

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 35  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Programme:** Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)  
**Topic:** Funding for Southern Ocean Research Partnership  
**Hansard Page:** N/A  
**Question Date:** 19 February 2016  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Urquhart asked:**

Where is the Southern Ocean Research Partnership based? Can you provide a breakdown of the funding, in kind and in cash, from those countries involved in it?

**Answer:**

The Southern Ocean Research Partnership is an Australian-initiated and International Whaling Commission endorsed, collaborative consortium of eleven member countries undertaking non-lethal research on whales in the Southern Ocean. The members are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and the United States of America.

Secretariat functions are undertaken by the staff of the Australian Marine Mammal Centre at the Australian Antarctic Division, based in Hobart. The Secretariat reports annually to the Commission's Scientific Committee on progress and future plans.

Members can contribute to the Partnership in a number of ways, with financial support provided through voluntary contributions to the Commission. Since 2008, the Australian Government has committed \$10.6 million to the Partnership which has supported conferences, research voyages and a competitive grants process for non-lethal research. The United States made a contribution of £16,000 in 2011, and the Netherlands (who are not a member) made a contribution of approximately £17,000 in 2015.

Members also contribute to the Partnership by sharing their scientific expertise and staff time, research vessels, equipment, and laboratory time. For example, New Zealand and Argentina have contributed to the Partnership through the provision of ship time (two Tangaroa voyages and annual Tango voyages for last 10 years, respectively), South Africa has provided data from Aghulus voyages and Germany has provided sightings data from a Polar Stern voyage.

Scientists participating in the Partnership lead the world in the development and application of a range of novel, powerful, non-lethal cetacean research methods including acoustic techniques (such as real time tracking of whales using directional sonobuoys), satellite tagging, photographic identification, tissue sampling and sophisticated genetic techniques, as well as important ecological theory and analyses.

There are five ongoing, multi-national research projects on whales that address key research needs of the Commission. Australia is actively involved in or supporting all five projects and has conducted three productive Antarctic whale research voyages.