



Additional Comments—Senator Stott Despoja

While I unanimously support the main report and recommendations of the Committee, I would like to make some brief additional comments, which relate to the conservation and protection of the Antarctic environment.

Australia's international obligations

I note that in addition to Australia's international obligations reported in para 5.1, Australia has international obligations to protect migratory species, including whales and seabirds, and to promote the recovery of any species listed as threatened, both domestically and internationally.

Preserving marine life in the Southern Ocean

I note that in addition to the agencies listed at para 5.6, the National Oceans Office also has a role in managing the Southern Ocean, given its responsibility for development of overall oceans policy, including development of a Regional Marine Plan for the Antarctic region.

I also note that the issue of whaling has received significant attention in the media recently, as reported in para 5.6, as a result of allegations that Japanese whalers have taken whales in waters claimed as Australian Antarctic Territory, and in light of plans to increase numbers of whales killed for research and other purposes.

The Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) Marine Reserve

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) requires a management plan to be prepared for the HIMI Reserve. I note that the EPBC Act also requires that marine mammals, migratory species and threatened species occurring in the marine reserve are protected and, in the case of threatened species, recovery plans are prepared and areas of critical habitat are recognised on the EPBC Register of Critical Habitat.

The Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery

The main report identifies a number of agencies and authorities at para 5.20 which the AAD works in conjunction with to monitor illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. I note that given the presence of threatened seabirds and vulnerable Australian sealions, the AAD should also be working with the Department of the Environment and Heritage – as the department responsible for the protection of marine mammals and threatened species – to assess and monitor their status and recovery.

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