

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA,
HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC**

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‘Mr Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to join in welcoming you to Hobart and Tasmania for this, the Twenty-ninth Meeting of the Commission. This is the third year that I have had the pleasure of opening your meeting. Given CCAMLR’s important role among the Antarctic community here in Hobart, its stewardship of the Southern Ocean and my passionate interest in Antarctic affairs, it is an opportunity that I look forward to with much enthusiasm.

Many of you have a long history of association with CCAMLR and will have visited Hobart on the occasion of the annual meeting several times in the past. You will be aware that Hobart prides itself on its connection to the Antarctic through its historic, logistic and academic links.

These links to the south were never more apparent than during this winter when a southern right whale gave birth to her calf in the River Derwent, a calf that was the product of the richness of the Southern Ocean and will be setting off on its first “trip South” over the next few months. It is believed that it is 190 years since the last birth of a southern right whale was reported for the Derwent, so you can imagine that the birth here this year created much local and international interest. It is also an indication of the dynamic nature of the Southern Ocean and the changing environment in which CCAMLR operates.

The demanding agenda that you have set yourselves for the next two weeks is a reflection of this dynamism and of the ongoing challenges that we collectively face in monitoring, and responsibly responding to, human activities and natural changes that are taking place in the Antarctic marine environment. The fullness of your agenda is also a reflection of the commitment CCAMLR Members have traditionally applied to addressing such challenges as they have presented themselves since the Commission was established 29 years ago. There are three specific issues of relevance today I would particularly like to touch on.

Although there is still much to be learned about Antarctic marine living resources, the last 12 months have been productive in terms of improving our knowledge and understanding of the Antarctic marine ecosystem.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the outcomes of the Antarctic Treaty Meeting of Experts on Climate Change which was held in Svolvær, Norway, in April this year. In particular, the presentation by SCAR (the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research) of its ‘Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment’ report warrants special mention as does the commitment of SCAR to provide regular updates to its report.

Of course, these matters get widespread attention in other fora, including at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting and the CEP (Committee for Environmental Protection) which met in Uruguay in May this year. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that CCAMLR has much to contribute to global discussions concerning the impact of climate change on the Antarctic marine environment. This may include contributions to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which is currently preparing its Fifth Assessment Report that is scheduled to be finalised by September 2014, for example.

There are two other matters concerning CCAMLR's work which have attracted my interest over the last few months.

The first concerns the krill fishery. I understand that, during 2010, one of the Scientific Committee's working groups completed some intensive analytical work associated with a re-assessment of the CCAMLR-2000 krill survey data to revise the estimate for the biomass of krill in Area 48. This re-assessment is timely, as it has been reported to me that the krill harvest for the current season is in the vicinity of 200 000 tonnes. This represents a marked increase over recent annual catches, and is the highest annual catch of krill reported since 1992.

The other matter that has concerned me for a long time is illegal fishing in the Southern Ocean. For many years CCAMLR has been at the forefront of efforts to minimise illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing which principally impacts stocks of toothfish under CCAMLR management. These efforts, through the 1990s and earlier this decade, led to an apparent downturn in IUU fishing in the Southern Ocean. However, I understand that, not only do IUU fishing fleets continue to operate in the Southern Ocean, but it appears that they are increasingly turning to less discriminate fishing methods such as gillnets. While this might be a cause for despair, I am encouraged to learn of the efforts by CCAMLR to deny these vessels the support necessary for them to maintain their operations. The recent workshop in Cape Town aimed at building capacity to combat IUU fishing in Africa is to be particularly complimented.

Before closing I would like to emphasise the interest that I, and many in the Hobart community, have in the work that you undertake in CCAMLR and I very much look forward to learning the outcomes of your deliberations. I look forward to being able to discuss progress with some of you on Thursday evening.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you success in your work ahead and hope that your meetings are productive, and of course I hope that you have a little time to enjoy the scenery and hospitality that Tasmania has to offer.

Thank you.'