In the 2010-11 Budget, the Australian Government reaffirmed its commitment to improving maritime border security by investing in building and supporting eight new enhanced patrol boats to replace the Bay Class vessels, which were nearing the end of their planned operational life.

In March 2010, Customs and Border Protection (now Australian Border Force) released a tender for the design and construction of these boats. Austal emerged as the winner of the contract to design, build and provide in-service support to Australia’s next generation of border protection vessels.

The in-service support contract extends for a minimum period of eight years and encompasses a full range of intermediate and depot level maintenance activities. Further options can be exercised by Australian Border Force for in-service support for the life of the fleet.

This contract was Austal’s second significant contract with the Australian government for border protection vessels, having designed and constructed the previous fleet of eight Bay Class vessels.

The new Cape Class Patrol Boats represent a significant investment in Australia’s long term security and is the biggest maritime acquisition project ever undertaken by Australian Border Force.

The first Cape Class Patrol Boat came on line in early 2013, and the last vessel, Cape York, was delivered in September 2015.
ABOUT THE CAPE CLASS PATROL BOATS

The Cape Class Patrol Boats have greater range, endurance and flexibility in responding to maritime security threats than the previous Bay Class vessels. These boats also have enhanced capability to operate in higher sea states and survive in more severe conditions.

The patrol boats have capacity to accommodate future upgrades in surveillance technology and response capability. The vessels are connected to the Australian Maritime Security Operations Centre via an Australian Maritime Identification System terminal onboard each vessel.

The Cape Class Patrol Boats are able to:
• Undertake 28 day patrols;
• Sail 4,000 nautical miles before having to refuel;
• Sail to 50 degrees south, in Southern Ocean waters;
• Combat the full range of maritime security threats;
• Carry a larger crew than the Bay Class vessels to more effectively and safely manage boarding operations;
• Identify, track, intercept additional threats in the maritime domain and gather intelligence and store evidence for matters that may proceed to the courts; and
• Launch two Tender Response Vessels simultaneously.

USE OF PATROL BOATS

Australian Border Force patrol boats may be deployed according to aerial surveillance, community reports and/or radar sightings.

They may be used to:
• Counter people, drug and weapons smuggling;
• Apprehend foreign fishing vessels;
• Gather information and intelligence;
• Monitor environmental pollution; and
• Assist management of offshore nature reserves and marine parks.

COMBATING MARITIME SECURITY THREATS

Australia has 36,000 kilometres of coastline and an offshore maritime area of nearly 13 million square kilometres.

The new Cape Class Patrol Boats will play a significant role in border security by maintaining a presence around Australia’s coastline and responding to reported or suspected border incidents and illegal activity.

Australian Border Force vessels perform strategic patrols and tactical surveillance and enforcement for various agencies to address maritime security threats within and beyond Australia’s 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

These threats are:
• unauthorised maritime arrivals;
• bio-security;
• illegal exploitation of natural resources;
• illegal activity in protected areas;
• import or export of prohibited items;
• maritime terrorism;
• piracy, robbery or violence at sea; and
• marine pollution.

The Cape Class Patrol Boats and crew are capable of operating to the full extent of the Australian EEZ, other than in the deep Southern Ocean, and have the capacity to conduct operations in all environments in which Australian Border Force now operates and will be required to operate in the future.
CAPE CLASS PATROL BOAT SPECIFICATIONS

PRINCIPAL DIMENSIONS
Length overall ........................................ 58.1 metres
Beam (overall) ........................................ 10.6 metres
Draft (approx.) ........................................ 3.1 metres

ACCOMMODATION
Crew .................................................................. 22
Facilities .. Holding areas equipped with CCTV and facilities
for accommodating intercepted illegal foreign fishers and
suspected unauthorised people attempting to enter Australia

ARMAMENT
Weapons ........................................ Two deck-mounted 0.50 cal
general purpose machine guns

COMMUNICATION & SENSORS
Communication system . Secure/Non-secure voice and data
over VHF, UHF, SATCOM and
Sea Boat’s Situational Awareness
Navigation .................... Integrated bridge system including
Radars, 2 x ECDIS, 2 x Gyro Compass,
Secure AIS, 2 x DGPS, EOSS and VDR

ADDITIONAL FEATURES
Sea boats .............................. 2 x 7.3 metre Gemini
Motion control system ........... Austal 2 x 3.25m² roll fins
2 x 4.5m² trim flaps

PROPULSION
Main engines ........................................ 2 x Caterpillar 3516C
........................................ 2 x 2,525 kW @ 1,800 rpm
Gearboxes ........................................... 2 x ZF 9055A
Propellers ........................................ 2 x fixed pitch
Bow thruster ......................... HRP 2001 TT (160 kW)

PERFORMANCE
Speed .................................................. 26 knots
Range at 12 knots .............. > 4000 nautical miles

CLASSIFICATION
Det Norske Veritas
1A1 LC, PATROL, E0, N, BIS, NAUT-HSC, ELT, RADHAZ

Cape Class Seaboat