



SOUTHERN OCEAN PATROL VESSEL – ACV OCEAN PROTECTOR

The Australian Government takes the protection of its sovereign territories and assets very seriously. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Southern Ocean presents a threat to Australia's Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) and Macquarie Island Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), its valuable Patagonian toothfish fishery and the fragile Southern Ocean environment.

The remoteness of the HIMI and hostile Southern Ocean sub-Antarctic waters makes the detection and apprehension of vessels carrying out IUU fishing even more challenging.

In response to this, the Australian Government, through the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs and Border Protection), the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and the Australian Defence Force, has provided surveillance and apprehended vessels operating illegally in this remote region. This has included on-the-water cooperation with other countries with similar Southern Ocean interests, in particular France who share EEZ boundaries with Australia.

The Southern Ocean Maritime Patrol and Response (SOMPR) program provides a dedicated vessel, the ACV *Ocean Protector*, which is able to conduct year-round patrols in sub-Antarctic weather conditions.

In the 2009-10 Budget, the Australian Government committed to an additional 80 patrol days per year until 30 June 2011 as part of the package of measures to respond to the rise in people smuggling.

ABOUT THE ACV OCEAN PROTECTOR

The ACV *Ocean Protector* is the Customs and Border Protection multi-role ship that can respond to a wide range of maritime security threats. It is available for operations 300 days per annum.

The vessel is contracted from dmas SEAFORCE to conduct year-round patrols as part of the SOMPR program.

The ACV *Ocean Protector* undertakes patrols in the Southern Ocean. These patrols are part of Australia's commitment to intercepting vessels and apprehending people suspected of illegally fishing in the ecologically fragile sub-Antarctic waters.

When not operating in the Southern Ocean, the ACV *Ocean Protector* is used to patrol Australia's coastline.

SPECIFICATIONS

- **Length:** 105.9 metres
- **Beam:** 21 metres
- **Displacement tonnage:** 8500
- **Range:** 9200 nautical miles at 16 knots with 10 per cent reserve; 23000 nautical miles at 14 knots with 10 per cent reserve

Customs and Border Protection Response Tenders (CRT)

Two 8.5 metre Norsafe SOLAS approved boats powered by twin 233hp diesel jet propulsion, with a range of approximately 60 nautical miles at 20 knots.

Accommodation

- Cabin accommodation for 22 Teekay crew and up to 50 people from Customs and Border Protection and other agencies
- Austere accommodation for up to 120 potential transportees.

Equipment and facilities

- An emergency surgical, care and resuscitation room, staffed by an Australian Antarctic Division doctor
- Operations room equipped with secure communications
- A Forward Looking Infra-Red detection system
- A TerraScan system used to predict weather conditions.

Weapons and Personal Defence Equipment (PDE)

- Two .50 calibre machine guns deck mounted
- Glock pistols for Customs and Border Protection Boarding Party officers
- Other PDE equipment is also on board.

Customs and Border Protection Marine Unit personnel

Maritime Operations Support Branch has overall command of the Customs and Border Protection Marine Unit and provides personnel and logistic support to combat illegal activity in Australia's waters.

All armed Customs and Border Protection Marine Unit boarding party personnel are required to satisfy and maintain mandatory security, medical, dental, fitness and psychometric standards as part of their conditions of employment.

Customs and Border Protection Marine Unit personnel are trained in Use of Force, ship search and to undertake armed boardings at sea. Some staff also have specialised hospital theatre assistant training. Officers performing the role of tender coxswains must have the appropriate marine qualifications.

Officers operating in the region undergo extensive training in:

- Cold climate survival and safety at sea
- Use of Force, including side-arms and deck-mounted weapons
- Vessel familiarisation
- Medical training
- Operational Command
- Customs and Border Protection and Fisheries legislative provisions
- Tactical boarding operations
- Ship search techniques.

Southern Ocean Maritime Patrol and Response program outputs

To detect, deter and apprehend illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing vessels in Australia's EEZ. This includes:

- Operating a marine vessel with deck-mounted weapons in the Southern Ocean
- Undertaking marine patrols for a minimum of 120 days per year in the Southern Ocean.

Delivery of other services in the Southern Ocean and northern waters as directed by Government. These services include:

- Joint operations with France
- Medical evacuations
- Environmental checks of the HIMI for the Australian Antarctic Division
- Buoy deployment for the Bureau of Meteorology
- Ad hoc engagements for the Australian Government.

Southern Ocean Maritime Patrol and Response program outcomes

The desired outcomes of the SOMPR program are the protection of:

- Patagonian toothfish fisheries around the HIMI EEZ from IUU fishing
- Australia's Southern Ocean waters
- The fragile Southern Ocean environment
- Australia's mainland EEZ.

Missions to the region are challenging. Severe weather conditions can include Force 12 gales and seas of more than 10 metres. Average temperatures are minus two.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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