



# MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Ian Campbell  
Minister for the Environment and Heritage

Tabled by  
Senator McLucas  
25/5/06

C109/06

25 May 2006

## DOES LABOR WANT TO MINE ANTARCTICA?

Today in the Senate Estimates hearing on the environment portfolio the Australian Labor Party has revealed that it may be working on a secret policy to exploit the resources of the precious Antarctic territories.

Labor Senator Jan McLucas sought to have the Department of the Environment and Heritage produce for the Labor Party a detailed analysis of the mineral resources which may lie beneath the ice of Antarctica.

Senator McLucas said: *"...surely it would be useful for this committee to understand whether, in fact, there is anything there that can legitimately be mined, and what are the barriers to it."*

*(Senate Estimates, Parliament House, 25 May 2006)*

I repeated today what I have made clear whenever I have been asked: the Australian Government is implacably opposed to mining in the Australian Antarctic territory. Furthermore, the Madrid Protocol on Antarctic Environment Protection, ratified by Australia in 1994, prohibits all signatory nations from exploiting Antarctic mineral resources.

Under the Madrid Protocol, any activity relating to mineral resources is banned.

As the Minister for the Department of the Environment and Heritage, I have directed my officers to not comply with this illogical request from the Australian Labor Party.

This would divert staff resources from the vital business of preparing to battle to protect whales at the upcoming meeting of the International Whaling Commission and other necessary work.

I will instead ask the Department to provide the Australian Labor Party with references to documents where they may find this information. I also call on the ALP to come clean on why it needs such information unless it is proposing a policy to mine Antarctica?

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