



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTS SPECIAL ENVOY ON WHALE CONSERVATION

Environment Minister, Peter Garrett today announced the appointment of Mr Sandy Hollway AO as Australia's Special Envoy for Whale Conservation.

Mr Garrett said Mr Hollway's appointment was the next step in the Government's comprehensive strategy to bring an end to commercial and so-called 'scientific' whaling.

"Mr Hollway's appointment builds on the intensive diplomatic engagement the Rudd Labor Government has undertaken to date and will see Australia deepen our dialogue with leaders in Japan and other countries ahead of the southern summer.

"Mr Hollway is a highly experienced former public servant with a strong background as a professional diplomat and he brings to the position the mix of intellect, skills and experience necessary to help advance the Government's objective of ending Japan's so-called 'scientific whaling' and improving the conservation of whales globally."

Mr Garrett said the Envoy had had initial discussions in Japan and the United States with key officials, and Mr Hollway had reported to he and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, on the progress of these discussions.

"Since coming to Government we have taken a robust approach on the issue of commercial and so-called 'scientific' whaling, through bilateral dialogue with Japan, multilateral diplomatic representations and through an unprecedented reform agenda within the International Whaling Commission.

"At the recent Commission meeting in Chile, Australia's proposals to change the focus of the Commission to whale conservation were strongly supported by a substantial number of nations.

"Australia continues to work in co-operation with other countries to build a new global consensus on whale conservation.

"To that end, I look forward to Australia hosting an international workshop early next year to plan the non-lethal whale research partnership for the Southern Ocean.

"This partnership will be open to all nations and will direct research on internationally-agreed priorities and demonstrate once again that all essential whale research can be performed without killing a single whale."

Mr Garrett said he remained hopeful that progress could be made ahead of the southern summer.

"We will continue our intensive engagement and will continue to consider all options to bring an end to commercial whaling, including possible international legal action."