



Australian Government

65th Meeting of the International Whaling Commission

11-18 September 2014, Portorož, Slovenia

OPENING STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIA

The Australian Government is pleased to submit the following opening statement to the 65th meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

We firstly thank the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for their generous hosting of this meeting and for the excellent support provided by the IWC Secretariat for a successful meeting.

This is the first meeting of the Commission since the move to biennial meetings. Australia wishes to acknowledge the positive impacts the longer intersessional timeframe has made to the work of the Commission.

Australia acknowledges the significant workload undertaken by the Commission's Committees, Sub-Committees and working groups during over the past two years and thanks all Commission members for the considerable efforts and contributions to this work.

We welcome in particular, the improved planning by Committees and groups to guide the Commission's work into the future. Detailed planning and efficient reporting demonstrates the Commission's ability to modernise its practices in line with other intergovernmental environmental organisations.

Australia also welcomes activities jointly undertaken in the past two years by the Conservation and Scientific Committees, such as two successful workshops addressing the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans. We hope the Commission collaborates with existing international marine debris initiatives to keep up the momentum on this important work.

The newly established Bureau is another significant achievement. Australia thanks the Bureau and the Secretariat for their support to the Commission which has enabled effective running of the Commission in the lead up to this meeting.

We welcome their improvements such as shorter time-bound plenary agendas focused on decision making and their preparatory work for handling agenda items that might otherwise take unnecessary time at the meeting to resolve. Like most administrative reforms they are small changes with big impacts.

Following the 31 March 2014 judgment delivered by the International Court of Justice, this meeting provides us with an opportunity to embed the principles of the judgment into the work of the Commission.

The [full judgment](#) (64 pages), and [summary](#) of the judgment (12 pages) can be found on the Court's website. Australia encourages all Commissioners to read the judgment, because the best approach is to let the authoritative judgment speak for itself.

The Court concluded that JARPAII was not a programme for the purposes of scientific research pursuant to Article VIII. Australia welcomes the decision of the Court that Japan "shall revoke any extant authorization, permit or licence to kill, take or treat whales in relation to JARPA II, and refrain from granting any further permits under Article VIII, paragraph 1, of the Convention, in pursuance of that programme." The words of the Court, the highest court of international law, speak for themselves. We need just ensure that the IWC, as a responsible international organisation, considers the guidance from the Court and incorporates its learned judgment into the practices of the Commission. Australia therefore commends the NZ Resolution for endorsement by the Commission.

Australia's opposition to all forms of commercial whaling remains unchanged. Australia is of the view that lethal scientific research is not necessary. All information necessary for the contemporary conservation and management of whales can be obtained non-lethally. The Commission's Southern Ocean Research Partnership is delivering valuable, best-practice, non-lethal whale research and demonstrates that whales do not need to be killed in the name of science.

Australia remains of the view that lethal research on whales is unnecessary and that non-lethal research techniques are the most effective and efficient method of studying all cetaceans.

To showcase this in practice, the Commission's Southern Ocean Research Partnership is delivering valuable, best-practice, non-lethal whale research and demonstrates that whales do not need to be killed in the name of science.

At the 2014 Scientific Committee meeting, 22 primary papers stemming from the Partnership were reviewed and endorsed. Many of those detailed the work of the Australian-led Antarctic Blue Whale Project.

The Southern Ocean Research Partnership is growing and now includes 10 members: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and the United States, and we welcome Italy's announcement of its intention to join.

Australia strongly encourages Contracting Governments to join this important initiative, and provide voluntary contributions to support the Partnership's research that is helping us to better understand and protect whales.

As a final point, Australia wishes to inform the Commission that we are hosting the [3rd International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas](#) in Adelaide from the 9th to the 11th November 2014, in conjunction with the World Parks Congress and the Asia Pacific Rainforest Summit. The Conference provides an opportunity for managers, researchers, scientists, educators and government representatives to discuss how best to protect marine mammals.

This year's theme, "Important Marine Mammal Areas – A Sense of Place, A Question of Size," will focus on criteria for the identification of important marine mammal areas and to

address the challenges and strategies of managing both large and small marine protected areas.

Australia promotes Marine Protected Areas as regions in which environmentally sustainable and economically viable whale watching can occur. Australia extends a warm welcome to any countries wishing to attend the Conference.

Ultimately, we strongly support the global moratorium on commercial whaling and believe in non-lethal scientific research and respectfully believe that we must do all that we can to preserve, protect and support recovery of the world's magnificent whales.