

## MEDIA STATEMENT

19 April 2024

### Missing fisherman found in North Queensland

- Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) was involved in the search and rescue of two men who were found clinging to the upturned hull of their vessel on the afternoon of Sunday, 14 April.
- The two men had last been heard from at around 3.00 pm on 13 April
- MSQ's vessel and crew found the two men near Flagstaff Bay off the coast of Burdekin at around 2.30 pm on 14 April and transferred them to a waiting helicopter for medical attention.
- The search and rescue was co-ordinated by the Queensland Police Service involving volunteer Marine Rescue, State Emergency Services, Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the volunteer Coast Guard

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) was involved in the search and rescue of two men who were found clinging to the upturned hull of their vessel on Sunday afternoon, 14 April.

The two men had last been heard from at approximately 3.00pm on Saturday 13 April.

MSQ's vessel Aquila and crew found the two men near Flagstaff Bay off the coast of Burdekin almost 24 hours later at 2.30pm and transferred them to a waiting helicopter for medical attention.

The pair were then airlifted from Cape Upstart to Ayr Hospital where they were treated for dehydration and hypothermia.

The search was co-ordinated by the Queensland Police Service through Water Police Search and Rescue officers from Townsville. It involved one MSQ vessel, three volunteer Marine Rescue Vessels, two State Emergency Service vessels and one volunteer Coast Guard vessel in a multi-agency response.

To assist the QPS with coordination of the search, Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) tasked 4 helicopters and one dedicated fixed wing search aircraft for search activities throughout the morning and afternoon of 13 April 2024.

The capsized vessel was subsequently recovered by Marine Rescue's Burdekin crew.

This was a very pleasing outcome not only for the two men and their families, but also for all agencies involved in the search and rescue.

#### **Quotes attributable to Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager, Kell Dillon:**

"Our Maritime Safety Queensland vessel and two of our Marine Officers found the two men. Nether of the men were wearing life jackets when the vessel capsized and had been clinging to their overturned vessel for about 24 hours, including through the night. They are very, very lucky blokes.

"We are immensely proud of our Townsville MSQ Marine officers for successfully rescuing the two men. They acted incredibly professionally and with courage in very tough circumstances, and without doubt saved the lives of those two men."

#### **Quotes attributable to the MSQ Marine Officer Mark Chown:**

"I just happened to get up at 4:20 am and saw my phone flash with a missed call from the Water Police, who asked if we could assist the volunteer rescue teams already on water.

"We were able to join in the search with Police and volunteer marine rescue units already out searching and fortunately we located the men in the area we were allocated"

"We just consider it part of our responsibility to maritime safety, and if QPS make a request for assistance, we always do our best to provide whatever support they need."

ENDS

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