

5 March 2002

Immediate Use

DISABLED FISHING BOAT FOUND AFTER BEACON ACTIVATED

A rescue helicopter this morning located a disabled fishing boat about 30 kilometres east of Innisfail in the Great Barrier Reef after a satellite distress beacon was activated shortly after 7am (AEST).

The Queensland Rescue Service helicopter from Cairns located the vessel which had lost main engine power and electrical systems in heavy seas overnight.

The satellite distress beacon signal was detected by an overflying passenger aircraft and reported to Australian Search and Rescue in Canberra.

The vessel with three people on board was located by the helicopter at about 10 am (AEST).

A Volunteer Coast Guard vessel from Innisfail is en route to the fishing boat to tow it back to port.

A spokesman for AusSAR said this morning's operation again proved the worth of distress beacons.

"In the past 10 years more than 2800 people have been saved in the Australian region as a result of satellite distress beacons. They are the cheapest life insurance on the market," he said.

Further information:

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