



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

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## **ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF WHALE WATCHING UNDERLINED IN NEW REPORT**

Environment Minister Peter Garrett today joined the International Fund for Animal Welfare to release the report *Whale Watching Worldwide* at the International Whaling Commission annual meeting in Portugal.

Speaking on the release of the significant report, Mr Garrett said that in the decade since the previous report the whale watching industry has grown substantially around the globe.

“In 2008 alone, more than 13 million people enjoyed whale watching in 119 countries resulting in more than \$2 billion in expenditure,” Mr Garrett said.

“It proves that whale watching is an internationally dynamic industry that is not only offers significant commercial benefits for local communities, creating jobs and new businesses but also offers a terrific opportunity to educate the public about whales and the marine environment.”

“The release of this report here at the IWC is timely because the the Commission is in an ideal position to provide the practical tools and advice for countries developing their whale watching industries that minimize the impacts on whales and their environment.

“And it further reinforces the point that whales are worth more to nations alive than dead, with the economic benefits of whales extending far beyond hunting them.”

The Minister said Australia looked forward to the Commission embracing the recommendations of the joint paper that South Africa, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Australia will present to the IWC regarding the future activities related to whale watching within the Commission.

“This work is critical both as an important piece of strategic work that demonstrates a new direction for the IWC as well as important in maintaining momentum on non-lethal use of whales.”

Mr Garrett said the International Fund for Animal Welfare report complements the *Global Cetacean Summary Report* launched by the Australian Government.

"Australia comes to this meeting of the IWC committed to working with like-minded nations on those critical issues which Australia believes must be addressed to transform the Commission into a modern, conservation-focused organisation, securing long-term protection for the world's whales and these two reports will be important tools in supporting our very strong position."

**Madeira, Portugal**