



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIA CALLS FOR RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR IN THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

The Australian Government remains resolute in its opposition to commercial and so-called 'scientific' whaling and is deeply disappointed at the recent departure of the Japanese whaling fleet for the Southern Ocean.

Since coming to Government we have strongly conveyed Australia's opposition to the Japanese whaling program through intense diplomatic engagement, including through the work of our Special Envoy on Whale Conservation.

We are aware that the coming season's anticipated whaling activities in the Southern Ocean are once again likely to attract protests from the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

The Australian Government respects the right of individuals and groups to protest peacefully. But no matter the objective, we do not condone, indeed we condemn, dangerous or violent activities, including any activity that may jeopardise safety at sea or could lead to injury or loss of life.

The International Whaling Commission has repeatedly urged all parties to refrain from action that is a risk to human life and property in relation to the activities of vessels at sea.

At a meeting in March this year, all members of the IWC collectively called upon Sea Shepherd to refrain from dangerous activities, and called on vessels and crews concerned to exercise restraint.

The Australian Government expects any unlawful activity to be dealt with in accordance with relevant international and domestic laws.

The Southern Ocean is a remote and inhospitable region where the risk of adverse incidents is high and the capacity for rescue or assistance is low. As the Government has repeatedly done in the past, we call upon all parties to exercise restraint and to ensure that safety at sea is the highest priority.