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MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND THE ARTS

## **TRANSCRIPT**

**TRANSCRIPT OF REMARKS TO  
THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION  
REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE IWC AND AUSTRALIA'S  
PROPOSALS FOR REFORM  
SANTIAGO, CHILE  
TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2008**

[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]

Thank you Chair, I want to particularly welcome the constructive way that participants have worked to develop the documents before us and acknowledge your work in helping us reach this point.

As we gather here at the 60<sup>th</sup> meeting of the International Whaling Commission, graciously hosted Chile, thank you — it's important to reflect on how, over the last 60 meetings, the world has changed.

To be relevant in the third Millennium, the IWC must move away from its 1950s function as a whaling regulator, focused on determining quotas.

I strongly believe the IWC needs to become a contemporary international conservation and management organisation focused on the recovery and conservation of whale populations, addressing the non-consumptive uses of whales.

There must be reform — this reform must be open and transparent, embracing civil society.

We must all engage constructively in moving ahead and do so with our eyes open, both to those areas where we disagree and those where we can cooperate in the future.

I don't underestimate for a moment how difficult and complex this journey of reform will be.

Australia's views are very well known. The primary source of tension in the Commission has been special permit whaling.

The reluctance to embrace a broader conservation agenda has been a critical problem.

But we are at the beginning of this journey — it is a time to listen and understand the views of others so that we can start the construction of a strong base upon which to move forward.

Most of all now is the time for fresh thinking.

Australia comes to this Commission with new and innovative ideas.

As a constructive contribution to this process the detail of our proposals are elaborated in several papers we have put before this meeting.

I look forward to explaining them in some detail at other points of the Agenda. For the moment, lets me frank, the past experience has been fraught and difficult and the way ahead is by no means clear. But today we are taking an important step and this is a break with the past.

The agreement here to work by consensus then represents encouraging progress.

Australia remains strongly committed to working constructively through this process to reshape the IWC now for the better and for the future.