

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

Question No. 103

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 23 May 2007:

- a) What was the period of time that Armidale Class patrol boats were unavailable for use?
- b) On what dates were they returned for use?
- c) What vessels were made available during the period the *Armidales* were not available?

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

- a) Operational restrictions were imposed by Commander Australian Fleet from 30 January 2007 to 19 February 2007.
- b) The Armidale Class Patrol Boats progressively returned to service from 19 February 2007 as interim measures were implemented to enable their safe return to service.
- c) Until sufficient interim and fully modified Armidale Class Patrol Boats became available, the Royal Australian Navy minimised the impact on operations by reallocating Minehunter Coastal HMAS *Gascoyne* and the Landing Craft Heavy HMAS *Brunei*. Additionally, the Fremantle Class Patrol Boat HMAS *Gladstone* was made available by deferring her decommissioning until 13 March 2007. Customs continued to provide full support to the Border Protection Command (BPC) including the new northern response vessel *Triton* to ensure the BPC had sufficient assets available to respond to potential or actual incidents in our maritime domains.