

**Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN**

**Chief of Navy**

**Address at the commissioning ceremony for HMAS *Canberra* (III)**

**28 November 2014**

Your Excellencies, Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen. Can I first thank you all for attending; for sharing this part of Australia's history with the Navy as commission HMAS *Canberra*, the largest warship this nation has ever owned and operated.

We have heard of the proud history of other ships bearing this name and the legacy this ship's company will carry is important. But today, I consider that we are at the departure point to Navy's future; a future that will change Navy's focus.

*Canberra* is the visible manifestation of the rejuvenation of Navy over the next few years. *Adelaide* will follow next year and guided missile destroyers soon after; two squadrons of new helicopters are being delivered now and the *Anzac* frigates are being modified. All of this represents a unique opportunity for Navy to change and refocus our strengths, our skills, our attitudes and our behaviours.

I am determined that we will.

But today, I want to also fulfil a traditional role: to thank the builders of this fine ship. Warships are some of the most sophisticated artefacts ever built. Filled with equipment, which are individually significant pieces of engineering, the true genius of warship design and construction is to bring them together in one integrated whole. The construction of a warship demands great skill in many different trades from very traditional heavy engineering to leading edge computing, from power generation to catering and each element must be done well.

A warship, particularly on the scale of this ship, is a true indication of national skill and capacity, a true indication of a nation's maritime power and a source of great national pride. Australia's maritime power does not reside just in the ships, submarines and aircraft of the Royal Australian Navy. Navies have always had close relationships with the ship building and sustainment industry and for the Royal Australian Navy the construction of *Canberra* has been no exception.

As we commission her into the Royal Australian Navy, it is my pleasure as Chief of Navy to offer the traditional thanks and acknowledgements to the ship builders. I would like to acknowledge and thank all who have played a part in the construction of this magnificent warship.

- Navantia and the fine Spanish shipbuilders, who designed the ship and constructed the hull.
- BAE Systems Australia and their subcontractors which completed the ship and integrated the many systems.
- The Defence Materiel Organisation, which represented the Commonwealth and managed the project.
- The hundreds and thousands of people, civilians as well those in Navy, Army and Air Force uniforms, who contributed their skills and expertise.

On behalf of the Royal Australian Navy, I thank you. I hope that you feel as much pride and satisfaction as I do to see HMAS *Canberra* commission today.

To the crew of *Canberra*, well done for your work so far. From Captain Jonathon Sadlier, the Commanding Officer, to Leading Seaman Daniel Lee, who represents all the crew who have put in so much, I thank you personally. I know there is much more to do and much is expected of you. I have no doubt in your ability and wish you fair winds and following seas.