



Report of the  
Board of Inquiry  
into the fire in  
HMAS WESTRALIA  
on 5 May 1998

VOLUME 1



REPORT/ANNEXES



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REPORT/ANNEXES

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## AUTHORISATION

The President and Members of the Board of Inquiry into the fire in HMAS WESTRALIA on 05 May 1998 confirm that we unanimously support the findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report.



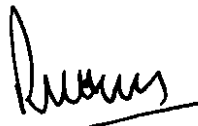
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**28** August 1998

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## ON BEING WISE AFTER THE EVENT

*For those who pick over the bones of other people's disasters, it often seems incredible that these warnings and human failures, seemingly so obvious in retrospect, should have gone unnoticed at the time. Being blessed with both uninvolved and hindsight, it is a great temptation for retrospective observers to slip into a censorious frame of mind and to wonder at how these people could have been so blind, stupid, arrogant, ignorant or reckless . . .*

*First, most of the people involved in serious accidents are neither stupid nor reckless, though they may well be blind to the consequences of their actions. Second, we must beware of falling prey to the fundamental attribution error (i.e. blaming people and ignoring the situational factors).*

*Reason J Human Error  
Cambridge Uni Press 1991*