

## Chief of Navy Address at the 2018 Navy Chaplains Conference

Canberra

19 March 2018

Good Afternoon — it is a pleasure to be here today.

And can I say welcome to Canberra for the majority of you who do not work here.

I am pleased to see so many of you have taken the time out of your busy schedules to come together for this professional development opportunity and to gain a shared appreciation of the vision and mission of Navy Chaplaincy.

I hope you each find a new level of energy to continue your service to Navy, its members and their families, and Australia during this week.

It is also great to see that this conference is genuinely multi-faith conference and I would like to particularly welcome CHAP Essa.

I have been asked to speak to you about the future of the Navy Chaplaincy given the government's massive investment in naval capability.

However, before I do that I think it is appropriate to give you an idea of where the Navy was 4 years ago when I started as my tenure as CN so you can appreciate what has changed and contextualise some of the challenges and opportunities that await us in the future.

[Plan *Pelorus* Video played]

Since that video was made:

- All of the Seahawk Romeo Helicopters have entered service and are undertaking operations, deployed in ships in the region and beyond.
- Both LHDs HMA Ships *Adelaide* and *Canberra* — the largest ever ships operated by the Australian Navy — have been commissioned and have proven their utility and versatility with participation in Talisman Sabre 17 and Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2017.
  - These exercises and deployments have demonstrated that we can operate independently or as part of a larger task group.
- The Air Warfare Destroyer HMAS *Hobart* — one of the most sophisticated warships ever to be operated by the RAN — has been commissioned with two more to follow.
- We are generating more submarine availability.
- We are better managing and sustaining our platforms, infrastructure, communications and information systems, intelligence, and other mission and support systems for our current capabilities
- We are well on our way to having an integrated, diverse, resilient and deployable workforce that has the skills and competencies to deliver Navy's warfighting effects.
- We are improving our culture to ensure that it supports an agile, resilient and innovative Navy that actively seeks ways to better deliver our capability.

Also since I made that video the Australian Government released the 2016 Defence White Paper and in 2017 it followed

with a companion Naval Shipbuilding Plan. These documents outline the government's vision for Australia's future naval capability — a capability that is a truly national endeavour.

The vision for the Navy and a continuous naval shipbuilding enterprise that is set out in those documents is truly exciting and in many ways daunting.

The White Paper and Shipbuilding Plan sets out three distinct lines of investment in naval shipbuilding enterprise totalling around \$90 billion. These are:

- the investment in the rolling acquisition of new submarines, and the continuous build of future frigates and minor naval vessels;
- the investment in modern shipyard infrastructure; and
- the investment in naval shipbuilding workforce growth and skilling initiatives; together with new generation technology and innovation hubs.

As a consequence of these decisions, the government announced that Naval Group will be our international partner to design the 12 Future Submarines.

Concurrently, Navy's two new tankers have been selected and work will soon commence on their construction — the first ship is expected to be delivered in 2019 and the second in 2020.

Lürssen has been selected as the lead contractor to build 12 new Offshore Patrol Vessels which provide us with an advanced capability to undertake constabulary missions and be the primary ADF asset for maritime patrol and response duties. Construction of the first two vessels will begin this year.

We have also made significant progress on the acquisition of nine Future Frigates. These frigates will be able to conduct a range of missions, with a particular focus on anti-submarine warfare. We are on schedule to commence construction in 2020.

But it must be remembered that platforms alone do not constitute capability.

Navy is a fighting system, rather than a collection of individual platforms.

We need to evolve if we are to effectively use these platforms and coordinate all the inputs to capability, and create the systems that can deliver what the Government requires of us — remember targeted and decisive lethality is the ultimate purpose of our Navy because it deters armed adventurism, and lethality is a product of availability, sustainability and affordability across all sections of the Navy and the broader naval enterprise.

We need to develop a Navy that has the ability to take decisions quickly, to manoeuvre naval force with speed and flexibility, and to enhance survivability by ensuring that our warfighters are able to adapt doctrine and tactics to meet the needs of the moment.

A Navy that can work with the other Services — Army, Air Force and APS — other Government departments, the shipbuilding industry, and many other sectors of the Australian community, including the research and development and education and training sectors as well as the union movement and the professional associations

A Navy that can adapt to the ever changing, and in ways unpredictable shifts in our strategic environment. Some of these are:

- The unprecedented missile and nuclear weapons testing conducted by North Korea, the impact of the South China Sea Arbitration and the increased possibility for miscalculations which could result in armed confrontations at sea.
- The shifting of old alliances; the rapid rise in global terrorist networks in South East Asia; changes in migration patterns; the increased activities of international criminal syndicates whether it be from co-ordinated illegal fishing enterprises to smuggling illegal migrants.

We will only have a Navy that is capable of doing all that I have discussed, if our people are in good shape: mentally, physically, morally and spiritually. Each and every one of you in the room today play an important role in ensuring our people are in good shape.

As chaplains I need you to be focused on the delivery of core chaplaincy capability: pastoral care and spiritual support for all regardless of their faith commitment.

This in my view is a Chaplain's bread and butter; you must excel at it and you must be available, open, welcoming and willing to give to Navy people at sea and ashore at all times.

The pastoral care and spiritual support you can provide our people can help them:

- Develop resilience and a willing compliance to meet Navy signature values.
- Develop a robust moral compass that is capable of confronting the morally ambiguous and corrosive realities of modern warfare and Humanitarian and Disaster Relief activities.

In providing this pastoral care and spiritual support I expect that you will be in synch with Navy values and signature behaviours, Navy's professional development programs, and be integrated with other available support services and agencies.

I also expect that you will have an awareness of the bigger strategic picture of Australia's national interests, and Defence's part in this, so that you are better placed to support our people through demanding times of service.

Finally, I expect that you will support command to achieve directed tasks through considered, informed and timely advice. You have a privileged role; provide fearless and frank advice; it is valued and can play a significant role in our success.

This week is an opportunity for you to read, think and engage in sensible, informed and appropriate debate about your profession with your peers who all have different experiences and backgrounds — appreciate and understand their perspective.

I hope that by the end of this week you each grow to better understand the Navy Chaplaincy vision; to be a trusted friend who provides pastoral care and spiritual support to all members of the RAN and their families so that Navy is better placed to fulfil its mission.

Thank you.