

CHIEF OF NAVY CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY

VADM R.J. GRIGGS, AM, CSC, RAN

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Chief of Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston and Mrs Houston; Vice Admiral and Mrs Crane; distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and importantly for me, men and women of the Navy. Our official handover has brought to a close Vice Admiral Crane's outstanding 41 years in the RAN.

From his entry as a junior recruit in 1970 through to his three year tenure as our Chief, he has provided inspired and courageous leadership. He has led our Navy through cultural, leadership and structural reform under the New Generation Navy initiative. He has ensured we have met our operational commitments and improved our capability management processes with the introduction of the Seaworthiness Board.

His legacy is considerable. He has laid the foundation for us to modernise the way the Navy thinks and acts, which will enable us to face the challenges of the coming years with pride in who we are, and confidence in what we can achieve.

For my part, it is an enormous privilege and honour to be chosen to lead the Navy and I am conscious of the very large shoes I have to fill. In becoming the new Chief of Navy, I have reflected upon what we and our predecessors have collectively achieved in our 110 year history, and I look forward to working with you all to foster and progress that effort. You can rest assured that I will give my all as I lead the Navy and play my broader part as a member of both the ADF's and Defence's senior leadership teams.

We face many challenges that we must overcome; some of them are significant. However, as I look at the exceptional things that our people achieve on a daily basis – whether it be on operations as part of a joint force, or here at home in raising, training and sustaining our Navy – I know that together we will successfully meet these challenges.

In this context, there are three key areas that I will initially focus on as your Chief. The first is the need for us to continue progressing the significant reform program. I have already mentioned the cultural and leadership reform commenced with NGN. I have been personally involved with NGN since its inception and I believe that it is fundamental to our future. My commitment to it is absolute. I will say that again so there is no doubt: my commitment to NGN is absolute.

More broadly, Navy will continue to energetically play its role in the broader Strategic Reform Program, a program vital to the delivery of our future force. I look forward to the work on improving personal and institutional accountability across the organisation.

My second key focus is on ensuring that Navy delivers the levels of capability that government resources us – and therefore expects us – to deliver. In some areas we have not lived up to our contract with government; the reasons for this are numerous

and complex. I know that many people in Navy and the DMO are working exceptionally hard to address them. In doing so, you will have my full support and strong personal commitment. I look forward to the review work being conducted by Mr Paul Rizzo and the opportunity this will present to further strengthen our capability management processes.

My third area of focus is in ensuring that we are ready to transition to new capabilities such as the Air Warfare Destroyers, new amphibious ships and helicopters. We need to continue to work closely with other parts of Defence and industry so that we introduce these significant and exciting capabilities smoothly and efficiently.

I would like to conclude by wishing Russ and Michelle all the very best for the future and thanking them for the many sacrifices they and their family have made in support of the Navy. It has been an exceptional period of service to our nation and on behalf of all us here, I wish them fair winds and following seas in the years ahead.