



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday 27 June 2017**

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### **Rescue Teams Join Forces For Specialised Whale Stranding Training**

The Sea World team has today joined forces with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) and the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) to conduct specialist whale stranding exercises on Wave Break Island.

This training forms part of the annual whale rescue efforts and involved the rescue vessels towing a purpose built training whale to Wave Break Island to simulate a beach stranding scenario.

The rescue teams covered various aspects of training techniques including conducting health and wellbeing checks, correct use of equipment and how to attach the specially designed towing harness.

Sea World's Director of Marine Sciences, Trevor Long said these training exercises are vital to ensure rescue teams are equipped and prepared for whale strandings and entanglements.

"To practice this specific type of beach stranding training is important coming into the whale migration season and it is vital to be able to practice these exercises with the key agencies that play such an integral role in these rescues," he said.

"During training, the rescue teams reviewed the equipment and identified safe methods of application, conducted practical situations and scenarios while investigating other methods and ideas which could be implemented for future strandings.

"With almost 30,000 humpback whales passing through the Gold Coast on their annual migration journey, it is an unfortunate fact that we are likely to see some animals become entrapped or stranded, which is why this training is so important.

"During a whale stranding, the safety of all personnel involved and the welfare of the animal is the highest priority and must lead all the decisions within the stranding process.

"This specific rescue strategy has been used in the successful return of five humpback whales across the Queensland coast and our teams will be on standby should the occasion occur."

To find out more about Sea World's rescue efforts please visit <http://seaworld.com.au/research-and-rescue/rescues.aspx>

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