

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
 AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

**Question No. 106**

**Senator Humphries asked the following question after the hearing of 24 May 2012:**

- a) What is Customs and Border Protection's fuel budget for Border Protection Command's patrol vessels in 11/12 and 12/13?
- b) Was Customs' fuel budget for Border Protection Command's patrol vessels in 11/12 exhausted at any point this financial year? If so when?
- c) Did Customs meet with the Minister for Home Affairs in November, December last year or January expressing concerns over the fuel budget or that funds allocated for fuel were depleted?
- d) If not, were any such concerns ever communicated to the Minister in any other way by anyone in Customs?
- e) What was the response from the Minister?
- f) Is it true that Customs was informed by the Minister to use existing funds within the Customs budget to cover the shortfall in the fuel budget for Border Protection command's patrol vessels? If so, where were those funds diverted from?
- g) What is the fuel budget for 12/13? Are you confident that despite the huge increase in boat arrivals since the government announced its community release policy for boat arrivals that this budget will not be exceeded? What contingency plans are in place if it is?
- h) What has been the fuel budget for BPC's patrol vessels for every financial year from 2007/08?

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

- a) The following table details the cost of fuel for Customs and Border Protection vessels under the operational command of Border Protection Command in the 2011/2012 financial year, up until and including 30 April 2012, against patrol days during this period. It also details forecast expenditure on fuel for 2011/12 and 2012/13 against forecast patrol days in 2012/13 and 2012/13.

| Financial year         | Patrol days                |                   |                             |                        |                | Fuel cost, forecast fuel cost, or fuel budget |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---|
|                        | <i>ACV Ocean Protector</i> | <i>ACV Triton</i> | <i>ACV Ashmore Guardian</i> | <i>Bay Class fleet</i> | Combined total |   |
| 2011/12 incl. 30 April | 98                         | 262               | 270                         | 1958                   | 2588           | \$7,989,169                                   |
| 2011/12                | 120*                       | 314*              | 331*                        | 2341*                  | 3106*          | \$8,800,000                                   |
| 2012/13                | 120                        | 240               | 330                         | 2400                   | 3090           | \$9,603,000                                   |

\* Forecast patrol days for 2011-12 at 18 June 2012.

b) No. Customs and Border Protection has not exhausted its fuel budget for this financial year; nor does it foresee exhausting its fuel budget.

c) Customs and Border Protection did not meet with the Minister for Home Affairs in November or December 2011 or January 2012 to express concerns over the fuel budget, or that funds allocated for fuel were depleted.

d) No.

e) Not applicable.

f) No.

g) Customs and Border Protection's fuel budget for patrol and response vessels for 2012/13 is \$9.603m, which takes into account prevailing circumstances. Customs and Border Protection is confident that it will have the necessary mechanisms to address any unforeseen circumstances should this be required.

h) The following table details the fuel budget for the Customs and Border Protection vessels under the operational control of Border Protection Command per financial year since 2007/08.

| <b>Financial year</b> | <b>Fuel budget</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2007/08               | \$8.790m*          |
| 2008/09               | \$12.118m          |
| 2009/10               | \$9.355m           |
| 2010/11               | \$8.360m           |
| 2011/12               | \$9.070m           |

\* This is the actual fuel spend rather than the budgeted amount for the 2007/08 financial year; Customs and Border Protection is unable to provide data on fuel budgets prior to 2008/09 due to the level of detail regarding budgets that was recorded at that time.

Border Protection Command also draws on Defence vessels; Customs and Border Protection is unable to provide information relating to the fuel budget for Defence vessels when they are under the operational command of Border Protection Command.