



# SAVE THE WHALES

## Bring an end to lethal whaling

It's time to stop this barbaric practice once and for all

The Turnbull Government have stood idly by as the Japanese have ignored the findings of the International Court of Justice. This is not good enough. Australia must stand firm and must fight to stop lethal whaling in the Southern Oceans.

### > END LETHAL WHALING

Australia has historically been a strong opponent of lethal whaling. Australia banned whaling in 1979 ahead of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) moratorium on commercial whaling in 1982.

More recently, Australia took the Japanese Government to the International Court of Justice to contest their so-called 'scientific whaling program'. In 2014, the court ruled in Australia's favour in finding that Japan's whaling was not for scientific purposes.

In opposition, then shadow Environment Minister, Greg Hunt, was a proponent of strong action:

It's our time and it's our watch and these are majestic creatures and we have to fight for them and if we have to have a vote and we have to take Japan on then so be it.<sup>1</sup>

But Greg Hunt and the Turnbull Government have been a great disappointment. The Japanese have recommenced lethal whaling in the Southern Ocean in flagrant disregard of the decision of the ICJ. But the government will not say if they are patrolling whaling fleets because "the government does not discuss operational matters".<sup>2</sup> The government has also failed to say if they will pursue the Japanese through international avenues to seek to further sanctions for the recommencement of whaling.

This is not good enough. The Australian Government must stand up to the Japanese and do everything it reasonably can to stop whaling in the Southern Ocean.

The Greens would seek a determination at the next meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) that rejects Japan's resumption of lethal whaling.

If Japan then refuses to cease lethal whaling, the Australian Government should consider further international action. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea provides a dispute resolution mechanism that could hold Japan accountable for their lethal whaling program.

The Greens would also send a customs patrol vessel to monitor Japanese whaling activity. Collecting evidence of the lethal whaling was crucial to success of the previous ICJ case, and would be crucial to the success of any future international action. This measure would be covered by redirecting resources from within the existing budget of Australian Border Force.

Finally, the Greens would raise the issue directly with the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe. It is important that our government express the disappointment of the Australian people directly and at the highest level.

### > PROTECT THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The Greens recognise that protecting the marine environment is also important for the ongoing health of the worlds' whale population.

The Greens would develop a 'ship-strike strategy' to prevent collisions between whales and ships. This would include moving shipping lanes where necessary. It would also include introducing speed limits in key nursing areas for whales, such as parts of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Green's would also produce an action plan to reduce ocean noise pollution from sources such as oil and gas exploration, shipping and military activities. Whales have incredibly sensitive hearing. Noise pollution that disturbs their resting and nursing environments can be a serious threat to whale health.

Finally, the Greens' have committed to the re-establishment of marine reserves that would help protect whale habitat.

<sup>1</sup> ABC Morning Program, Adelaide, Interview with Matthew Abraham and David Bevan, June 26, 2008

<sup>2</sup> For example, Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications, Legislation Committee, Additional Estimates 2015-16, Question on Notice No. 50.