



## Gold Coasters fight to save whales at Animal Action Night this Saturday (31/5) and National Whale Day on Sunday (1/6)

Gold Coasters take action to stop Japanese whaling

THE first Animal Action Night: Inspiring Action for Whales at Quality Hotel Mermaid Waters on May 31 aims to help save whales off Australian shores as the Japanese prepare to hunt whales again this year despite legal ruling banning it. Animal Action Events founder Aldwyn Altuney organised the fundraiser for Sea Shepherd after watching the movie Blackfish and in response to whaling by the Japanese. It follows seven annual Animal Action Day events, which have raised over \$10,000 for different animal charities.

The night event comes the day before National Whale Day on June 1, which will include performers, speakers and stalls at the Southport Broadwater Parklands from 9am to 6pm.

Sea Shepherd Gold Coast co-ordinator Stephanie Ashton-Walters said at least three Japanese whaling ships were heading back out to whale in Australian southern Antarctic waters from November 2014 to February 2015.

"Australia won an International Court of Justice lawsuit against Japan's whaling program in the southern ocean this year, but Tokyo is still continuing with its hunt," Ms Ashton-Walters said.

"Their three harpoon ships (which hunt the whales) and factory ship (where the whales are killed and processed on board) are in the North Pacific currently.

"Despite the ruling in court, the Japanese will continue whaling this season with what they call 'non-lethal research' on the basis of supporting an application the following season for a lethal research permit."

Sea Shepherd Australia will monitor Japan's operations in Antarctica and ensure that no whales are killed off our shores at the end of this year.

"We are highly suspicious of their intention to uphold the ruling and will be monitoring them closely," Ms Ashton-Walters said.

"The fuel alone for four of our ships to go out costs about \$5 million. We are purely non-profit and non-government funded so we rely entirely on donations to survive."

She said Sea Shepherd stood strong in its stance that whaling was illegal off Australian shores.

"We have saved about 5000 whales' lives in the last 10 years off Australian shores which has led to an increase in the number of whale sightings," she said.

"It is a sanctuary for whales and we need to ensure their survival and family structures are protected. Our goal is to make whaling financially unviable for the Japanese worldwide. There are hundreds of tonnes of whale meat sitting in factories in Japan and people aren't buying it. The new generation don't want to eat whale meat."

The Animal Action Night will feature entertainment by Rhythm IV Vision band from Byron Bay Junkyard soul blues performer Benny D Williams and soulful melodic singer songwriter Lauren Napier. Speakers include Stephanie Ashton-Walters, Connect 2 Animals animal communicator Eliza Priddle and Spirit of Gold Coast whale watching cruise director Denise Ryan.

MC will be Taflyn Fiola, with welcome and wrap by Aldwyn Altuney.

Tickets are \$55 for 1 or \$50 each for a table of 10 from Eventbrite or Quality Hotel on 5572 2500.

National Whale Day festivities on June 1 at the Southport Broadwater Parklands include performances by The Lyrical, Felicity Lawless and Steve Andrews and speakers from 15 different organisations with stalls, including Chay Neal from Animal Liberation and Shane Weat from Coast to Coast Animal Friends.

A paddle out will start at 11am for the plastic free event. People are asked to bring drink bottles to fill up at water stations on the day.

The event leads into Green Week by Gecko, which will have several events across the Gold Coast during the week.

"Together, we can all make a difference for animals," Ms Altuney said.

Connect on the Animal Action Events page on Facebook or visit [www.animalactionday.com](http://www.animalactionday.com).

### Contacts

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