

'TW154'



A Kirby Naiad 8.5-metre Water Police RIB by MIKE BROWN



Pride of the Western Australian Water Police fleet is the 'Jaimee Lee', a 10-metre Naiad RIB built by Kirby Marine. It has proved to be everything their earlier aluminium monohulls were not: sea kindly, super stable, extremely fast and comfortable, and with precision handling.

Kirby's slogan for the Naiads is "the four wheel drive of the sea" but the Water Police believed they had something more like an aquatic Porsche Cayenne.

Size was its only problem. The Water Police wanted something more readily trailable. Their solution was to order an 8.5-metre Naiad. With barely-detectable reductions in capability, they got a boat towable by an ordinary four-wheel drive.

With an aluminium hull structure using scantlings far beyond Australia's USL Code (already one of the world's most rigorous), the Naiad starts out with immense strength. Its 23-degree dead-rise gives initial shock absorbing, and the collar gives a soft secondary effect as its great reserve stability comes into play. The collar also gives the stability (to what is essentially a narrow deep V-hull) that the Water Police wanted for diving and towing operations.

Civilian and volunteer rescue versions of the Naiads usually have fabric awnings over a basically open control position. Police, and other government agencies, specify enclosure. This is an extension of a major reason for selecting Naiads in the first place: providing a safe workplace.

The Naiad has a wheelhouse with a store compartment in front whose watertight door opens to the forward cockpit. The windscreen rakes forward, lifting the actual and apparent volume of the space. There is the battery of radios to be expected in a police boat (five of them), and each of the two suspension seats faces an all-in-one Raymarine screen.

The seats have long slides allowing plenty of room to stand at the wheel. Standing is eased by Kirby's customary 10mm shock-absorbing membrane fitted

beneath the carpet. Normally this would extend throughout the boat, but the Water Police opted for the easy cleaning properties of non-skid paint in the cockpits.

The forward cockpit provides the preferred route for boarding another vessel, so a step has been provided forward, and the anchor handling bowsprit retracts to prevent damage. The anchor itself has been given particularly neat stowage within the cockpit. To further cope with working alongside other vessels, the Naiad has been given a heavy duty fendering strip around its perimeter.

There are big, sliding side windows so the coxswain can pull alongside a boat and speak to the other driver without moving outside. Should another boat be boarded from the side, Kirby Marine built non-skid side decks and inboard grab rails on the wheelhouse. For closing with other boats, grab rails are a lot safer and more convenient than side rails.

The after cockpit has ample room for towing or diving operations, and has a folding lounge aft for extra personnel. This hinges on the transom structure that also houses the batteries, and supports the tow post and engine protection frame.

The sides are low enough, at 75mm, to easily haul people from the water over them. Deck level is close to water level when loaded, contributing to low motion for those on board. Self-draining of casual water coming aboard is handled by elephants' trunks, with large freeing ports for serious amounts.

Power is supplied by a pair of Yamaha 167kW four-stroke outboards. Top speed is 47 knots and, at that speed, the theoretical range from the 580-litre fuel tanks would be 200 nautical miles. More realistically, at 33 knots it rises to 275 nautical miles. The Water Police were delighted with ride and handling qualities.

For further information contact:
Kirby Marine, Western Australia.
PH: (08) 9410 2270, FX: (08) 9410 2280,

Email: info@kirbymarine.com,
Web: www.kirbymarine.com

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SPECIFICATIONS

Vessel type:	Police patrol boat RIB
Class:	2C USL
Home port:	Fremantle, Western Australia
Owner:	Western Australia Police Service
Operator:	Fremantle Water Police
Designer:	Naiad Design
CAD software:	Maxsurf
Builder:	Kirby Marine, Western Australia
Construction material:	Aluminium/rubber
Length overall:	8.5 metres
Length waterline:	6.8 metres
Beam:	3.0 metres
Draught:	0.45 metres
Displacement:	3,500kg
Propulsion:	2 x 167kW Yamaha outboard
Maximum speed:	45 knots
Cruise speed:	30 knots
Range:	275 nautical miles
Electronics supplier:	AMI Sales
Radar:	Raymarine
Depth sounder:	Raymarine
Radio:	ICOM GMZ
Compass:	Plastimo
GPS:	Raymarine
Paints/coatings:	International
Windows:	Beta Marine
Seating:	KAB 515
Safety equipment:	Kontiki
Fuel capacity:	540 litres
Crew:	2 + 4 special personnel