

Pacific nations have opportunity to end whaling

Sydney Tuesday, 30 May, 2006: Greenpeace today urged Pacific Island nations to vote for whale conservation at the upcoming International Whaling Commission (IWC), as Environment Minister Ian Campbell today travels to the Pacific in a bid to secure support on a whaling ban.

Greenpeace Australian Pacific CEO Steve Shallhorn said, "Greenpeace calls on Pacific countries to not be deceived by Japan's 'sustainable whaling' sham and to instead vote for whale conservation.

"Greenpeace would welcome Kiribati and Marshall Islands joining the whale conservation lobby at the IWC," he said.

"There is no genuine market for whale meat even in Japan, and the facts are that whale watching is actually more profitable than whale killing.

"This year's vote at the IWC is very close, and Pacific countries could possibly tip the balance in our favour if they vote against the pro-whaling nations," Mr Shallhorn said.

Greenpeace is calling on the Australian government to:

- Continue all diplomatic efforts to ensure that the majority vote at the IWC is in favour of whale conservation; and
- Support the use of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) as an alternative to the IWC to protect whales.

Last season Japan killed 853 minke whales and 10 endangered fin whales, and in 2007 will begin to hunt the humpback whales that travel up the east coast of Australia.

"Greenpeace will be represented at the IWC and will be forcefully making the case to end whaling once and for all," Mr Shallhorn said.

At the last IWC meeting Australia and New Zealand again broached the idea of a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary.

"Greenpeace believes a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary should again be considered this year by the scientific committee advising the IWC," said Greenpeace Oceans Campaigner Nilesh Goundar.