

**Chief of Navy Address at the unveiling of the Navy Memorial at  
Southbank, Queensland**

27 May 2017

**The Navy and Queensland's development: a long and valuable  
connection**

I am delighted to be here today to officially unveil this Navy Memorial which recognises the Royal Australian Navy's involvement in major conflicts and operations over such a long period of time.

I would like to start by recognising the efforts of the members of the Far East Strategic Reserve Association (Queensland) and the members of the Naval Association of Australia, Queensland Section. Without their efforts this day would not be possible.

I would also like to recognise the support of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Queensland Government, the Brisbane City Council and the many people who made donations. I am truly thankful for your support in making it possible to place this memorial here.

I am delighted with the artistry of this memorial. The artistic skill and craftsmanship of the sculptor, Catherine Anderson, has captured the spirit of this young sailor with great accuracy and truth. It moves us through its dignity and beauty. I thank Catherine for your dedication to the project and the creative work that has been put into this sculpture.

For me, this memorial recognises not only the Royal Australian Navy's involvement in major conflicts and operations, but also the special relationship between the Naval forces and Queensland.

When Queensland separated from New South Wales in 1859, the Naval forces supported Queensland by surveying many of the key coastal ports and bays. It was these surveys which improved the safety and efficiency of shipping, and in turn enabled the growth of the cotton and sugar industries.

Queensland, recognising that its prosperity was linked to the defence of the continent, offered in 1884 to release 'Gayundah' to be attached to the Australian Squadron. In making this offer 'Gayundah' became the first ship of the colonial navies to have the honour of flying the ensign of the Royal Navy.

After Federation, Queensland's part in the foundation of the Royal Australian Navy was no small one with 66 of the 135 officers on the active and unattached list in 1904 being from Queensland.

During World War II Queensland rose to the occasion. Shipyards in Maryborough and Brisbane turned out vessels for the Navy in increasing numbers and many barges and landing craft were built at seaports from Cairns to Brisbane.

Today, Queensland continues to support the Navy, especially the work of our amphibious ships, Patrol Boats, Hydrographic ships, and enabling establishments, HMA Ships *Cairns* and *Moreton*. Indeed, over 35 per cent of all new recruits come from Queensland.

And Navy continues to support Queensland through enabling safe shipping off the Queensland coast and in times of crises. Most recently during Operation Queensland Assist 2017, HMA Ships *Melville* and *Choules* undertook difficult and dangerous work following Cyclone Debbie to evacuate people from affected areas, and deliver humanitarian aid and disaster relief stores.

It is this special relationship that Navy recognises through bestowing the names of Queensland towns and landmarks on some of our ships — HMA Ships *Childers*, *Maryborough*, *Norman*, *Paluma*, *Toowoomba* and on the future Air warfare destroyer, *Brisbane*.

This memorial also recognises the commitment of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service, who provided essential support ashore, the Royal Australian Nursing Service whose service was 'beyond praise', and the Australian Merchant Navy which carried supplies to the battlefronts of the world and sustained the populations at home until victory was won.

But this memorial goes beyond just simply recognising the service of all these men and women. It reminds us of their sacrifice and dedication. Their mental strength, resilience and self-discipline. Their courage and readiness to do their duty, even if it cost them their future.

It reminds us that our liberty is their legacy.

This memorial is a place of reflection where our generation, and those that come after us, can pause, and remember what we owe to all those who fought and returned from the sea - and to those who lie there still.

Lest We Forget.