

## Media release

For immediate release

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# New marine citizen science initiative launches on *World Oceans Day* by making a splash with whales

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Whales, dolphins, shore birds, plants, seaweed and many other species are at risk due to climate change.

On World Oceans Day, Earthwatch Australia together with Woodside have launched [ClimateWatch Marine](#); a citizen science initiative calling on individuals to observe their marine environment and help scientists understand the impacts of climate change.

Richard Gilmore, Executive Director of Earthwatch Australia said, "We are kicking off ClimateWatch Marine with four iconic whale species; humpback whales, southern right whales, pigmy blue whales and killer whales (orcas)."

"Whales are majestic creatures that we all love to watch particularly during the migration season. It's these migration periods along with feeding patterns which are impacted by climate change and variations in currents and food availability," said Mr Gilmore.

Curt Jenner the Managing Director for the Centre for Whale Research (WA) Inc said, "Whales (cetaceans) are the "canaries in the coal mine" that will alert us to fundamental changes in the oceans food web. They are large, easily monitored animals that provide us with an early warning system on the potential decline in ocean productivity, caused by changes in our climate."

"By reaching a global consensus and understanding the signs of impending changes we can assist scientists in planning for the preservation of marine species and their habitats," he said.

ClimateWatch is an Australia-wide initiative developed by Earthwatch Australia with the Bureau of Meteorology and University of Melbourne which includes a range of land species from plants, to birds, frogs, mammals and reptiles. Now the Marine environment is being included with the release of four species of whales. Over the coming months a variety of other species will be added including dolphins, coastal birds, seaweed and barnacles.

"Woodside employees have a great track record in volunteerism and getting involved in community programs. We have had a relationship with Earthwatch dating back many years," said Jo Ferrie, Manager of Community Affairs for Woodside.

"ClimateWatch Marine is a natural evolution of our involvement with Earthwatch. We are very excited about this program which gives everyday Australians and our employees the opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base surrounding our marine environment," she said.

To become a Climatewatcher register at [www.climatewatch.org.au](http://www.climatewatch.org.au)



For people who would like to learn more about conservation and work directly with a scientist and a team of volunteers on the ground, contact Earthwatch **03 9682 6828** or visit [www.earthwatch.org.au](http://www.earthwatch.org.au)