

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 39**

**Senator Birmingham asked the following question at the hearing on 18 February 2008:**

- a) When did the Oceanic Viking arrive in the Southern Ocean?
- b) When did the Oceanic Viking leave Fremantle?
- c) How many days after the 19 December 2007 promise by Ministers Garrett and Smith did the Oceanic Viking finally leave port?
- d) Has the Oceanic Viking ended its voyage? If so, why has this not been made public, why has it ended its voyage and has it ended its voyage because it is running out of fuel?
- e) Will there be further releases of footage from the Oceanic Viking?
- f) Are the Japanese whalers still hunting in the region? If so, why, if it is the case, has the Oceanic Viking ended its journey?
- g) What was the total cost of the Oceanic Viking's voyage?
- h) How will video or photographic footage taken from the A319 Airbus aerial survey or Oceanic Viking be used to influence further whaling activities?
- i) Are plans being made for aerial or sea-based surveillance next whaling season and, if so, what are they and how much has been budgeted to support such surveillance?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

- a) Details on when Oceanic Viking entered the Southern Ocean are restricted for operational reasons
- b) Oceanic Viking departed Fremantle 8 January 2008
- c) 20 days
- d) The Oceanic Viking returned to port on 28 February 2008. The return was covered by media. The Oceanic Viking had completed all its tasks and returned as planned. There were no fuel issues involved in its return.
- e) Release of footage is considered on a case by case basis by the Government.
- f) As at 5 March, the Japanese Whaling Fleet was still operating in the Southern Ocean. Oceanic Viking had completed all taskings requested by Government
- g) \$1.271m was allocated by Government to extend the patrol beyond normal patrol duration.
- h) Video and photograph footage gathered during the surveillance missions is being analysed.

i) Any future surveillance will be considered by the Government at the appropriate time.