

ACV *Corio Bay* first vessel armed with machine gun



National Marine Unit Standards Manager Warwick Conlin (rear) and ACV *Corio Bay* crew member Andrew Lynch demonstrate the new machine gun fitted to the vessel.

Photo: Matt Wardell

ACV *Corio Bay* was the first Customs vessel to be fitted with a deck-mounted weapons system.

All eight of the 38-metre vessels in the Customs coastal patrol fleet were fitted with the weapons system during 2005.

This will better equip them to deal with border incursions and other threats at sea.

This follows the Australian Government providing \$6.8 million in the 2005-06 budget and \$25.2 million over the next four years for a FN Herstal 7.62mm general purpose machine gun to be fitted to each of the vessels.

The Customs and Fisheries Southern Ocean patrol vessel, the

105-metre *Oceanic Viking*, is already fitted with automatic weapons.

In commissioning ACV *Corio Bay*'s new weapons system in Broome, WA, the Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Chris Ellison, said: "These vessels form a key part of our frontline maritime defences against a range of border threats, including drugs and people smuggling, counter terrorism and foreign fishing boat interceptions.

"Operating around our 37,000 kilometres of coastline out to, and sometimes beyond the limit of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone, they need to be able to deal with just about any situation they encounter."