

**CN Address at the 20th Anniversary of the fire on
HMAS Westralia**

HMAS Stirling

5 May 2018

I felt it an honour and a duty to be with you today. It is with great sadness that we mark the twentieth anniversary of the day that four young Australians gave their lives in the service of their country: Midshipman Megan Pelly, aged 22, Petty Officer Shaun Smith, aged 29, Leading Seaman Bradley Meek, aged 25, and Able Seaman Phillip John Carroll, aged 23.

I know that the tragic events in HMAS *Westralia* on this day 20 years ago have left a lasting impact on their families, their shipmates, the Royal Australian Navy and the entire nation.

They were four young people embarking upon promising lives and careers in the Royal Australian Navy.

And while the Navy lost four serving members that day — for those gathered here, you have lost a loved one — a father, an important member of your family, a partner, a friend. 20 years on we will all continue to share the memories of that tragic day and the feelings of loss and sadness.

We also remember the five personnel seriously injured and others that live with the scars, visible or otherwise, of that day. We will never forget.

Nor have we forgotten the significant lessons we learnt from this tragedy and the importance of these lessons to the operational, safety, engineering, education and training aspects of Navy.

The memory of those we lost on this tragic day 20 years ago will continue to help guide Navy's actions in seeking to ensure the safety of our sailors.

But importantly today we solemnly remember and honour the men and women who gave their last full measure of devotion, and those who have lived on with the scars of this tragedy.

They demonstrated their readiness to serve their shipmates, their ship, and their nation.

Let us be thankful for their loyalty to their shipmates and to our nation; let us be mindful of the courage that that they demonstrated on that day; and the strength of their shipmates; and let us be conscious of the challenges experienced by those injured then, and still suffering injury now.

Megan, Shaun, Bradley and Philip — you gave your all. The Navy will not forget your lives, your service and your sacrifice.

We will remember them.