

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

Question No. 3

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:

Senator HUMPHRIES: On 5 December last year, I understand that two Bay class vessels, the ACV *Storm Bay* and the ACV *Corio Bay* intercepted an illegal maritime arrival carrying 110 passengers. Is that correct? ...

Senator HUMPHRIES: So a third vessel was not called or used to get those passengers back to Darwin?

Rear Adm. Johnston: I do not have the precise details. I think in that circumstance a third vessel may have come down in the proximity to be able to provide additional support if it was required, but my recollection is that that was not required by the two masters on that occasion.

Senator HUMPHRIES: Could you take on notice whether there was a third vessel involved and describe to us the circumstances in which it intervened? I assume it did not arrive at the scene at the point where the boat was taking on water but came later.

Rear Adm. Johnston: Later, yes.

Senator HUMPHRIES: If you could give us the details please.

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

The circumstances of this interception are as follows:

On 4 December 2012 Australian Customs Vessel (ACV) *Storm Bay*, with ACV *Corio Bay* in support, intercepted the Suspected Irregular Entry Vessel (SIEV) approximately 150 nautical miles south-east of Ashmore Islands.

The condition of the SIEV required the 111 people on board to be transferred to ACV *Storm Bay* and ACV *Corio Bay*.

On the same day, an air medical evacuation was undertaken for two people with medical conditions, coordinated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's Rescue Coordination Centre.

To mitigate operational risks, on 5 December 2012 a third vessel, ACV *Roebuck Bay* arrived to assist ACVs *Storm Bay* and *Corio Bay* with the transfer of people from the SIEV. This resulted in an on board count on the three vessels of 37 people from the SIEV embarked in ACV *Storm Bay*, and 36 each on board ACVs *Corio Bay* and *Roebuck Bay*.