

## Articles

Sue Arnold reports from the IWC meeting in Ulsan, South Korea

## A tragedy for whales and for humanity

In the ten years I've been coming to IWC Convention meetings, this Ulsan meeting takes the cake as the most infamous.

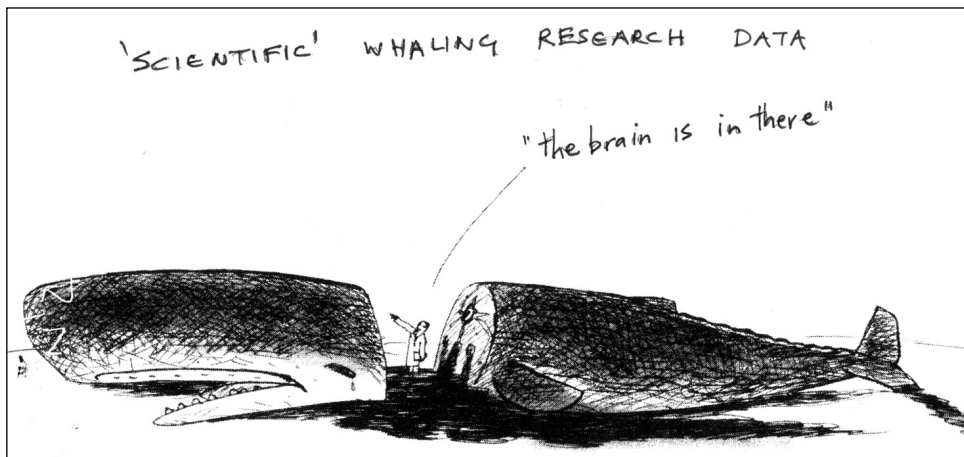
If this was a *Star Wars* movie, the audience might say the dark forces have won, at least for the time being. Nothing has changed save that Japan has granted itself a de facto commercial quota, Norway and Iceland will continue their own slaughters under another loophole. Australia and New Zealand have been big on rhetoric, driving the votes condemning Japan's actions, leading the anti whaling nations in the battle to stop Japan taking over the IWC. But there is no victory.

Scientific whaling will go ahead, many of the coastal states which are poor and undeveloped countries could follow the precedent set by Japan and grant themselves scientific permits. Or invite Japan to whale in their waters by taking the same loophole Norway and Iceland have used.

What is abundantly clear is that fact that the IWC Convention has become completely unworkable. While New Zealand is attempting to get ministerial talks at the highest level in place after the IWC meeting to discuss the impasse, any solution to this morass of legal and diplomatic problems is not obvious. In spite of all the condemnation and Australia's resolution, no action has been taken to stop Japanese scientific whaling.

An indication of the serious ramifications of this program came out during the week when Japan gave a power point presentation of aspects of JARPA 11, their next 18 year 'scientific whaling' program. One Japanese scientist detailed how the reproductive age of Antarctic minke whales had dropped from 16 years down to seven years of age. According to the Japanese scientist, this dramatic drop in a decade indicated how rapidly the minkes were breeding. (It was their Commissioner last year who described minkes as the 'cockroaches of the sea'). In fact this drastic drop is a major indication of a species in deep trouble.

Harp seals, in response to the massive cull of the last years, now come into oestrus at around the age of two, another dramatic reduction in the start of reproduction. Many of the



Cartoon by Howie Cooke

seals are so young when they give birth that they're unable to adequately feed their pups who die of starvation.

The meeting was told in great detail how much and what species of fish Antarctic whales eat, highlighting the 'greedy' whales with figures such as one slide which indicated that three baleen whales could consume over eight million tons of fish. Whether this was in a lifetime or over one year was never explained.

Japanese scientists patiently explained how they needed to 'bring the Antarctic ecosystem back to a normal state' with their 18 year experiment to manipulate the ecosystem. JARPA 11 is an insult to any pretence of science. The 18 year program has been reviewed by the Institute of Cetacean Studies in Japan, otherwise it has undergone no ethical review process. JARPA 11 has been widely condemned by the IWC Scientific Committee and a majority of IWC member nations.

All to no avail.

Another resolution introduced by Japan again attempted to bring in coastal whaling in their exclusive economic zone. The IWC Commissioner demanded a quota of 150 minke whales and 150 Brydes, claiming that villages like Taiji had strong cultural needs to kill whales going back 700 years.

Taiji is one of the sites of the infamous Japanese dolphin drives. More than 400,000 dolphins and porpoises have been slaughtered in the most cruel and brutal fashion in these drives over the last 20 years. Each year the Japanese government gives a quota of 20,000 dolphins and porpoises.

Yet not one word was spoken by any delegate on this infamous, horrendous slaughter.

After losing the resolution condemning its scientific whaling program, the Japanese IWC Commissioner told an informal press scrum that the IWC meeting and the condemnation had not damaged Japan's relationship with Australia, New Zealand or the USA. He indicated that Japan had a simple majority and the fact that three nations who would have supported Japan had not arrived at the meeting was an indication of their economic poverty.

'We are at a turning point,' he said. A completely correct summing up of the meeting.

The last major vote on Friday when the meeting wrapped up is on another resolution led by Sweden, Denmark and Finland with a number of other countries who are 'mushies' (fence sitters) to recommence negotiations on the Revised Management Scheme. As many delegates are desperate for a compromise, this resolution has caused bitter division and has been the topic of discussion in many late night private delegation meetings.

The resolution would ignore the scientific whaling permits and go back to a situation where there is no compliance for any commercial whaling program. It's a little like the movie *Groundhog Day* where the same old story was told again, day after day. Attending the IWC meetings costs governments and non government organisations a small fortune, it is a colossal waste of money which could be used more effectively to save whales and protect the ocean environment.

One leading American activist told me that a deal might be struck at a future Ministerial meeting which gave Japan its coastal whaling quota in return for an end to scientific whaling. In the opinion of seasoned IWC activists this option will never fly.

Depending on the ferocity of Japan's response to this IWC meeting, we may see attempts by Japanese puppet nations to take exceptions to the Convention and go whaling. Almost every third world country supported Japan, reiterating over and over again their right under the Law of the Sea to use the marine resources of their exclusive economic zones.

The IWC Commissioner from the Solomon Islands repeatedly supported Japan in spite of that government's assurances to the Australian Environment Minister Ian Campbell that it would not. A New Zealand delegate told me that pre Campbell's visit Japan was giving \$6.7 million in aid. After Senator Campbell's visit, Japanese aid went up to \$30 million.

Australia and New Zealand delegations were strong and outspoken in their defence of whales. But Japan's 'scientific' slaughter will soon begin and none of the rhetoric or resolutions will change this situation.

The federal government needs to be put under immense public pressure to take Japan to the International Court of Justice. My group, Australians for Animals, lobbied many member nations on this issue and we will shortly obtain legal advice from a well respected international lawyer skilled in these complex issues.

A boycott of Japan is also on the cards but this action needs to be well organised and focussed.

Unless international legal action is taken and public pressure is maintained, the remaining whale species

have never been at greater risk. Japan's whaling program in the Antarctic has the potential to cause the localised extinction of all three species which are the focus of JARPA 11.

The IWC meeting in Ulsan can only be described as a tragedy for whales and a tragedy for humanity.

There will be whale info night with Sue Arnold this coming Thursday at 7pm at the Lord Byron Resort, 170 Jonson Street, Byron Bay. She will give a first hand report of the events at the IWC meeting. Dean Jefferys and Howie Cooke from the Whale Action Group will also give a presentation. Entry by donation. For recent IWC reports, lobby information and photos see [www.worldpeacenow.org.au](http://www.worldpeacenow.org.au).

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4

## Inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrades

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 is calling for submissions to its inquiry into the impact of the proposed Pacific Highway upgrades. The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

That the General Purpose Standing Committee No 4 inquire into and report on the impact of the proposed upgrades of the Pacific Highway between:

- 1) Ewingsdale and Tintenbar, with particular regard to the following issues:
  - a) Reasons for expanding the highway upgrade study area on the St Helena to Tintenbar section;
  - b) The level of upgrade proposed for this section and the remainder of the Pacific Highway;
  - c) The impact of the highway upgrade on prime agricultural land;
  - d) The potential impact of the upgraded highway on prime agricultural land in the expanded study area;
  - e) The impacts of B-doubles on the Pacific Highway;
  - f) The impacts of interstate heavy transport on the Pacific Highway and of the mixing of interstate and local transport;
  - g) The impacts of interstate truck transport on the New England Highway;
  - h) The significance of the New England Highway as a designated national transport route;
  - i) Existing or proposed strategic transport plans that seek to deal with the forecast doubling by 2025 of the NSW freight task;
  - j) The significance of statements by the Minister for Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources that the Pacific Highway is dedicated as a regional road; and
- 2) Ballina and Woodburn, with particular regard to the following issues:
  - a) Impact on prime agricultural land;
  - b) Impact on flooding in the mid-Richmond area;
  - c) Impact on communities at Broadwater and Woodburn; and
- 3) Any other related matters

The Committee encourages public participation in the inquiry process and invites written submissions addressing the terms of reference from interested persons and organisations. Submissions become the property of the Committee and may only be released following a decision of the Committee to make them public. The Committee will consider requests that a submission remain confidential and not be made public. Please indicate clearly if you wish your submission to remain confidential.

In order to facilitate electronic publishing of submissions, the Committee would prefer submissions to be emailed to [gpscno4@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gpscno4@parliament.nsw.gov.au) or lodged via the Committee's website whenever possible. Alternatively, submissions may be sent to: The Director, General Purpose Standing Committee No 4, Legislative Council, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

Further information can be obtained from the Committee Secretariat on telephone (02) 9230 3543, facsimile (02) 9230 3416 or by visiting the Committee's page on the Parliament's website at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au). An information sheet elaborating on the Committee's terms of reference is available on the web site.

**THE CLOSING DATE FOR WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS IS FRIDAY, 19 AUGUST 2005**

The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC  
Committee Chair