



**PRIME MINISTER**

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INQUIRY INTO WHALES AND WHALING

The Government's concern to preserve and conserve the many species of whales is well known. Australia has played a major part in instituting procedures in the International Whaling Commission designed to achieve this aim, and in fact a moratorium has been declared on the taking of certain species.

In accordance with an earlier commitment, the Government is proceeding to establish an Inquiry to examine and report upon Australia's policies on whales and whaling. The Inquiry will examine all available evidence and arguments, and make recommendations on the best way in which Australia might pursue its policy of preservation and conservation of whales.

The Inquiry will be asked to examine particularly whether Australian whaling should continue or cease, the consequences for international whaling of Australia's decision, and the operations of international regulatory mechanisms in so far as these bear on Australia's concern for preservation and conservation of whales.

Terms of reference for the Inquiry are attached. These have been discussed with interested parties, including both conservationists and whaling industry representatives.

It is essential that all interested parties have an opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry. It will be open to the Inquiry to hold public sessions, and submissions will be sought from the general public, scientific experts, conservation groups and whaling interests as well as Commonwealth and State Government Departments and agencies.

The Inquiry will also be able to draw on international expertise. This could include bringing experts to Australia or overseas travel by the Inquiry, but details are still to be determined in conjunction with the head of the Inquiry.

The Inquiry will be conducted by the Honourable Sir Sydney Frost. Sir Sydney, formerly a Queen's Counsel at the Victorian Bar, took up an appointment in 1964 as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea. On the independence of Papua New Guinea in 1975, he was appointed as its first Chief Justice, a position from which he retired late last year.

Sir Sydney will have the support of scientific advisers and a Secretariat. He has been asked to report in September or as soon as possible thereafter.

# INQUIRY INTO WHALES AND WHALING

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The Inquiry shall examine and report upon Australia's policies on whales and whaling. It shall make recommendations on the best way in which Australia might pursue its policy of preservation and conservation of the many species of whales (also known as cetacea).
2. The Inquiry shall in particular examine:
  - whether Australian whaling should continue or cease;
  - the consequences for international whaling of Australia's decision;
  - international regulatory mechanisms in so far as these bear on Australia's concern for preservation and conservation of whales.
3. Without limiting its scope in any way, in considering Australia's possible actions the Inquiry shall examine:
  - the role of whales in marine ecosystems and the impact of past and current whale harvesting strategies on the marine environment;
  - any special features of whales which may make their conservation important;
  - significant consequences, if any, for other areas of conservation policy;
  - methods used in taking whales and whether better methods are possible.
  - factors influencing the scale of Australian and world whaling activity, including the demand for products derived from whales and the possibilities for substitution;

- any consequences for Australian employment and industrial development, particularly in Albany;
- the implications of Australia's policies on 200 nautical mile fishing and economic zones in Australian waters, including those adjacent to the Australian Antarctic Territory;
- foreign relations aspects;
- any other considerations relevant to whales and whaling.