



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Media Release

Thursday, 12 March 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Search for missing fishermen suspended

At 1.30pm Queensland time today, Thursday 12 March 2009, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority suspended the search for two men missing from the fishing trawler, *MBC* off the coast of Rockhampton in Queensland. Weather conditions have deteriorated due Ex-Tropical Cyclone Hamish returning to the search area and hampering search operations.

The search for three men began on Monday 9 March 2009 after AMSA's Rescue Coordination Centre received a satellite detection of a 406 MHz distress beacon approximately 140 nautical miles north east of Rockhampton.

After more than 24 hours, one man was located by AMSA's search and rescue Dornier aircraft from Cairns. The crew of the Dornier dropped a life raft to the man, who was subsequently winched to safety by the CQ Rescue helicopter and conveyed to Rockhampton Hospital.

Late on Wednesday afternoon, the Dornier aircraft and a Customs Dash-8 aircraft sighted what was believed to be two life jackets in the search area. Additionally, the Dornier also sighted what was believed to be a life raft casing. The items were unable to be recovered at the time due to weather conditions in the search area.

Limited search activity was undertaken on Thursday due to marginal weather conditions. An attempt to re-locate the life jackets, reported on Wednesday, was undertaken but without success.

The intensive search conducted over four days involved in excess of 15 fixed-wing aircraft and three helicopters from AeroRescue, Defence, Customs and civil operators. More than 50 State Emergency Service volunteers provided support in the search aircraft as observers, as well as catering and administrative support to the AMSA Forward Field Base accommodated at the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue centre in Rockhampton.

Media inquiries:

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