

'TW170'



Another Kirby Naiad patrol RIB for the WA water police

By MIKE BROWN



The Western Australian Government users of small patrol boats are abandoning their traditional plate aluminium construction and enthusiastically adopting RIBs.

So also are the sea rescue groups, and for the same reasons, although they are sometimes expressed differently.

Essentially the reasons boil down to two: comfort of the operators on long patrols or rescues, and the duty of care of the employers that requires them to provide a safe place of work. And the two reasons are really the same: give the employees or volunteers the incentive to turn up for work each day, confident that they will go home in much the same condition as they started work.

There is a third, though less important, reason – increased hours in a day, or days in a week that sea-going may be safely carried out.

Kirby Marine, working in a competitive tender environment, has become almost the monopoly supplier of these RIBs, offering a wide range of lengths and detailed designs of Naiads.

The latest is an 8.5 metre model for the Water Police, adding to the Police fleet of another 8.5 and a 10-metre vessel. The hull remains the standard 8.5, but detailed work has been carried out above the deck in the light of operational experience.

These details include setting the stem fitting further back to reduce damage possibilities when boarding bow-to, and armouring the exposed edges of glass for related reasons. In boarding exercises with a ferry, the earlier Naiad made contact between a window top and the ferry's rubbing strake, resulting in broken glass.

Based in Fremantle, the 8.5 will spend much of her patrolling time at Mandurah to the south. With a towing weight that standard four-wheel drive vehicle can cope with, there is a choice between making the trip by land or sea. There will be almost no occasions when the sea trip would be ruled out. The hull has astonishing quantities of material reinforcing its 23-degree deadrise bottom, and this hull has proved its soft riding qualities over many thousands of miles.

Protecting a complex suite of electronics and the crew from the elements, the large wheelhouse has become close to standard design for government patrol craft. Kirby has also delivered assault-style Naiads with traditional motorcycle seats and open structure, but for day-in, day-out presence on the water, users put their hands up for maximum protection.

The electronics include the usual plotter and sounder, the usual – for Police work – radar (these all sharing a single screen, duplicated for both seating positions) and the expected bank of five radios. Computing power is also high, and linked with the Government information system on certificates of competency and surveys, boat and vehicle registrations, and vehicle and boat driver certification.

Powered by twin 168kW Suzuki four-stroke outboards, top speed is in excess of 45 knots, and cruising a nominal 30. At that speed range from the 540 litre tanks is 275 nautical miles with a small safety margin.

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'TW170' SPECIFICATIONS

Vessel type:	Police patrol RIB
Class:	2C USL
Owner:	Western Australian Police Service
Operator:	W.A. Water Police
Designer:	Naiad Design, New Zealand
CAD software:	Maxsurf
Builder:	Kirby Marine, Western Australia
Construction material:	Aluminium
Length overall:	8.5 metres
Length waterline:	6.8 metres
Beam:	3.0 metres
Draught:	0.45 metres
Displacement:	3.5 tonnes
Propulsion:	2 x 168kW Suzuki outboard
Maximum speed:	45 knots
Cruising speed:	30 knots
Range:	275 nautical miles
Electronic supplier:	AMI Sales
Radar:	Raymarine
Sounder:	Raymarine
Radio:	Icom GMZ
Compass:	Plastimo
GPS:	Raymarine
Paints:	International
Windows:	Beta Marine
Seating:	KAB 515
Safety equipment:	Kontiki
Fuel capacity:	540 litres