



BACK POCKET BRIEF

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2024

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

Key Statistics:

Vessel Patrol Days

s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b)

2022-23 Patrol Days by Month and Class

Month 2022-2023	Ocean Shield	Cape	Thaiyak	Bay	Total
s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b)					
Total 2022-23	289	1,373	278	242	2,182



2021-22 Patrol Days by Month and Class

Month 2021-22	Ocean Shield	Cape	Thaiyak	Bay	Total
s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b)					
Total 2021-22	267	1,702	159	209	2,337

2020-21 Patrol Days by Month and Class

Month 2020-21	Ocean Shield	Cape	Thaiyak	Bay	Total
s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b)					
Total 2020-21	292	1,580	285	328	2,485



2019-20 Patrol Days by Month and Class

Month 2019-20	Ocean Shield	Cape	Thaiyak	Bay	Total
s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b)					
Total 2019-20	295	1,444	232	327	2,298

2018-19 Patrol Days by Month and Class

Month 2018-19	Ocean Shield	Cape	Thaiyak	Bay	Total
s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b)					
Total 2018-19	295	1,376	254	270	2,195

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Key Issues:

ABF Fleet (Vessels)

- The Australian Border Force (ABF) fleet comprises various vessel types to support operations.
- The ABF 'blue water' fleet achieved a total of 2,182 on-water patrol days in 2022-23.
 - 'Blue water' fleet vessels are maritime assets that are greater than 24 metres in length.
 - Blue water fleet comprises 12 vessels:
 - 1 x Ocean Shield;
 - 1 x *Thaiyak*;
 - 2 x Bay Class; and
 - 8 x Cape Class.
- The ABF patrol days forecast for 2023-24 is 2,200 days.
- Although there is a forecast increase in patrol days at this time, emergent work, maintenance delays, crewing shortages and significant weather events could significantly impact patrol days delivered.
 - As at 31 March 2024:
 - 455 patrol days were lost due to unscheduled maintenance, and
 - (SB24-000365 Workforce Capability) 227 patrol days were lost due to shortages of crew in critical positions.

ABF Assets

- *ABFC Ocean Shield (110.9m) - 37 Crew (22 ABF Enforcement Team; Commercial crew that operate the vessel)*
 - This large-hulled vessel is owned and operated by the ABF.
 - Can be ice rated (to moderate ice), and therefore able to patrol in the Southern Ocean if required (although not currently certified).
 - In use since 2014, and can accommodate up to **s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b)**.
 - The next major maintenance period (five yearly renewal survey) is due in 2025.



- *ADV Ocean Protector (110.9m) - 22 ABF Enforcement Team (in addition to Navy contingent)*
 - This large-hulled vessel is owned and operated by the Department of Defence (Defence), with the enforcement and boarding capability provided by ABF Officers.
 - Ocean Protector is a Defence asset, but is force assigned to Maritime Border Command so questions regarding its major maintenance schedule should be directed to Defence.
 - Can accommodate up to s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b).
 - ABF provides medical support and, when required, minor port services for this vessel.
- *Eight Cape Class Patrol Boats (57.8m) - 18 Crew per vessel*
 - Provide on-water surveillance, patrol, response and deterrent capability against the maritime threats in Australia's northern waters.
 - Became available for use in a staged way between 2013 and 2015.
 - Can accommodate up to s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b).
 - Equipped with two 7.3m Ships' Boats on each vessel for operational response and interdiction.
 - Five-yearly renewal surveys for the fleet spans occurs between 2023 and 2026.
- *ABFC Thaiyak (40m) - 14 Crew*
 - Procured to maintain a near permanent presence at Ashmore Reef.
 - In use since 2014, and can accommodate up to s. 33(a)(i), s. 37(2)(b).
 - The next major maintenance period (five-yearly renewal survey) is scheduled to commence in May 2024.
- *Two Bay Class vessels (38.2m) - 12 Crew*
 - Upgraded in December 2015, through the Torres Strait Marine Capability project that funded Fast Response Boats (FRBs) and Medium Patrol Vessels (MPVs).
 - Bay Class was reintroduced into service as an interim MPV.



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S. 47E(d)

- Commenced Life of Type Extension in 2023—Roebuck Bay is now complete; Story Bay is expected to be completed in 2024.
- ‘Littoral Fleet’
 - 32 small vessels provide response capability in littoral environments. The vessels operate up to 30 nautical miles out to sea and are up to 12 metres in length.

Consultation

- The data in this brief have been cleared.

Additional References

- SB24-000359 – Maritime (Key Brief)

Cleared through:	Nicole Spencer, First Assistant Secretary, Civil Maritime Capability 7 May 2024
Final clearance: Position: Date:	Kaylene Dale Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Capability 15 May 2024

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