

Chief of Navy Change of Command Ceremony

6 July 2018

Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, AO, RAN

Canberra

Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Marise Payne

Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence Industry and Support, the Hon Mike Kelly

Chief of the Defence Force, Chief Air Marshal Mark Binskin
Secretary of the Department of Defence, Mr Greg Moriarty

Fellow Senior Australian and visiting Defence Force and Defence leaders

Warrant Officer of the Navy – Warrant Officer Gary Wight

Men and Women of the Royal Australian Navy – past, present and future

Ladies and Gentleman..... and to my Family

Thank you for being here with me and your Navy today, I know that a number of you have travelled a long way to be here – and that means a lot to me personally.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Ngunnawal people, and I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and future. I would like to also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have, and continue to serve in our Defence Force – thank you for your service.

It is my absolute honour to assume command of the Royal Australian Navy at midnight tonight.

Leading an institution that is so vital to Australia's security and prosperity is a true privilege, and it brings with it a responsibility that I do not take lightly.

I wish to firstly recognise the contribution that Vice Admiral Tim Barrett has made to our Navy and the Nation over the last 42 years. His commitment and dedication has been both extraordinary and selfless, and over the last four years as the Chief of Navy, he has set our Navy on a new course.

Through his ability to demonstrate how the naval enterprise plays a vital role in Australia's prosperity, he has been one of the most influential people in driving the largest recapitalisation of our Navy in modern times.

He has guided the decisions to acquire the Offshore Patrol Vessels, our next generation of Replenishment Ships, the Future Submarines, and the *Hunter Class* Frigates along with the associated infrastructure investments.

He has overseen the introduction into service of the Landing Helicopter Docks Ships, HMA Ships *Canberra* and *Adelaide*, the MH60R Seahawk helicopters, and the first of our new destroyers, HMAS *Hobart*.

These new capabilities, combined with the Navy wide reforms driven by his Plan *Pelorus*, have enabled our Navy to generate and deploy maritime task groups capable of accomplishing the full spectrum of maritime security operations in support of our national interests.

I expect that in the years to come, history will consider Vice Admiral Barrett to be the father of Australia's 21st century Navy.

He is a great Australian, and I know that he will continue to actively contribute to our Navy and our national interests well beyond midnight tonight. Tim, thank you for your service and I sincerely wish you and Jenny the best of health and happiness for the future.

I would also like to publicly acknowledge and thank another officer who will shortly retire from full-time naval service. Vice Admiral Ray Griggs yesterday handed over the role of Vice Chief of the Australian Defence Force to Vice Admiral David Johnston, after an extraordinary four years in one of the most demanding roles in Australian public office, and this of course was preceded by three years as the Chief of Navy. Ray, thank you for your service to our Navy and our Defence Force, and I wish you and Chloe all the best for the future.

Notwithstanding all that has been achieved during the tenure of my predecessors — we still have much to do if we are to realise our full potential.

It is an important time to be in the Navy. With the majority of capability decisions now made, we must shift our focus to successful delivery and sustainment of our current and future force.

In parallel, we must also continue to deliver on our contract with Government and with the Australian people during a period of increasing uncertainty and unpredictability, both globally and regionally.

Over the next four years, I will strive to lead a Navy that works closely with our Government and the men and women of Australian Industry to mature the design, production and delivery of our future surface, subsurface and aerial platforms and weapon systems; and

A Navy that is operationally ready thanks to committed, resilient, well-trained men and women, who are able to deploy nationally, regionally and internationally in support of our national interests and the international rule of law – proud Australians who want, and are able to make a difference.

To achieve these outcomes we need to think like a Fighting Navy, and fight like a Thinking Navy.

We must all work together, alongside our Brothers and Sisters in the Army, the Air Force, our Defence Civilian colleagues and our partner government agencies, as a professional Navy Team that understands, and is committed to, our nation, our mission and each other.

We must all strive to be better, every day, in everything we do. We must be worthy of the trust and responsibility that the Government and the Australian people have bestowed upon us. We will be inclusive, respectful and innovative. We will embody and display the best of Australian values and virtues, and we will build upon the hard earned reputation for excellence that we have inherited from those who have served before us.

And we must grow as a Navy – both as people and as a force. We will promote, and operate within, a culture – an NGN culture – that encourage those who are currently serving, to continue to serve – those who have left, to want to return – and those Australians who are looking to be part of something bigger, a national institution, a national Family, to see in our Navy the attributes of a unique organisation worthy of their commitment and service.

Be in no doubt that the quality of you, our men and women, is our most important contributor to Australia's maritime power and to our future success.

It is my commitment to you — the Sailors and Officers of the Royal Australian Navy, the women and men of the Australian Defence Force, those working in the broader Defence Department, the elected members of Parliament, and the people of Australia — I will give you my best so that our Navy, your Navy, can achieve these outcomes.

I will strive every day to lead by example — to do what is right — to live Navy's Values of Honour, Honesty, Courage, Integrity and Loyalty and demonstrate our Signature Behaviours.

I want to lead a Navy that reflects our nation, takes account of the changes that occur in our nation, and is a ready, agile, resilient and lethal fighting force which, when called on by our Government, is able to contribute to the safety and security of the world's maritime environment and safeguard Australia's ability to freely navigate the world's oceans and engage in global trade – a Navy that stands ready to execute our mission to 'Fight and Win at Sea'.

This is my commitment to all before me today, and the great nation we serve.

Thank you.