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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **SEA SHEPHERD INTRUDERS TRANSFERRED TO OCEANIC VIKING**

The two Sea Shepherd intruders who illegally boarded the Japanese flagged research vessel Yushin Maru No.2 have been safely transferred to the Australian Customs vessel, the Oceanic Viking.

The Director General of the ICR, Mr Minoru Morimoto, thanked the Australian Government for acting as the intermediary and ensuring the protection and safety of the crew and scientists aboard the Japanese vessel.

"It became very clear yesterday that Sea Shepherd had no intention of retrieving their two intruders, who boarded the Yushin Maru with backpacks carrying a change of clothes, toiletries and other sundry items. They were certainly intending for a long sojourn aboard our vessel and Sea Shepherd had no intention of helping to remove them.

"The Australian Government accepted Japan's request to assist and remove the men from our research vessel to allow us to continue our work," Mr Morimoto said."

The men were treated well, were provided a cabin and privacy. There were invited to eat their meals in the vessel's dining room, but instead chose to take their meals in private. They have been looked after and in no way have they been harmed," Mr Morimoto said.

The Yushin Maru No.2 is to rejoin the other research vessels.

Mr Morimoto urged the Sea Shepherd organisation and Greenpeace not to interfere further in Japan's research program, which is working to improve knowledge of Antarctic whale species and improve development of a commercial whaling regime.

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