

HMAS Choules



Introduction

HMAS *Choules* is a highly operational 16,000 tonne ship, 176 metres long, 24 metres wide, and capable of carrying over 300 troops, 23 Abrams tanks, 150 light Trucks, LCVP, Landing Craft Mechanised (LCM8) and is also capable of operating Navy helicopters including the [MRH-90 Taipan](#) and [S-70B-2 Seahawk](#) and the Australian Army's [S-70A Black Hawk](#). *Choules* is an amphibious Landing Ship Dock which originally served with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. She was commissioned by the Royal

Australian Navy in December 2011.

Commissioning

The ship originally entered service with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary on 28 November 2006 as RFA *Largs Bay* (L3006). The Bay Class is a proven capability with *Largs Bay* having provided humanitarian relief as part of the international response to the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

At the end of 2010, *Largs Bay* was marked as one of the vessels to be removed from service under the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review.

On 17 March 2011, the Department of Defence announced that the Royal Australian Navy would be bidding for *Largs Bay*. This was followed on 6 April by news that a A\$100 million (£65 million) bid had been successful.

ADF Ship *Choules* was formally handed to the Australian Defence Force in October 2011 following extensive sea trials to confirm the condition of the vessel. The ship also underwent a major refit to make her suitable for RAN service. This work included:

- Overhauling the main propulsion system, including diesel generators and azimuths
- Repainting the hull and flight deck
- Upgrading the tropical cooling system
- Upgrading and maintaining the salt water system
- Overhauling the stern ramp
- Extending the bridge front walkway
- Various safety enhancements
- Supplying and installing mexeflotes pontoons
- Installing temporary aircraft shelter

ADFS *Choules* arrived in Western Australia in December 2011, and was commissioned as HMAS *Choules* on 13 December 2011. The ship is named after the late Chief Petty Officer Claude Choules.

Capability



| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Commanding Officer | Commander Scott Houlihan |
| Class | Bay Class |
| Type | Landing Ship, Dock (LSD) |
| Pennant | L100 |
| International Callsign | VKJC |
| Motto | Face Difficulty With Zeal. |
| Home Port | Fleet Base East |
| Builder | Swan Hunter Shipbuilders, Wallsend-on-Tyne |
| Laid Down | 28 January 2002 |
| Launched | 18 July 2005 |
| Commissioned | 13 December 2011 |
| Resources | |
| Datasheet | HMAS Choules |
| News Articles | Navy Daily |
| Image Gallery | HMAS Choules |
| Dimensions & Displacement | |
| Displacement | 16,190 tonnes |
| Length | 176 metres |
| Beam | 26.4 metres |
| Draught | 5.8 metres |
| Performance | |
| Speed | 18 knots |
| Range | 15,000 kilometres at 15 knots (28 km/h) |
| Complement | |
| Crew | 158 officers and sailors |
| Capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 356 troops (standard) up to 700 troops (overload) • 32 Abrams tanks |

Choules is designed to operate using helicopters and landing craft to get landing forces and equipment ashore. *Choules* has a large flight deck aft which can accommodate two large helicopters and a docking well in the stern capable of operating a LCM-8 or two LCVP landing craft. She has had a great amount of experience working with Blackhawks, MRH-90 and Seahawks, so much so that on 10 April 2014 *Choules*'s Ship's Aviation Officer (SAVO) clocked up 1,000 deck landings in one twelve month period.

The military lift includes the capacity to load and transport up to 32 Abrams tanks, or 150 light trucks. HMAS *Choules* can carry a normal load of 356 troops, or overloaded with 700. Depending on the situation *Choules* can operate either close in shore or over the horizon using helicopters and landing craft, to get men and equipment ashore.

Employment of HMAS Choules in the Australian Defence Force

Choules provides a significant capability to embark a sizeable group of people and vehicles, transport them to a destination, land them safely ashore without relying on the availability of shore infrastructure, and sustain the group for a period of time. The force might include a mix of military vehicles, cargo and support vehicles, as well as Navy and Army helicopters.

The amphibious capability is a key element of future Australian Defence Force's military operations, and provides the ability to conduct Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) throughout the region.

An amphibious capability involves both amphibious warfare and Humanitarian Assistance and/or Disaster Relief:

- Amphibious warfare is where a military operation is characterised by tactical missions launched from the sea by naval and landing forces.
- HADR includes the material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to humanitarian crises included natural disaster and conflict.

The ADF presently has an amphibious platform capability able to provide rapid maritime humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) response.

In 2013, the accomplishment of amphibious mission essential tasks during the training continuum for HMAS *Choules* and via a trial certification process was a significant step towards realising the full amphibious capability.

The ADF provides a significant amphibious capability includes several layers ranging from Landing Craft Heavy, HMAS *Tobruk*, HMAS *Choules* through to the arrival of the first Landing Helicopter Dock, HMAS *Canberra*, in 2015. The amphibious capability part of the HADR range of options the Government has to activate in the case of emergency or natural disaster.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 light trucks • Two LCVP • LCM-8 • Two mexeflotes |
| Propulsion | |
| Machinery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diesel-Electric propulsion systems with 2 azimuthing thrusters and bow thruster. • 4 main diesel generating sets: 2 × Wärtsilä 8L26 engines (2,240 kW each), 2 × Wärtsilä 12V26 engines (3,360 kW each). • 1 auxiliary Wärtsilä standby diesel generating set. • Dynamic positioning system. |
| Armament | |
| Helicopters | x 2 |

