

Customs to use subs to hunt for drugs

2006-11-09 04:31:51 by Rons_ROV_Links

Customs officers will use mini-submarines to check ships' hulls in the hunt for drugs, weapons and bombs in Australia's busiest ports. The Australian Customs Service is looking for companies to provide five remote-controlled mini-submersibles to check the hulls of commercial ships in four states. The subs will be controlled by officers on land or from small boats and will relay images from depths of up to 50 metres at ports in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Fremantle and Dampier in Western Australia, The Australian reports.

The plans come in the wake of a multi-million dollar drug bust last month in which metal pods full of cocaine were allegedly attached to the hulls of ships.

"The government is committed to ensuring Customs has the personnel, technology and training to deal with emerging criminal and terrorist threats to Australia's borders," said federal Justice and Customs Minister Chris Ellison.

Remote-control vessels are already in use for underwater maintenance by North West oil and gas exploration companies, while the navy uses them to inspect mines.

Source: [The Age Company Ltd.](#)

© 2006 [AAP](#)

<http://www.rovworld.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1034>