



KEY BRIEF

Spillover Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2024

Topic: Maritime
Group: Strategy and Capability
Division: Civil Maritime Capability Strategy

Key Points:

Budget

- Border Protection funding is \$6.84 billion over four years from 2022-23 and \$6.76 billion over four years from 2023-24 in the 2024-25 Budget, representing the highest Border Protection funding over the last 10 years (since 2015-16).
- Comparing the Border Protection funding in the 2024-25 Budget to the 2022-23 March Budget, and utilising the same four year period (2022-23 – 2025-26), the funding has increased by \$1.31 billion from \$5.53 billion to \$6.84 billion.
- The key 2024-25 Budget measures and estimates variations relating to the Border Protection funding are:
 - *Operation Sovereign Borders Annual Sustainment* - **\$266.7 million** in 2024-25 (estimates variation);
 - *Enabling Western Sydney International Airport* - **\$120.0 million** over four years from 2024-25;
 - *Civil Maritime Critical Security Capabilities* - **\$116.3 million** in 2024-25; and
 - *Engineered Stone Import Prohibition* - **\$32.1 million** over two years from 2024-25.

Operational Impacts

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- MBC is operating at a heightened tempo in response to increased threats from Illegal Foreign Fishing and increased Unauthorised Maritime Arrival threat levels from Indonesia, with recent SIEV arrivals on Australian mainland.

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- MBC's approach to operations is intelligence based, and risk informed, but limited by available resources.
- MBC can request supplementation of assets through the ADF and by interdepartmental agreements across Government agencies when necessary to mitigate risk. The re-tasking of other agencies' assets to MBC has roll on effects to Government in both cost and effect.



- Risks exacerbated through capability gaps are regularly monitored and short-term mitigation options are managed daily.
- Future options are being developed for consideration by Government, subject to appropriate funding and value for money procurement processes.

Futures Planning and Strategy

- Short-term and just-in-time funding of capability has driven planning, procurement and contract management practices that carry significant risks.
- Lines of effort to improve management of ABF Civil Maritime capability include, but are not limited to:
 - Performance management of existing capability service providers;
 - Procurement and contract management;
 - Planning for transitions in, transitions out, and divestment where that is an appropriate option;
 - Ensuring there is good governance in place, including senior visibility of capability issues;
 - Working closely with Defence and other agencies on longer-term planning.

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- While the ABF and Department are managing contract performance issues, and pursuing a procurement strategy that positions us with fit for purpose contracts, the ABF continues to plan for and draw on existing capabilities to ensure border vulnerabilities are managed with targeted operations and deployments. Our recent response to an increase in Illegal Foreign Fishing activity demonstrates our ability to effectively do this, jointly with Defence.
 - ABF and ADF resources and assets were surged to effectively respond to the threat. Offshore, on land, littoral and on-water engagements, resources and capabilities were postured to treat the risk end-to-end.
 - This deterrence and disruption effect requires the border continuum vulnerabilities to be assessed and treated as most appropriate. We are currently working with ADF on how we optimally sustain combined capabilities to manage current and emerging threats.



Key Statistics:

ABF Patrol Days (as at 31 March 2024)

*Achieved Annual Patrol Days for 'Blue Water'** Vessels*

Financial Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 as at 31 Mar	2023-24 Forecast
Total patrol days	2,576	2,628	2,668	2,195	2,298	2,485	2,337	2,182	1563	*2200

**Subject to any further emergent work.*

***'Blue water' fleet are ABF maritime assets which are greater than 24 metres in length.*

- There are 14 ABF 'blue water' vessels to support Maritime Border Command, in addition to Australian Defence Force (Defence) vessels.
 - Includes 8 x Cape Class; 2 x Bay Class; 1 x Ocean Shield; 1 x Thaiyak; and 2 x Fast Response Boats (FRBs).
 - Excludes Ocean Protector.
- In 2022-23, 'blue water' fleet achieved a total of **2,182 on-water patrol days**.
- The **decline in patrol days** between 2021-22 and 2022-23 (6.6%) is due to ABFC Cape St George being in her 2nd 5-yearly renewal survey and DLM, significant emergent defects amongst the ABF Fleet units, and crewing deficiencies.

ABF Aerial Surveillance (as at 31 March 2024)

Achieved Aviation Hours for 10 x Dash-8 (Fixed Wing) aircraft and 2 x Helicopters

Financial Year	Dash-8	Helicopter	Total
2019-20	13,904	1,308	15,212
2020-21	14,262	1,743	16,005
2021-22	13,155	1,629	14,784
2022-23	11,332	1,356	12,688
2023-24 as at 31 Mar 2024	8,283	728	9,011

- There has been a **downward trend in annual aviation flying hours** across the past three years attributable to aircrew shortfalls due to the ongoing global



shortage of pilots, and reduced aircraft availability due to increased unscheduled maintenance, as well as COVID-19 border restrictions during the pandemic.

- Aviation flying hours for 2023-24 are **expected to be lower** than previous year.

ABF Marine Workforce (as at 31 March 2024)

Crew Staffing Level (FTE) (excluding HQ officers)

	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023	Current as at 31 Mar 2024
Number of crew (Maritime Crew Sustainment)	517.5	515.0	518.4	505.8	555.5	513.4	521.1	554.1



Marine Border Command (MBC)

Operational Outcomes – ABF and ADF vessel days on task

ABF and ADF Vessel Days on Task*	ABF	ADF	LHV	Total
1 July 2023 – 31 March 2024	687	552	219	1,458

** Days on task are the number of days a vessel (from ABF or Defence) at sea is deemed operational and assigned to MBC. 'At sea' is defined to be where a vessel is on water and not at a port.*

Land Force Assigned (Patrol) Days	ADF
1 July 2023 – 31 March 2024	178

Illegal Foreign Fishing

Australian Border Force (ABF) Enforcement Action on Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing as reported by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 as at 31 Mar 2024
Apprehensions			6	11 Vessels (85 Fishers)
Legislative Forfeitures	170	321	119	194
Vessel Destruction	12	44	20	44

- Over the last two years, illegal fishing activity in Australian waters has increased to a rate not seen for over 18 years.

Overview of MBC

- MBC is a multi-agency within the Australian Border Force, and is the coordinating authority for Australia's maritime security.
- MBC uses a surveillance and reconnaissance, intelligence informed risk-based approach to monitor, identify, deter and respond to illegal activities in our AO.
- MBC is the convening authority for Australia's Partner Agencies' efforts to deter, detect and respond to illegal activity across the eight civil maritime security threats.



- MBC contributed to over 400 unique partner tasks for CTH and state/territory agencies.

Response to Illegal Foreign Fishing activity in the Kimberley Marine Park (KMP)

- The MBC existing multi-agency model with ABF and ADF assets and resources, has had success in detecting the presence of illegal foreign fishing vessels through these waters through air and sea surveillance and response capability.
- However, in October 2023, we observed unprecedented numbers of illegal foreign fishing vessels in our North-Western waters (62 vessels).
- This unprecedented volume and changed nature of the fishing activity triggered a surge from all involved agencies to pivot operational activities to deterrence and disruption outcomes.
- ABF and ADF have surged assets and resources in support of MBC and AFMA to uplift our combined ability to detect and disrupt illegal foreign fishing.
- MBC assigned one vessel to KMP regularly from 26 November 2023 (previous to this, MBC had vessels intermittently assigned in the KMP from January 2023). COMMBBC directed multiple vessels (two or three) from 1 December 2023, which has largely been met.
- As part of the whole of government response, ABF has established a dedicated operation (Operation LEEDSTRUM) that will look to establish a new KMP remote area patrol function, to enhance the ABF's land-based capabilities to detect, deter, respond to and prevent civil maritime security threats in the vicinity of the KMP.

KMP AO Success to date

- Combined whole of Government efforts under Operation Palisade (on water MBC operation) and Op Leedstrum have resulted for the period 1 December 2023 to 31 March 2024:
 - Detention of 43 illegal foreign fishers – 30 in YHIDC; 13 in NAPOD
 - Returns: 36
 - Legislative forfeitures: 12
 - Vessels apprehended: 6
 - Vessels destroyed: 10
 - Trepang seized: 1,665 kg
 - Other catch seized: 340 kg
 - Salt seized: 5,420 kg



Consultation:

- All statistics must be cleared by the Chief Statistician at:
s. 47E(d) . Please update the table below.
- All briefs containing financials must be cleared through your Group Finance Partner (GFP) and the Chief Finance Officer. Please update the table below.
- All further consultation across portfolio to be included in the table below:

Area	Title and position
ABF	Maritime Border Command
Home Affairs	CFO, Chief Statistician

Additional References

- SB24-000368 Aerial Surveillance (fixed and rotary wing) [Back Pocket Brief]
- SB24-000369 Vessels [Back Pocket Brief]

Cleared through:	Nicole Spencer First Assistant Secretary, Civil Maritime Capability Strategy 1 July 2024
Final clearance: Position: Date:	Kylie Rendina A/g Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Capability 1 July 2024