



MEDIA RELEASE

19 October 2003

Immediate Use

SEARCH OFF QUEENSLAND FOR CHARTER VESSEL PASSENGER

An air search is underway for a passenger reported overboard from a fishing charter vessel 130 nautical miles (240 kms) east of Gladstone.

The 45 year old NSW man was seen falling from the Bundaberg charter boat *Crusader 3* with 14 passengers and crew still on board just before midnight last night.

The 20 metre vessel was on a charter to Wreck Reefs about 220 nautical miles (406 kms) north-east of Bundaberg.

The vessel's skipper reported the incident to Australian Search and Rescue who took over search coordination tasking two fixed wing aircraft from Mackay and Cairns.

Helicopters are not a search option because of the distance offshore.

A broadcast was put out to all vessels in the area and the *Crusader 3* continued to search throughout the night but in rough weather conditions with low visibility from sea mist, two metre seas and 20 knot winds.

The aircraft will search an area up to 160 square nautical miles three times today assisted by the *Crusader 3*.

Weather conditions in the search area are reported as fine with 10-12 knot winds, one metre seas and good visibility.

Further information:

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