



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment

MEDIA RELEASE

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Customs monitoring operation in the Southern Ocean

For the first time since 2008 Australia will carry out a Customs mission to monitor activities by all groups in the Southern Ocean this summer during the whaling season.

It is important for Australia to have a monitoring presence in the Southern Ocean given the risk of confrontation between whalers and protestors. While we respect the right to peaceful protest, Australia will not condone any dangerous, reckless or unlawful behaviour.

This announcement follows the joint statement by Governments of Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States – calling for responsible behaviour at sea during the 2013/14 Southern Ocean whaling season.

For operational reasons, the use of a plane has been determined as the most effective means of monitoring activities in the Southern Ocean.

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service will deploy an A319 aircraft to monitor activity in the Southern Ocean.

The flights will be planned, co-ordinated and staffed by ACBPS officers over the whaling season from January to March, 2014.

The aircraft will be able to monitor activities over a large area. It sends a clear message that the Australian government expects all parties to abide by the laws of the sea.

The Coalition Government's opposition to whaling is well known. The Government supported the case taken to the International Court of Justice.

It was hoped that a ruling would have been delivered ahead of this whaling season. The Government continues to remain hopeful that the International Court of Justice will soon make its ruling.

In the meantime, the Abbott Government is fulfilling a key election promise by putting in place a monitoring programme in the Southern Ocean this summer to ensure the laws are adhered to by all parties.

Media contact: **John O'Doherty 0402 047 852**