

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

Question No. 39

Senator Brandis asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2011:

Senator BRANDIS: You said that there had been aerial surveillance on—was it the 5th, did you say, Mr Carmody?

Mr Carmody: It was 3 October and 5 October.

Senator BRANDIS: And that aerial surveillance would have been focused on the coordinates of the vessel, of course?

Mr Carmody: The broad area that those coordinates indicated. They were not precise coordinates, as Mr Pezzullo has already mentioned.

Senator BRANDIS: I understand that. My point is that you were not searching the whole of the Arafura or the Timor Sea. You knew where to look for this vessel.

Mr Carmody: We might have been on the day but this particular flight was directed because of that incident.

[Brandis: Because of that incident, you knew where to look, you sent the surveillance flights over and the surveillance flights could not find anything?]

Mr Carmody: That is correct.

Senator BRANDIS: Approximately how far from the nearest coastline were the coordinates?

Mr Carmody: I am not sure I can answer that precisely. My understanding of the coordinates, as Mr Pezzullo has indicated—and I do not understand these terms—was that the last figure on the coordinates, which is the seconds, was not included. That means it was quite a sizeable box, a large area.

Senator BRANDIS: How many square kilometres?

Mr Carmody: We would have to take that on notice. I do not have that detail here.

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

Surveillance flight - 3 October 2009:

Search area size: 12,794 square nautical miles* (approximately 43,938 km²).

Surveillance flight - 5 October 2009:

Search area size: 29,623 square nautical miles* (approximately 101,733 km²).

*Area given is the area of the specified search area – area covered during transit is not included.