

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

Question No. 78

Senator Colbeck asked the following question at the hearing on 8 February 2010:

In the 2009-2010 budget, funds were set aside for the vessel:

“More than \$6 million over two years will also be provided for the *Oceanic Viking* to undertake an additional 80 days of surveillance and patrol in Australia’s Northern Waters.” (12 May 2009 media release by the Minister for Home Affairs).

I understand the vessel was in Northern Waters on 20 September and remained there until early- to mid-December. This would put its time in Northern Waters at 80 days or well over. Can ACBPS confirm this? If not, what amount of days was the *Oceanic Viking* in Northern Waters? What were the exact dates?

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

ACV *Oceanic Viking* was deployed in Australia’s Northern Waters initially for two 40-day patrols in support of the Government’s budget initiative to combat maritime people smuggling. Customs and Border Protection sought Government approval to reallocate a further 40 days assigned to Southern Ocean patrol activity in the 2009/2010 financial year to continue operations in Australia’s Northern Waters, noting patrol activities in the Southern Ocean were largely covered by the presence of a French patrol.

Three patrols were undertaken as follows:

- 11 August to 24 September 2009 (45 patrol days);
- 25 September to 1 November 2009 (38 patrol days); and
- 2 November to 16 December (42 patrol days, not including a 3 day stop-over in Singapore from 19 to 21 November).

The total number of sea days ACV *Oceanic Viking* spent in Australia’s Northern Waters for the 2009/2010 financial year was 125 days.