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## Specialist vessels and drones support flood recovery across Bundaberg waterways

- The Queensland Government has specialist recovery efforts underway to address flood damage caused by the recent tropical low across Bundaberg waterways, impacting more than 40 vessels and 14 pontoons.
- Drones, patrol vessels, and hydrographic surveys have been deployed to identify hazards and restore safe navigation in the Fitzroy, Burnett, and Mary rivers.
- Key hazards identified include sunken vessels, displaced pontoons, and damaged navigation markers, with recovery actions progressing.

Drone technology is playing a key role in a coordinated Queensland Government maritime recovery effort following significant flooding across the Fitzroy, Burnett and Mary rivers.

The scale of flooding impacted long stretches of waterways, displacing vessels, shifting navigation markers, and pushing pontoons and debris downstream.

Queensland Government Maritime Safety Queensland marine officers, hydrographic surveyors and engineers are working together to assess damage and restore safe navigation as quickly as possible.

Drones are allowing crews to rapidly assess large and hard-to-access areas, helping identify sunken vessels, displaced pontoons, and damaged navigation markers. Repeat flights are tracking recovery progress and supporting faster, safer decision-making.

This aerial intelligence, combined with on-water patrols and specialist hydrographic surveys, is helping identify hazards both above and below the surface to support a thorough recovery effort.

In the Burnett River, at least six vessels remain unaccounted for, with one submerged vessel already identified during survey work. Action required for a further 19 vessels is being progressed with owners, while seven cases have been resolved.

Floodwaters have also displaced 14 pontoons. MSQ is working to identify owners and coordinate removals to reduce risks to navigation, with many additional pontoons seriously damaged or destroyed.

Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager Kell Dillon said flood-affected waterways can change significantly after major weather events.

“Floodwaters can shift vessels, move navigation markers and create hazards that may not be immediately visible,” Mr Dillon said.

“Our teams are working across the Fitzroy, Burnett and Mary rivers using drone technology, on-water patrols and specialist surveys to identify hazards and restore safe navigation as quickly as possible.”

Mr Dillon said vessel owners also played an important role in reducing risks during severe weather.

“Acting early when warnings are issued and ensuring vessels are properly secured helps prevent vessels breaking free and creating hazards for other boaties,” he said.

“Boaties should remain cautious, keep a lookout for debris and follow the advice of the Regional Harbour Master while recovery work continues.”

**ENDS**

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