

Chief of Navy
HMAS Adelaide
Commissioning Speech
4 December 2015

Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove and Lady Cosgrove; Minister for Defence Senator the Honourable Marise Payne; Spanish Ambassador to Australia; His Excellency Manuel Cacho Quesada; Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence (Representing Senator Conroy), The Honourable David Feeney MP; Senator for South Australia, Senator the Honourable Simon Birmingham; Secretary of Defence, Mr Dennis Richardson, Chief of Joint Operations, Vice Admiral David Johnston; Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer; officers of the Armada, Navy veterans, commissioning ship's company of HMAS *Adelaide* and families, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today we are writing a new page in Australia's naval history.

Australia is watching us. Today will be long remembered.

HMAS *Adelaide* joins the Navy today. She, together with her sister ship *Canberra*, will be at the heart of our fleet for decades to come.

These decks will witness events we can only guess at.

She will be engaged in exercises and operations in our coastal waters and in distant seas.

She will range through our region many times and far beyond it furthering Australia's interests and providing security for those using the seas for their lawful purpose.

She will bring relief from suffering and injury caused by mother nature to our friends and neighbours in this volatile region.

HMAS *Adelaide* (I) served Australia for 24 years in peace and war.

HMAS *Adelaide* (II) served for 27 years and made 30 overseas deployments. I know some of you served in her. This must be a proud day for you.

Adelaide and *Canberra* are the visible manifestation of the re capitalisation of Navy and its increased capabilities. But we are only at the beginning of that national naval enterprise and our future fleet.

Since *Canberra* was commissioned last year, *Hobart* the first of our three air warfare destroyers has been launched. NUSHIP *Brisbane* is preparing to for her launching and I conducted a ceremony to lay the keel for NUSHIP *Sydney*.

This has been a year of rapid progress for Navy. Thirteen of 24 new Seahawk Romeo helicopters have been delivered to the Fleet Air Arm.

Our *Anzac* class frigates are being upgraded and the designs for our future fleet of surface ships and submarines are being evaluated.

This step change represents a unique opportunity for Navy to refocus our strengths and our skills and to innovate in accordance with Plan Pelorus - our Strategic Plan for Navy in 2018.

This year Government announced that building our fleet will be a continuous industrial enterprise. Throughout history building warships has required national will and sustained commitment and we have that now.

One of my predecessors as CN made this point about Navies' role in the national life explicitly seventy years ago when he wrote:

A navy does not drop from the clouds. It is a miraculous and delicate instrument, a creation of nerves as well as steel, united with blood as well as rivets, it is in many ways the greatest expression of a nation's genius

Having made those points. I now fulfil the traditional role of Chief of Navy which is to thank the builders of this 27,000 ton amphibious ship.

Warships of this size and complexity are some of the most sophisticated artefacts ever built.

They are filled with pieces of equipment which are all individually significant pieces of engineering.

The true genius of warship design and construction is to bring them together in one integrated whole and that demands great skill in many different trades— each element must be done well.

Navies have always needed close relationships with commercial ship building and sustainment companies and for Navy the construction of *Adelaide* has been no exception.

Many organisations, agencies and companies have worked together for a decade to make this vessel ready for this commissioning day.

I now acknowledge and thank all who have played a part in the construction of this magnificent amphibious ship.

- Navantia and the fine Spanish shipbuilders, who designed the ship and constructed the hull in Ferrol.
- BAE Systems Australia, which installed the island structure completed the ship and integrated the many systems.

- The Defence Materiel Organisation, now the Commonwealth Acquisition and Sustainment Group, which represented the Commonwealth and managed the project.
- I thank the thousands of people, civilians as well those in Navy, Army and Air Force uniforms, who contributed their skills and expertise to the project

On behalf of the Royal Australian Navy, I thank you all. You certainly deserve to feel that your job is well done.

To the crew of *Adelaide*: Well done for your work so far and for the planning and execution of this commissioning ceremony.

You know that there is much to do and much is expected of you. I am confident that you have the ability and determination to achieve great things in the months and years ahead.

I know you will deliver this ship mission ready on time and I look forward to signing off on your Intermediate Operational Certificate of Readiness in 2016.

That is your challenge, your aim and your opportunity.

Good luck *Adelaide*