

Question on Notice
No: 1680
11 November 2008

MR ELMES asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport (MS SPENCE)—

QUESTION:

How many operational water police officers are there between Tin Can Bay and Pumicestone Passage, what is the role of each of these officers and how many vessels are available at any one time?

ANSWER:

The two Water Police units based at Hervey Bay and the Sunshine Coast operate in the area between Tin Can Bay and Pumicestone Passage.

The Hervey Bay Water Police operational patrol area extends from Baffle Creek (just north of Bundaberg) to Double Island Point, covering Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach.

The Sunshine Coast Water Police operational patrol area extends from Double Island Point to the southern end of Welsby Lagoon, Bribie Island.

Three operational police officers are allocated to the Hervey Bay Water Police. These officers are the Officer in Charge, who is a Sergeant, and two Senior Constables.

Four operational police officers are allocated to the Sunshine Coast Water Police. These officers are the Officer in Charge, who is a Sergeant, and three Senior Constables.

The officers attached to both units are fully trained and able to effectively perform all duties associated with water policing functions.

Each Water Police unit is responsible for attending to search and rescue incidents in its operational area. Subject to mechanical and maintenance issues, all Water Police vessels are available for use.

The Hervey Bay Water Police has three vessels in service –

- 11.9m catamaran (the “S W Gill”)
- 3.2m rigid hull inflatable boat (tender to the “S W Gill”)
- 5m aluminium centre console boat.

The Sunshine Coast Water Police has five vessels in service –

- 11.9m catamaran (the “George Doyle”)
- 4.3m rigid hull inflatable (tender to the “George Doyle”)
- 6m ridged hull inflatable
- two personal watercraft (jet skis).

The role of regional Water Police is to:

- (i) provide a police presence, both proactive and reactive, in the Water Police operational sphere, which includes coastal areas, waterways and abutting land, boat ramps, wharves, marinas, islands and boat mooring areas;

- (ii) carry out general police investigations with respect to matters that occur within the Water Police area of operation;
- (iii) provide assistance to other officers as directed by the officer in charge or district officer in whose district they are based and, in Brisbane, as directed by the Inspector, Specialist Services Branch, Water Police;
- (iv) coordinate marine search and rescue operations in Queensland. Most Water Police officers are trained as Search and Rescue Mission Coordinators or Assistant Search and Rescue Mission Coordinators;
- (v) provide assistance as required, and within the ambit of various Acts and Regulations, to the officers of other government departments, such as the Queensland Transport (Marine and Ports Division), Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Primary Industries (Boating and Fisheries) and the Australian Customs Service;
- (vi) enforce Queensland statute law in relation to the operations of vessels and water borne activities; and
- (vii) provide a professional police service for the safety of members of the community who venture onto the waterways of Queensland.