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Immediate Use

SEARCH FOR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS CONTINUES

An extensive air search for eight people in a dinghy reported to Queensland Police as overdue after sailing from the Yorke Island Group in Australian waters for Daru Island off the coast of Papua New Guinea will continue tomorrow.

The eight adults in a seven metre banana boat powered by a 40 hp engine sailed from a Torres Strait Islands Festival on Massig island at midday on Friday (4/10) for the 40 nautical mile (74km) return voyage to Daru.

It is believed the missing boat was not carrying a distress beacon.

They were reported overdue to Queensland Police last night who searched a 760 sq nm area this morning by aircraft and handed coordination to Australian Search and Rescue, Canberra at 10am AEST today.

AusSAR issued a broadcast to shipping in the region and searched a large area of 1700 sq nm this afternoon using six fixed-wing aircraft and two helicopters from Horn Island, Weipa and Cairns.

The police launch Conroy remains on scene overnight and planning is underway at AusSAR for another extensive search at first light Monday covering a 1800 sq nm area from Saibai Island to Warrior Reef and across to Daru Island just 2nm (4 km) off the PNG coast.

It is expected about eight aircraft will be tasked for the search.

Further information:

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