

4 April 2002

Immediate Use

NEW INFRA-RED SEARCH CAMERA FOR TASMANIA

Tasmania's search and rescue helicopter will be fitted with an advanced Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) camera, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, and Tasmania's Police and Public Safety Minister, David Llewellyn, announced today.

The camera, to be purchased by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's search and rescue division AusSAR, will be the first infra-red device fitted to an aircraft in the state. It will greatly enhance the state's night search and rescue capability.

The camera picks out heat-generating objects like human bodies from the general environment. The cameras are most commonly used by search and rescue authorities and law enforcement agencies to track people and vehicles at night.

The Federal Government allocated \$1.7 million in the last Budget to purchase three aircraft-mounted FLIR cameras for search and rescue. Tasmania is the only state currently without access to a FLIR camera for search and rescue.

It has been decided to allocate one of the three new FLIR cameras to be purchased by AMSA to Tasmania as a priority. Decisions on where to base the other two units will be made in due course.

Mr Anderson said the FLIR camera would greatly improve the chances of finding people in the water at night.

"These cameras have the potential to save many lives throughout Australia, and will be a particularly useful addition to the search and rescue facilities available in Tasmanian waters," Mr Anderson said.

Mr Llewellyn said the camera would help keep Tasmania's search and rescue system at the cutting edge of technology.

"FLIR cameras have been extremely useful in locating people in densely forested areas. This new device will assist the police greatly in finding missing bushwalkers in Tasmania's wilderness areas," Mr Llewellyn said.

The camera will be purchased and installed later this year.



Further information:

Ben Mitchell

0418 164 901



Visit AMSA's Internet site at www.amsa.gov.au