



The Pilbara is in a major industrial expansion phase, with a growing population that are almost universally boat owners. Recreational fishing is huge in the region and, curiously, in recent years Fisheries Western Australia has not had a full time boat there to monitor and regulate the catch.

They have now, having taken delivery of a Naiad RIB from Kirby Marine. The department has virtually standardised on these craft, at least part of the reason being work safety considerations. Putting employees for large parts of their working lives in small, hard-riding conventional craft means unnecessary wear and tear on backs and other body parts. Unnecessary when alternatives like the Naiad exist: 23 degrees of deadrise combined with massive stability.

There are other advantages to the Naiad besides a higher comfort level at speed. A prime one is the ability to come alongside shiny pleasure boats without risk of even cosmetic damage. The 500mm diameter buoyant tubes have a wear band to prevent damage to the Naiad.

Karratha's new boat will operate predominantly in the Dampier area, but will also cover long distances both by sea and by road. The boat needed to be launchable from beaches and mud banks as well as from ramps, and it needed range once afloat.

The chosen Naiad is 7.3 metres over all, powered by a pair of 112kW Yamaha four-stroke outboards, and with a 400-litre fuel tank giving a 200nm range.

It has a nominally cuddly cabin layout, but such are the boat's equipment levels that there is no question of the cabin being a habitable compartment. Its hatch does, however, afford a safer route to the bow than via the side decks. From within the hatchway a crewmember can handle the retracting fairlead or the anchor, for which a Maxwell capstan is fitted.

The driving position is protected by windscreen and side structure that wrap to well aft of the seats. To suit the tropical conditions the entire cockpit aft to the

motor well is shaded by a fabric awning, leaving a usually welcome air gap over the windscreen. In adverse conditions the gap is closed by a clear plastic screen, reverse raked to deter spray from creeping over the top.

The awning has been ingeniously fashioned around protruding grab rails and aerial, scanner and spotlight mounts.

The coxswain and navigator's seats are mounted on Glyde Ride shock mitigating bases with storage boxes under. They face an action packed dash with an electronics suite of a complexity rarely seen in a vessel of this size. Sounder, GPS, plotter and radar share the Raymarine multi-function screen, there is a monitor for Oceanvision, and four radios, including secure band VHF, are also neatly fitted in.

The electronics intrude into the fore cabin where they share space with spares for almost everything, and where a fridge and stores can be carried on extended patrols.

The fatigue and wear mitigation theme continues in the cockpit with a shock absorbing membrane covering the deck. This area provides a large working space, and has a lounge at the rear for casual personnel.

A neat Kirby feature is the vessel's side ladder that hinges up to stow almost invisibly against the gantry leg. It enables boarding at a beach from shallower water than the stern ladder allows, and also places the boarder further away from the propeller.

The Yamahas deliver a maximum speed of 45 knots and cruising at 25 to 30. They also allow loitering speeds for extended periods, unlike earlier generations of outboards. Kirby have housed the motors within a protective pipe-work frame that, like all the other metalwork in the vessel, is as much sculptured as fabricated.

Construction generally is massively strong to withstand the pounding of continuous high-speed operations in poor conditions. Practicality has not overwhelmed aesthetics, and the Paint finish is superb.

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### Naiad RIB

#### SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel:	RIB
In survey to:	USL 2C
Home port:	Karratha
Builder:	Kirby Marine, Western Australia
Designer:	Naiad Design, New Zealand
Owner:	Fisheries Western Australia
Length overall:	7.3 metres
Beam:	2.65 metres
Draught:	0.45 metres
Displacement:	1.8 tonnes
Construction material:	Aluminium
Main engines:	2 x Yamaha 4-stroke outboards, each 112kW
Maximum speed:	45 knots
Cruising speed:	25-30 knots
Radios:	Barrett HF; VHF Icom IM 302; VHF secure band; 27mHz GME GX300
Radar:	Raymarine 24nm
Sounder:	Raymarine DSM300
Compass:	Plastimo
GPS:	Raymarine DGPS
Plotter:	Raymarine multi-function display
Windows:	Beta Marine Windows
Seating:	Universal Upholstery
Capstan:	Maxwell Anchor Mate
Fuel capacity:	400 litres
Range:	200nm