

recent developments

INTERNATIONAL

A win for whales at IWC

[From a Media Release by Australian Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon. Ian Campbell, 21 June 2005, No C168/05]

Australian and pro-conservation nations have won an historic vote at the 57th meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in Ulsan, South Korea. IWC nations voted on Japan's proposed "Revised Management Scheme", which, if successful, would have meant the end of two decades of a moratorium on commercial whaling. The vote for commercial whaling was supported by 23 pro-whaling nations and opposed by 29 proconservation nations, including Australia. Five nations abstained from voting.

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell said today "Pro-whaling nations are on the wrong side of history," "This is a critical step in our ongoing fight to see commercial whaling relegated to the history books – a fight we will not give up,"

Australia joins new Asia-Pacific partnership on clean development and climate

[From a Joint Press Release by The Hon. John Howard MP, Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon. Alexander Downer MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Hon. Ian MacFarlane MP, Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources and the Hon. Ian Campbell MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 28 July 2005.]

"We are very pleased to announce that the United States, China, India, Japan, South Korea and Australia have agreed to form the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate.

The partnership brings together key developing and developed countries in the region to address the challenges of climate change, energy security and air pollution, in a way that strives to encourage economic development and reduce poverty.

The partnership is a significant step forward as it establishes a new path for global agreements to emerge based on clean technology development and deployment which are effective and comprehensive in addressing climate change. While Australia contributes only 1.4 per cent to world emissions, taken together the founding countries encompass around half of global greenhouse emissions, the world's population and energy consumption. The founding countries will consider ways to include other like-minded and interested countries.

The partnership is consistent with our efforts under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and will complement, but not replace, the Kyoto Protocol.

Today the six founding countries released a [Vision Statement for the Partnership](#) at the ASEAN Regional Forum in Vientiane which states that countries will work together to:

- develop, deploy and transfer existing and emerging clean technology;
- meet our increased energy needs and explore ways to reduce the greenhouse intensity of our economies;
- build human and institutional capacity to strengthen cooperative efforts; and
- seek ways to engage the private sector.

This vision is consistent with the approach articulated in the Australian Government's Climate Change Strategy and Energy White Paper. The partnership complements the commitments made by the Australian Government in its election policy document A Sustainable Australia to promote an effective and pragmatic approach to climate change that builds on key partnerships within the region, promotes collaboration between Australian businesses and researchers and their regional partners, encourages technology partnerships and implements practical solutions to climate change that involves large countries.

We are pleased to announce that Australia will host the inaugural ministerial meeting of the partnership. Foreign, Environment and Energy Ministers from each member country will be invited to build on the

principles in the Vision Statement. Discussions are already underway on the practical elements, including a work plan and a wide range of technology areas for possible collaboration.

The recent G8 announcement at Gleneagles also recognises the important role that technology will play in future global agreements on climate change. Australia will investigate ways to become involved in initiatives under the G8 Plan of Action. Australia will also play an active role in other international fora such as the ASEAN regional forum, APEC and the International Energy Agency.”

NATIONAL AND COMMONWEALTH

Editor: Elizabeth Marsden

EPBC Act updates

Review of Tasmanian Bilateral Agreement

A review of the operation of the Bilateral Agreement between the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government Bilateral is underway, with the opportunity for public comment closing on 5 August 2005. The Agreement operates pursuant to Section 45 of the *EPBC Act*, relating to environmental impact assessment. The Agreement entered into force on 15 December 2000 and is due to expire on 14 December 2005. The text of the current Bilateral Agreement may be found at: <http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc/assessmentsapprovals/bilateral/tasmania/agreement.html> .

Procedures and Systems for the Conduct of Major Military Exercises

Draft Terms of Reference were released in March 2005 in relation to the strategic assessment, under the *EPBC Act*, of the Environmental Management Processes, Procedures and Systems for the Conduct of Major Military Exercises. Public comments were to be received by April 2005 and the Terms of Reference will subsequently be finalised. The Department of Defence is then expected to produce a report detailing its procedures for the management of environmental impacts of major military exercises.

Draft “significant impact” guidelines

The Department of the Environment and Heritage has released the following draft guidelines for public comment:

- Draft Principal Significant Impact Guidelines
- Industry Sector Guidelines for Aquaculture, Windfarms and Urban Development

The Guidelines are intended to provide guidance on the practical application of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Comments on the Principal Guidelines are due by 28 October 2005. Comments on the Industry Sector Guidelines are due by 21 October 2005. For further information and copies of the draft guidelines, see <http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc/policy/index.html#guidelines>.

Other matters

Alpine grazing licences

On 24 May 2005 the Victorian Government announced that alpine grazing licences held by cattle owners in the Victorian high country would not be renewed, ending a practice that had continued for 170 years. The Government’s main reason for eradicating cattle grazing in the area, much of which is part of the Alpine National Park, was to protect fragile alpine ecosystems. However, on 10 June 2005 the Federal Environment Minister responded to the State Government’s move by issuing a temporary heritage listing to protect the summer cattle mustering tradition. This is believed to be the first time an activity has been nominated for the National Heritage List. At the time of writing, the Australian Heritage Council was assessing the Federal Government’s nomination for permanent listing and its legal status remained