

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

Question No: 26
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Policy and Communications Division
Topic: INTERNATIONAL WHALING
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Could I ask, Minister, if you would be prepared to formally invite the Japanese to join with our world-leading scientists in a non-lethal, non-commercial research—

Senator PRATT: They would have to fund it first, past 2015.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Correct. This is where I am going with it, but certainly there is funding available for some research. Perhaps you could take that on notice, Senator Cormann—whether that might be something: to develop bi-lateral relationships and bring the countries closure together on this issue?

Senator Cormann: I am happy to take the question on notice and to see whether Minister Hunt has got anything to add here to the evidence provided by the officers from the department. But let me just make the general point, and also respond to the interjections by Senator Pratt: it is very important to always remind ourselves that we have inherited from the previous government a budget in an absolute mess. There is not much spare cash around to direct at—

Answer:

Australia considers that the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which has primary responsibility for the conservation and management of whales, is the appropriate forum in which to address issues relating to whales and whaling.

Australia will continue to work through the IWC to promote global whale conservation and the benefits of non-lethal research on whales.

Australia would welcome Japan becoming part of the Southern Ocean Research Partnership (SORP) that is undertaking non-lethal whale research in the Southern Ocean. SORP was initiated by Australia and is directed by the IWC in a joint venture with ten other nations.