

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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AND
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AUSTRALIA ACTS TO STOP WHALING

The Australian Government will formally urge Japan to end the slaughter of whales in the Southern Ocean.

Japanese whaling vessels have already reached the Southern Ocean and are expected to kill as many as 935 minke whales, 50 threatened humpback whales and 50 endangered fin whales for so called “scientific research”.

Australia strongly believes that there is no credible scientific justification for the hunting of whales and is opposed to all commercial and “scientific” whaling.

That is why the Australian Government will step up efforts to end this senseless and brutal practice, using a range of diplomatic, legal and monitoring and surveillance initiatives.

Diplomatic Efforts with Japan

Australia will dramatically increase its diplomatic efforts with Japan.

- A Special Envoy on Whale Conservation will be appointed to convey our views to Japan and increase and strengthen dialogue at senior levels.
- In Tokyo, Australia will lead a coalition of anti-whaling countries in lodging a formal protest with the Japanese Government.
- The Foreign Minister and Environment Minister will also directly register their concerns with their Japanese counterparts.

International Whaling Commission

Australia will upgrade our efforts at the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the place where rules on the conservation and protection of whales are made.

- The Government will develop its own proposal for improving and modernising the IWC – which will include closing the loophole that allows for scientific whaling.
- We will work to build and strengthen the coalition of anti-whaling countries in collaboration with our allies.

Legal Avenues

The Government is giving serious consideration to a range of options for international legal action against Japan.

- The Attorney General has withdrawn the previous Government's submission to the current federal court case concerning Japan's whaling activities in the Australian Whale Sanctuary.

Monitoring and Surveillance

Australia will also act to collect evidence of Japan's whaling activities by monitoring the Japanese whaling fleet using both aircraft and a surface vessel:

- An A319 aircraft, operated by the Australian Antarctic Division, will make several surveillance flights during the whaling season.
- Monitoring and surveillance activities will also be undertaken using the Customs patrol boat the Oceanic Viking, which will be disarmed for this whaling surveillance activity.

The information obtained from the Government's surveillance activities will be important for any legal action.

Australia values its extensive and mutually beneficial relationship with Japan. As in any close relationship there are some issues on which we cannot agree. One of the few issues on which we fundamentally disagree is Japan's policy of undertaking so-called 'scientific whaling' in the face of widespread opposition from the Australian and international community.

Australia is determined to play a leading role in international efforts to stop Japan's whaling practices.

**CANBERRA
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