

**SEVENTH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF
ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS (ACAP)
OPENING ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
MONDAY, 9 MAY 2022**

Good morning. I warmly welcome everyone to the Seventh Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). While it is unfortunate that I am unable to welcome you in person as originally planned, you are always welcome in beautiful Hobart.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

I also acknowledge the Representatives of the 13 ACAP Parties and their delegations participating in this meeting.

I am pleased to acknowledge the Observers also attending from:

- the non-Party Range States of the United States of America, Canada, and Namibia
- the APEC member economy of Chinese Taipei, and
- non-Government organisations and the Secretariats of other relevant conventions.

I would also like to acknowledge Tasmania's long-standing role in supporting the ACAP Secretariat in Hobart, it is a great pleasure to have you here.

I am delighted and honoured to meet you all virtually and participate in this meeting. Thank you for your ongoing support for ACAP and your leadership in

seeking to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for albatrosses and petrels globally.

It has now been over 20 years since a small group of nations met in Canberra, Australia, and signed the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. I congratulate you all for your shared commitment and successes in conserving albatrosses and petrels since then.

The signing of this Agreement represented a clear and cogent response to the shared concern among nations about the significant losses of albatrosses and petrels, as a result of incidental mortality in fishing operations, and threats facing these species at their breeding sites.

- We recognised then, and continue to be concerned now, about the plight of albatrosses and petrels globally.
- We were committed then, and remain committed now, to advancing international cooperative efforts to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for these species.
- We embarked together then, and are continuing the journey now, to improve the breeding habitats of albatrosses and petrels, and to reduce the impacts of fishing and other threats at sea affecting these species.

As an island continent, Australia is proud to be an ocean nation. We recognise the importance to the biodiversity of Australia, and Tasmania in particular, of albatrosses and petrels.

- Australia is home to twenty-four (24) ACAP-listed albatross and petrel species, with eight (8) of these species breeding within Australia's jurisdiction.

Australia's coastal and sub-Antarctic islands provide critical habitats for our breeding populations of albatrosses and petrels, with Tasmania's Albatross Island, The Mewstone and Pedra Branca being home to Australia's only endemic albatross species, the Shy Albatross.

Australia is committed to the conservation, protection and recovery of its threatened albatross and petrel populations. This is illustrated by:

- the successful Macquarie Island pest eradication program, delivered jointly by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments, that has eliminated rabbits, rats and mice from this sub-Antarctic location, with the Island's flora and fauna now enjoying markedly improved conditions
- successive Threat Abatement Plans addressing the threat posed by longline fishing and marine debris to seabirds, and albatrosses and petrels in particular
- successive National Recovery Plans that aim to improve the conservation status of albatrosses and petrels, so that these species are no longer threatened in Australia's jurisdiction.

ACAP is particularly active in regional fisheries and conservation organisations and arrangements.

- ACAP advocates for best and improving technologies and techniques to reduce and eliminate the incidental mortality of seabirds during fishing operations.
- ACAP advocates for effective monitoring and reporting of seabird bycatch.
- ACAP advocates for complementary approaches across these organisations and arrangements that are responsive to the wide-ranging nature of the affected albatrosses and petrels.

The world is watching how you work together to conserve imperilled albatrosses and petrels. The future of these species depends on your collective efforts.

I wish all participants at the Seventh Session of the Meeting of the Parties every success in ensuring there is a secure foundation upon which to advance the work of ACAP in the coming triennium.

Thank you.