

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

**Question No. 55**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 13 February 2007:**

With regard to the recurring fuel problem that has been experienced by the Navy's Armidale Class ships:

- a) Could Customs provide details of the contingency arrangements that have been put in place in all occasions that the Armidale Class vessels have been withdrawn from service for this problem?
- b) Are there any deficiencies under the contingency arrangements as compared with the expected performance of the Armidale Class?  
If so, provide further details of what those deficiencies are.

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

- a) Additional naval support being made available to the Border Protection Command includes a Fremantle-class patrol boat, a mine hunter and a heavy landing craft. These will join a major fleet unit, two other Fremantle class patrol boats and a mine hunter that are already on patrol.

The Border Protection Command has the flexibility to deploy these and other Defence assets assigned to border protection responsibilities with those of the Australian Customs Service, including the eight Bay Class vessels and the northern response vessel, *Triton*.

- b) The withdrawal of the Armidale Class has not caused deficiencies in our maritime security as there are sufficient assets available to be deployed in support of effective border protection for Australia.