Home media release

Search and rescue operation north of Christmas Island - 13 July 2013

ACV *Triton*, operating under the coordination of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC Australia), rendered assistance to a suspected irregular entry vessel 87 nautical miles north of Christmas Island overnight.

At approximately 10.00pm last night, under the coordination of RCC Australia, ACV *Triton* arrived at the vessel. A merchant ship was also on scene after responding to a broadcast to shipping.

At approximately 10.27pm AEST, while a boarding party from ACV *Triton* was determining what assistance was required, the vessel foundered with the three members of the boarding party on board the vessel.

ACV *Triton* worked quickly to rescue people from the water, with assistance from the merchant vessel.

88 people have been recovered safely from the water, including three Indonesian crew. No significant injuries to the people on board the vessel have been reported and no injuries to the boarding party have been reported. One deceased infant boy has also been recovered.

ACV *Triton* completed the transfer of the 88 survivors to Australian Government authorities at Christmas Island. The search and rescue to locate any survivors is continuing.

The Service routinely evaluates and reviews procedures in response to any significant maritime incident or other event. In light of the tragic loss of life during the incident, it is prudent and entirely appropriate that an assessment of the operation is conducted to determine whether correct operational procedures and processes were followed and to ascertain any potential areas for improvement in those procedures.

The assessment is not designed to replace any police investigations or coronial processes that may be announced into the incident.

Further details will be provided as appropriate, considering the internal assessment and noting that the incident may become the subject of a coronial process. Customs and Border Protection will fully support any formal inquiries or investigations as required.

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