the festival draws to a close.

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Monday and Tuesday 07 and 08/12/2026

IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium Day 1

TBC: Antarctic Rights side event during the colloquium
hosted by the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law.
University of Cape Town (UCT)

IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium Day 2

Environmental lawyer Cormac Cullinan joins the opening
plenary panel to bring the Rights of Antarctica and the
newly signed Antarctica Declaration before an
international audience of scholars and law practitioners.
University of Cape Town (UCT)