



AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS VESSEL ASHMORE GUARDIAN

PROTECTING AUSTRALIA'S OFFSHORE AREAS

Protecting Australia's remote maritime areas off north-western Australia is a major priority for Customs.

In particular, guarding against the threats of environmental degradation, illegal fishing and people smuggling is an ongoing task.

The Australian Customs Vessel Ashmore Guardian is stationed on a near-permanent basis at the Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve and Cartier Island Marine Reserves.

The two marine reserves, covering an area of 750 km², are about 320km off the Australian coast but only 150km south of the Indonesian Island of Roti.

The internationally significant coral ecosystems and the turtles, dugongs, sharks and seabirds use the reserves for feeding and breeding and are threatened by illegal fishing and poaching.

The Ashmore Guardian allows Customs to conduct enforcement operations and assist with environmental management on a near continuous basis at Ashmore Reef.

The 34.9 metre specially modified commercial fleet support ship can carry up to ten Customs officers and government officials.

It also enhances surveillance and enforcement activities undertaken by Customs and Australian Defence Force aircraft and patrol boats which are coordinated by the Border Protection Command to protect Australia's offshore maritime areas.

VESSEL DETAILS

Performance

- The Ashmore Guardian will operate at Ashmore Reef for 330 days continuously per year until end of the 2010-11 financial year.

Specifications

- Length: 34.9 m
- Beam: 8 m
- Gross Tonnage: 339 GT
- Max Speed: 10 knots

Accommodation

- 26 berths for six civilian marine crew and up to ten Australian government officials, including armed Customs boarding officers.

Medical Facilities

- First aid / isolation facility.

Illegal Foreign Fisher (IFF) Accommodation

- Secure holding facility for up to ten apprehended illegal foreign fishers for a short period of time.

Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBS)

- 2 x 7.3m Zodiac tenders.

Other

- Operations room equipped with secure communications.



CUSTOMS MARINE UNIT (CMU)

The Customs Marine Unit (CMU) within Maritime Operations Support Branch provides personnel for Customs Bay-class vessels and for support to civil vessels chartered by Customs to combat illegal foreign fishing in Australia's northern and southern waters.

All CMU officers are required to satisfy and maintain mandatory security, medical, dental, fitness and psychometric standards.

They are trained in use of force, ship search and can undertake armed boardings at sea.

Officers performing the role of tender coxswains have appropriate marine qualifications.

In addition, the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts also provides training for Customs officers operating at Ashmore Reef.

MORE INFORMATION

For information on any Customs matters, contact the Customs Information and Support Centre on 1300 363 263 or email information@customs.gov.au or browse the website www.customs.gov.au