

CHIEF OF NAVY SPEECH

15 FEBRUARY 2013

NAMING CEREMONY FOR NUSHIP CANBERRA

Prime Minister, Minister Smith and the entire Defence Ministerial team, Minister Morenes and the rest of your distinguished Spanish Delegation, Senator Johnston, Our Launching and naming lady Mrs. Vickie Coates, CDF, the Chief of Army, Mr. David Allot, CEO BAE Systems, Veterans and other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here on this very important day.

I would like to acknowledge the people of the Greater Kolin nation, the traditional owners of the waters in which this ship lies and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Today this magnificent ship gets her name. It is normal that a ship is named when launched. My predecessor, I think quite wisely, chose a different path for the first of our Landing Helicopter Docks.

He felt that some ceremony of significance soon after the ships arrival in Australia was an appropriate way to welcome the ship and from my perspective to give you the chance to see just what all the fuss is about. The fact that we have Minister Morenes and his delegation here today is an added bonus.

So today, the launching lady, Mrs. Vickie Coates, the wife of the late Rear Admiral Nigel Coates, former Fleet Commander and more importantly the former Commanding officer of the last Canberra, will complete the mission she started in Ferrol in Spain when she launched the ship and officially name it.

I was very keen that we conduct the ceremony inside the ship. Sitting on the wharf looking at a massive slab of steel is one thing but being here and getting a real sense of the scale of what this capability is all about is quite another. This ship will transform the Navy and it will be at the centre of transforming the ADF.

Like all surface ships it is the ships utility across the spectrum of operations that is critical.

This ship will give Government options from Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations at one end through stabilization and peacekeeping and, if needed, combat operations at the other.

We should not just focus on one aspect of its capability because in my view that sells this ship short.

I would like to thank the builders, Navantia and BAE Systems for their work to date, this has been an innovative build approach and showcased the shipbuilding skills of two great maritime nations.

Finally I would like to thank the Prime Minister for being here today, we certainly appreciate it given the demands you have on your time and I am glad that you will have the opportunity to see some of the capability that this ship will bring with it when it comes into service.

I would now like to ask the Prime Minister, the Honourable Julia Gillard to say a few words.