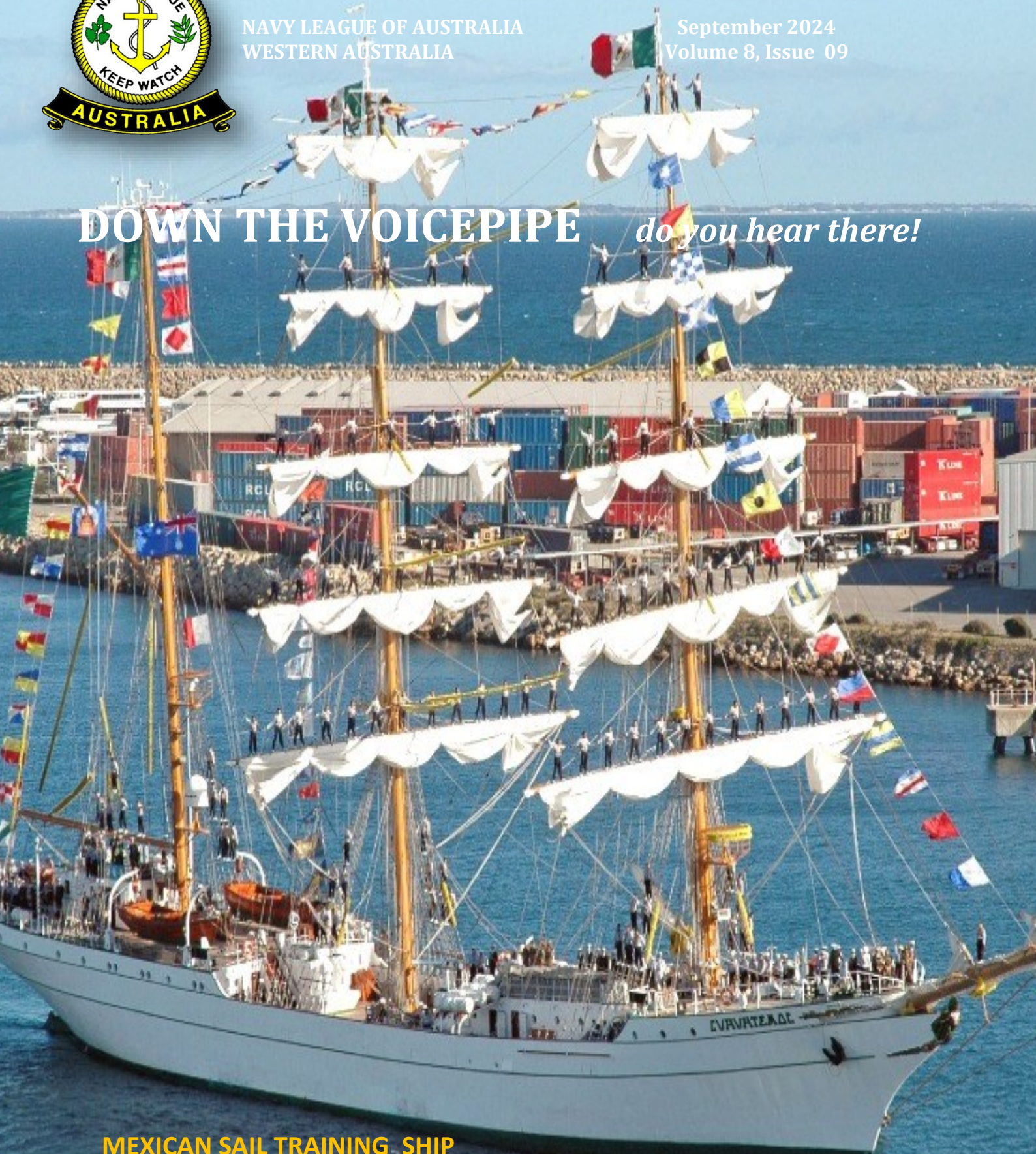




NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

September 2024  
Volume 8, Issue 09

# DOWN THE VOICEPIPE *do you hear there!*



**MEXICAN SAIL TRAINING SHIP  
ARM CAUHEMOC ENTERING  
FREMANTLE HARBOUR**

ALL ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE  
PRINTED IN GOOD FAITH AND DON'T NECESSARY  
REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE  
NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



## Navy League of Australia Western Australia Division News update



Spring has well and truly sprung in the west and we are enjoying some absolutely beautiful weather and with that, we are about to embark on our next journey into regional WA with some of the members who make up our travelling group. The AFL grand final has been run and won, unfortunately for me my team wasn't in it this year but we move on and now look forward to some cricket and the chance to get one over the Brits and our competitors from the subcontinent, as we like to do. Anyway, there's nothing wrong with some light-hearted banter between friends.

We all watched in shock as WA's famous sail training ship STS LEEUWIN was extensively damaged by a container ship entering Fremantle Harbour. Certainly, no malice intended and but for an unexpected freak gust of wind probably would have never happened. LEEUWIN suffered damage to all of its rigging which is currently being surveyed and repaired in order to get the ship up and sailing again. Unfortunately, WA had about thirty or so navy cadets ready to embark on a voyage the following day which, as expected, came to a very abrupt end.

The WA Division continues to forge ahead and we are excited to see a fairly regular influx of members and people in general taking an interest in us and what we are doing. We have been more than a little lucky in the way of free advertising, courtesy of the now, close to complete façade of the HMAS PERTH Memorial which has attracted a lot of attention by passers-by, many of whom have made enquiries and subsequently paid us a visit.

Early October sees the annual service for the loss of the RAAF Anson aircraft which sadly crashed on a training mission in October 1942. Added to this tragedy was the ages of the four crew who perished, the oldest being 28 and the youngest just 21 years of age. This service is a credit to the Northam RSL who not only host the activity, they maintain the surrounds and ensure this horrible scene of events continues to provide a place for reflection and an area for people to pay their respects.

As mentioned in the first paragraph, some of us are off to Wyalkatchem and Cunderdin soon so no doubt I'll have a few photos and maybe even a couple of tall stories to relay in the next edition.  
Until next month

Brad

### **Executive Committee 2024 -2025**

President Brad Barrett

Vice President Vacant

Hon Secretary Jim O'Neill CMDR ANC RTD

Treasurer Bill Gale OAM

Public Relations David Nicolson

Custodian Trevor Vincent

### **General Committee**

Colin Ralston

Bob Mummery OAM CMDR RAN RTD

Ian Holthouse

Geoff Hickling

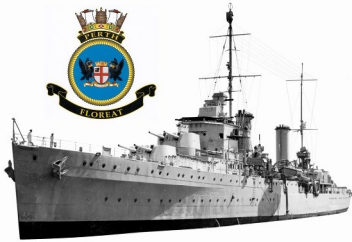
Mike Honer

Bob Hughes

Tom Goodlich



**RED LEAD**



# HMAS PERTH (I) MEMORIAL UPDATE

Incorporating NLWA and the  
HMAS PERTH (I) Memorial Foundation  
Incorporated



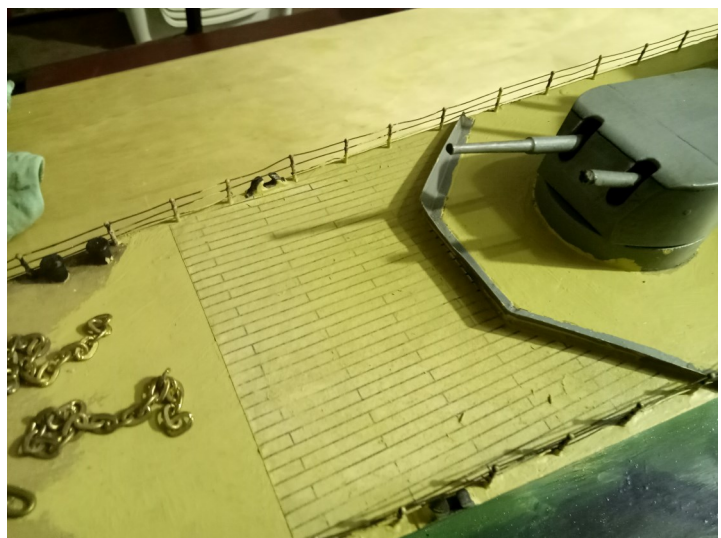
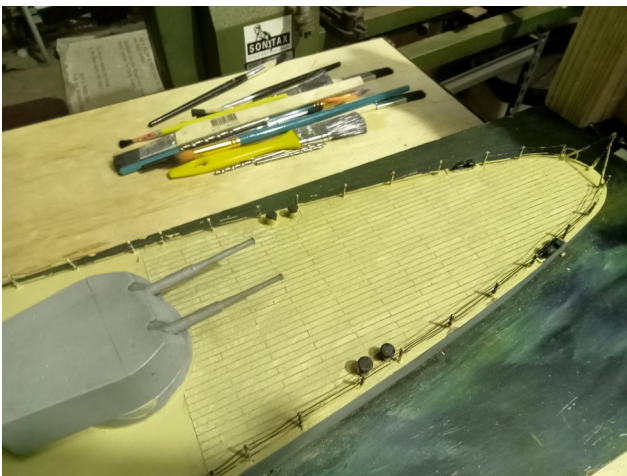
Jim O'Neill  
CMDR ANC RTD  
Project Manager

Good news the Memorial is now 90% complete virtually all of the exterior is completed and a few minor details to the cladding and roof plumbing to go. Once the outside is completed the fencing will be removed and levelling for the landscaping will take place. With the further generosity of SRG Global they will relay the pathway to the footpath and construct the foundations for the name wall to be constructed.

Further funding is being sort to complete the interior of the memorial which will include an internal wall, Ceiling , Polishing of the flooring complements once again of SRG Global. Painting of the interior wall, tiling of the foyer and installation of electrical i.e.: lighting and power points. Finally a door and door frame to enter the interior of the memorial. The small team continues to work tirelessly to ensure the memorial is completed on time for the opening.

Further Bob Mummery is working hard on the format of the program for the opening and together with David Nicolson and his daughter dispatching the official invitations. Mike Bailey and myself have been attending meetings with government officials to ensure that we have sufficient funds to complete the project.

The official opening will be definitely on the 1st March 2025 whether the memorial is total complete or near to finish depending on our approaches for successful funding.



Repairs to the HMS AMPHION model is underway

## Paul Papalia MP

Western Australia Minister for Defence Industry

Release content

16 October 2024

The Albanese Government will establish a consolidated Commonwealth-owned Defence Precinct at Western Australia's Henderson shipyard to underpin tens of billions of dollars of investment in defence capabilities in the West over the next two decades and support in the order of 10,000 well-paid, high-skilled local jobs.

The establishment of a consolidated Defence Precinct at Henderson is the critical next step in delivering continuous naval shipbuilding in Western Australia. This builds on the Albanese Government's announcement last year of a strategic partnership between Defence and Austal Limited at Henderson. It also represents a major milestone on the AUKUS pathway as Australia develops the capability to safely and securely own, operate and sustain conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

The Defence Precinct will support the build of new landing craft for the Australian Army and new general purpose frigates for the Navy announced by the Albanese Government, with requisite large vessel infrastructure to form part of the Precinct. These capabilities are vital to transforming our Defence Force's ability to meet Australia's complex strategic circumstances. The Albanese Government has also determined that the Defence Precinct at Henderson will be the home of depot-level maintenance and contingency docking for Australia's future conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines. These vital maintenance capabilities will be established at Henderson in accordance with domestic processes and regulatory requirements, and consistent with Australia's international obligations to maintaining the highest standards for nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

Contingency and depot-level maintenance alone will create around 3,000 jobs in Western Australia. This is in addition to the thousands of jobs that will be supported through construction of the Defence Precinct, delivery of continuous naval shipbuilding in the West, and the establishment and operation of Submarine Rotational Force-West at HMAS *Stirling*.

Coupled with the \$8 billion the Albanese Government has already committed to expand HMAS *Stirling*, these investments and capability programs in Western Australia will be worth tens of billions of dollars over the next two decades.

### Cooperation Agreement

To deliver this ambitious long-term program, the Albanese and Cook Governments have today signed a Cooperation Agreement, which provides a foundation for collaboration to deliver the Defence Precinct and related activities. This will include:

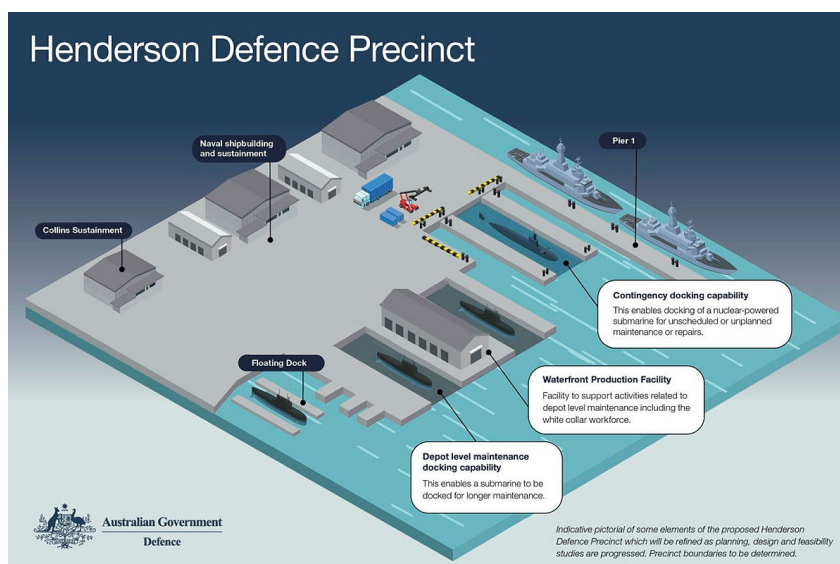
- Developing a dedicated joint forum to deliver the skilled workforce required to deliver and sustain critical Defence capabilities.
- Establishing the necessary infrastructure, including common user facilities, to support industry across the Defence Precinct at Henderson.

Ensuring effective engagement across Federal, State and Local governments and communities.

The Albanese Government will make an initial investment of \$127 million over three years to progress planning, consultations, preliminary design and feasibility studies as well as enabling works for the Defence Precinct at Henderson. This work will inform future decisions on delivery options and models for the Defence Precinct at Henderson.

The Albanese Government is committed to working with the Cook Government to deliver the infrastructure, industry, workforce and training for a defence future made in Western Australia.

A copy of the agreement will be available here: [Cooperation agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Western Australia to deliver and sustain Australia's future Defence capabilities | Defence Ministers](#)





**FILE PHOTO** (2019): *The future Royal New Zealand Navy dive and hydrographic vessel at Devonport Naval Base. Photo by Mike Millett, [AirflowNZ](#). [New Zealand News Pacific](#)*

#### Aussie expert on Court of Inquiry into HMNZS Manawanui sinking

New Zealand Defence Force has announced details of its Court of Inquiry (Col) into the sinking of HMNZS Manawanui in Samoa.

The dive and hydrographic ship struck a reef south of Upolu on Saturday 5 October, with all 75 people aboard successfully rescued.

Chief of the New Zealand Navy Rear Admiral Garin Golding has directed the assembly of a Col into the sinking of HMNZS Manawanui and has appointed Commodore Melissa Ross as the president.

Also on the Col will be Australian Navy Captain Dean Battilana, a specialist hydrographic officer who has commanded multiple ships and has expertise in operations, ship driving and hydrography.

He was also involved in the recovery efforts in response to the reef crash of USMC Osprey in Australia in 2017.

Also on the Col panel will be two senior New Zealand military officers – Navy Captain Andrew Mahoney, the commissioning Captain of HMNZS Manawanui, and Group Captain John McWilliam from the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Counsel assisting the Col will be Commander Jonathan Rowe, who is a barrister and solicitor of the High Court.

The Col will assemble today.

Cols are set up to establish the facts of an incident and any circumstances leading to it to allow the NZDF to identify possible improvements or changes for the future.

Terms of reference direct the Col to collect and record evidence and report on the sequence of events leading up to the loss of the ship, the cause of the grounding and subsequent sinking, and details on notification procedures, injuries sustained and any environmental damage.

The Col has also been directed to consider any organisational aspects relevant to the loss, and the material state of Manawanui before the grounding.

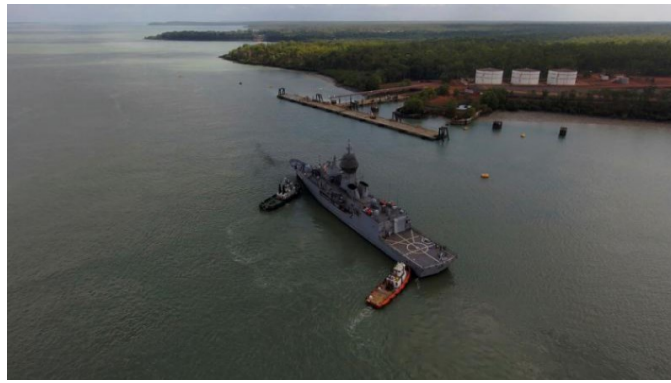
Courts of Inquiry into significant matters may be subject to an external legal review to provide independent assurance of their procedure and conclusions, with external legal reviews conducted by independent King's Counsel or other senior barristers.

In this case, it has been determined that an external legal review will be conducted by a King's Counsel.

Rear Admiral Golding said that given the high level of public interest in this matter and with transparency at front of mind, he would make the Col Report publicly available to the maximum extent possible consistent with the Privacy Act and his obligations to uphold national security.

"I have directed the Court to provide me with an interim report on specific areas by mid-November, and then to provide regular updates on the progress of their inquiry from there," Rear Admiral Golding said.





**CAPTION:** HMAS Warramunga arrives at Port Melville, Melville Island, Northern Territory, where the Expeditionary Logistics Team – Maritime provided food and fuel to the ship before returning to the sea phase of Exercise Kakadu. Story by Lieutenant Gary McHugh. Photo by Warrant Officer Shane Cameron.

[News Royal Australian Navy](#)

Strengthening Navy's supply chain

[11/10/2024](#) [Posted by Mike Hughes](#) [327 Views](#) [0 Comments](#) [1st Combat Service Support Battalion](#), [Exercise Kakadu](#), [Expeditionary Logistics Team – Maritime \(ELT-M\)](#), [HMAS Warramunga](#)

Navy added an important link to its supply chain recently as it proved the Expeditionary Logistics Team – Maritime (ELT-M) concept during Exercise Kakadu.

The ELT-M, deployed to Melville Island, in the Tiwi Islands off the Northern Territory coast, involved the forward deployment of stores and fuel delivered to a ship operating in the area.

During the exercise, HMAS Warramunga came alongside Port Melville to receive 11 pallets of dry and refrigerated foods, as well as about 250c (cubic metres) of maritime diesel fuel.

Officer in Charge Lieutenant Commander Michael Dunstan said the evolution, which took about six hours, was a game-changer.

“During Kakadu, the ELT-M demonstrated ‘push logistics’ where the provisions order was raised by the Fleet Logistics Directorate, submitted to the supplier, delivered to the end point by the ELT-M and then handed over to the ship,” Lieutenant Commander Dunstan said.

“The concept is to provide logistics to deployed ships via a forward support bridge which is scalable in size and capacity.

“To ensure supplies are delivered fresh, the ELT-M employed the use of temperature data loggers to track the temperatures of the provisions, both frozen and chilled.”

The deployment to an austere location like Port Melville highlighted the team’s ability to resupply ships when traditional contractors were unavailable.

Lieutenant Commander Dunstan said the ELT-M was ably supported by a number of logistics and transport units in Navy and Army.

“This included Joint Logistics Unit – North, 1 Combat Service Support Battalion and 36 Water Transport Troop,” he said.

Commanding Officer Warramunga Commander Dylan Phillips said having a robust expeditionary logistics capability guarantees a ship can maintain operational tempo.

“Modern ships are complex with thousands of parts, so when things break or wear out it’s important to be able to get replacements delivered to remote locations at short notice – the ELT-M allows us to do that,” Commander Phillips said.

The ELT-M was established in 2023 and is based at Fleet Headquarters. The team comprises two maritime logistics officers and two logistics sailors.

When activated, the ELT-M is supplemented by personnel from other fleet battle staff elements or force commands such as medical, communications and transport specialists.



**CAPTION:** Expeditionary Logistics Team – Maritime reprovision HMAS Warramunga at Port Melville, Melville Island, Northern Territory.



**CAPTION:** HMAS Sydney's bridge team waves towards Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship JS Sazanami during a formation foxtrot as part of a regional presence deployment. Story by Lieutenant Tahlia Merigan. Photos by Leading Seaman Daniel Goodman.

[News Overseas Royal Australian Navy](#)

HMAS Sydney participates in ship-to-ship culture swap

[09/10/2024](#) [Posted by Mike Hughes](#) 502 Views [0 Comments](#) [HMAS Sydney](#), [Japan Maritime Self Defence Force](#), [Regional Presence Deployment](#), [Royal New Zealand Navy](#), [US Navy](#)

Experiencing another country's ship for a day while in the middle of the ocean isn't something everyone will get to do, but it was a rare treat extended to a select few of HMAS Sydney's crew during their Indo-Pacific regional presence deployment. Members of the ship's company cross-decked with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship JS Sazanami, Royal New Zealand Navy ship HMNZS Aotearoa and United States Navy ship USS Howard, with personnel transferred by rigid-hull inflatable boat (RHIB).

Highlights for the international guests on Sydney included Royal New Zealand Navy sailors watching a five-inch gun firing from Sydney's bridge, Japanese and US sailors and officers learning the art of Uckers (similar to Ludo or Trouble) in the wardroom and junior sailors' café, and some Royal New Zealand Navy sailors receiving a 'Heggie's haircut'.



**CAPTION:**Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ship JS Sazanami, Royal New Zealand Navy ship HMNZS Aotearoa and HMAS Sydney personnel on the foredeck during a multinational cross-deck activity as part of a regional presence deployment.

On Sunday, it was ‘church with a twist’, when Sydney swapped chaplains with USS *Howard* for a taste of how each nation holds a service.

On the subject of taste, members from USS *Howard* thoroughly enjoyed lunch, including Tim Tams and kangaroo, on board *Sydney*.

Able Seaman Lilliana Millucci explored JS *Sazanami* for the day, experiencing Japanese food on a bento-style tray, painting their names in traditional Japanese characters and doing some origami. She was fascinated by how immaculate and organised the ship was.

“They separated plastics from cardboard (separate bins) and had a number of can crushers located around the ship,” Able Seaman Millucci said.

“The crew of JS *Sazanami* sure know how to host people. They were all so welcoming, kind and eager to get to know each of us – even with the little English they spoke.”

As part of a day tour of HMNZS *Aotearoa*, Leading Seaman Arlen Rodda McCarthy saw the replenishment-at-sea control room, which boasts an amazing view over the water.

“All in all it was a great day. Our hosts were friendly and welcoming, making us feel at home from the moment we stepped on board,” Leading Seaman McCarthy said.

“It was very interesting, seeing a vessel with significantly more space manned by roughly half the number of crew.”



**CAPTION:** USS *Howard* and HMAS *Sydney* personnel on the forecastle during a multinational cross-deck activity in the East China Sea as part of a regional presence deployment.

Able Seaman Annabelle Zyla’s day was spent touring USS *Howard* and learning about the roles and fundamentals of the ship, as well as experiencing an American Sunday brunch.

“I really loved the environment and how well the crew worked together. They were all so welcoming and engaged it was a refreshing experience,” she said.

“How the different cultural backgrounds blend and work well together made the overall experience really good, as they were so welcoming to us Australians.”

Crews also swapped coins, patches and other memorabilia as mementoes of their experiences.

HMAS *Sydney* is conducting a regional presence deployment, enhancing cooperation and relationships with regional partners and allies.



The SS United States, once a magnificent ocean liner, has had her anchors removed as preparations begin for her transformation into an artificial reef. This decision marks a significant chapter in the ship's storied history, reflecting both the challenges of maintaining such an iconic vessel and the potential for marine conservation. By sinking her off the coast, the SS United States will provide a habitat for marine life, creating an underwater ecosystem that divers and nature enthusiasts can explore.

As one of the fastest ships to cross the Atlantic, the SS United States symbolizes an era of luxury travel and engineering prowess. Now, instead of fading into obscurity, she will serve a new purpose in the ocean, contributing to biodiversity and attracting divers to witness the beauty of marine habitats formed around her remnants.

This initiative highlights the innovative ways to honour historical vessels while supporting environmental efforts.





Image of an army careers day in Victoria: [Hannah Donald/Department of Defence](#).

A cultural shift is required around how we think about careers in the Australian Defence Force and metrics of capability and retention. Counterintuitively, we should consider not only how to recruit and retain ADF members, but also how to support them to leave, thereby retaining extended service.

The core function of the ADF is deployment and operation of a tri-service fighting force. To maintain this capability, we must consider that the arc of national service can be life-long and take many forms. Metrics of recruitment and retention can look beyond short-term service obligations to how ADF capability can be retained following full-time service. This requires a shift in perspective from recruitment to post-discharge retention.

Australia needs to consider innovative approaches to generate the same commitment through schemes and marketing the benefits of service. Redeveloping financial supports for members to enter the [housing market](#) has been suggested, as well as flexible career paths, improved compensation and opportunities to upskill in new technologies.

None of these ideas are new. Nations such as Denmark and Finland have long-term service commitments with their citizens. In Sweden, military service marks conscripts for excellence to potential employers due to high standards in selection. These countries also use varying approaches to conscription. Their decisions are also supported by centuries of history and by having a nearby nuclear-armed great power prosecuting war in Ukraine.

Similar connections between Australian military service and employable skillsets would provide similar effect. This could be facilitated through strengthened [ADF-industry partnerships](#) in critical technologies, which would not only build skills and establish the calibre of ADF training and education but also capitalise on recruiting from existing capacities in the civilian workforce. ADF-delivered microcredentials could also support member transition.

Further supports and incentives could be targeted towards issues facing modern Australians. Options could include subsidising past and ongoing government education loans in non-military disciplines, retailer benefits for service members similar to those provided to community volunteers and other methods of reducing cost of living and housing pressures. Any potential benefit schemes can be tailored so maximum benefit for the individual is gained incrementally over the longer term. This contrasts with service benefits that scale over time and increase over years of service.

This benefits schemes would also require consideration of how ADF careers can continue following initial service obligations. Potential transitions out of the ADF and exit pathways should be considered and advertised as a normalised component of military service.

It has become a common approach in the modern civilian work environment to shift careers several times. For the ADF, this could take the form of supported transitions with partners in defence industry, the public service or alternative service options such as emergency services. This service pathway can then be advertised during recruitment and as a means of retention. Using existing service category and service option systems to allow for maximum flexibility in ongoing service opportunities into ADF reserves would further help in retention over the long term.

The attraction of a career beginning with ADF service followed by supported transition into a second profession, alongside supports such as housing and education, would allow the military to advertise a unique, flexible and varied opportunity in a competitive employment market.

The aim is to cultivate a transformation in how the public views military service: not as an outlier for only those with a military interest or family history, but as a career-starter and life-starter.

Other initiatives could involve following the lead of the British reserves in decentralising responsibility for recruitment to local units, many of which already cultivate their own [social media presence](#) through savvy videos displaying a relatability that official Defence communication often lacks. Local parliamentarians or celebrities could act as unit patrons and support ADF recruitment in their areas, an approach taken by Canada. Further, adapting basic and ongoing ADF training into tertiary electives could support university-level recruitment.

Reserve compensation likely needs to be revisited also. [Analysis](#) has shown a fully trained private earns more working a weekend at Woolworths than at a reserves weekend. There are also arguments for adopting variable tax and superannuation systems, as well as pro-rata [remuneration](#), to further improve the attractiveness of ongoing reserve service for civilian applicants or full-time members transitioning out of the ADF. This could entail an opt-in system, whereby members choose the most appropriate tax arrangement for their needs; university students might prefer the tax-free salary, while older members could choose taxed payments alongside superannuation.

We need to acknowledge that recruitment into the military is unlike that of any other employer. Any attempts to raise recruitment and retention levels must reflect this difference. To improve the current retention and recruitment problems, the ADF must create a culture that supports members during their service and beyond.

#### Author

**Shaun Cameron** is a serving part-time soldier in the Australian Army and a member of the Australian Public Service. **David Lipschitz** is a serving part-time officer in the Australian Army and a business owner in the private sector.

### HMCS Ottawa Deploys to Asian Waters



RCN photo by Dave Mazur

HMCS Ottawa deployed from Esquimalt October 16, 2024 for Asian waters. HMCS Ottawa will sail across the Pacific Ocean while deployed on Operations HORIZON and NEON. Operation HORIZON is Canada's forward-presence mission to the Indo-Pacific region to promote peace, stability, and the rules-based international order. Operation NEON is Canada's contribution to a coordinated multinational effort to support the implementation of United Nations sanctions imposed against North Korea.

During this deployment HMCS Ottawa will maintain Canada's naval presence in the Indo-Pacific, demonstrating the nation's contribution to regional peace and stability, and commitment to international security. HMCS Ottawa will showcase the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) operational capabilities while working alongside international allies and partner navies.

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## Australia needs to engage its youth population around AUKUS

| [Amanda McCumber](#)

Despite a push for openness and transparency in communicating the Australian National Defence posture, one group the Australian government is failing to converse with is its own citizens, especially its youth.

Communication is integral to AUKUS's resilience and success. As Australia's youth will be the generation who will be asked to provide for the national defence when AUKUS comes to fruition, it stands to reason that they must understand its value.

A multi-pronged and well-funded approach from the government is therefore needed for effective engagement with them. This approach must be focused on social media presence, outreach to youth organisations and schools and increasing access to AUKUS-related information.

As the agreement moves forward, all three partners must improve their messaging, particularly regarding Pillar II—advanced capabilities. Disjointed messaging between them that fails to account for each country's socio-political environment risks losing public support and poses a threat to AUKUS's survival.

Explanations of AUKUS can't rely wholly on defence aspects but must include non-traditional security facets as well. A key topic Australian youth are [most concerned](#) about is the environment. So, in regard to nuclear submarines, Australian government officials must be prepared to discuss plans for disposal of nuclear waste and fears of a naval Chernobyl. Additional discussions must be had about what the youth role in the economy will be under AUKUS and the impacts of Pillars I and II for Australia's economy and market. Telling them how the agreement benefits their daily lives now and into the future will go a long way to maintaining support.

The Office for Youth recently launched the [Engage!](#) Strategy, designed to improve young people's involvement in government. The government can tailor elements of this strategy to specific needs of AUKUS messaging. Specifically, younger populations are [increasingly](#) getting news from non-traditional media sources. They are less likely to look for an official government statement, so the government must meet them in spaces they frequent. In fact, 68.8 percent of young Australians [want](#) the government to engage them on social media platforms.

To meet this demand for engagement, the government must be creative in its social media presence.

One example of innovative presence is NATO's [#ProtectTheFuture](#) campaign, in which NATO experts played popular video games on Twitch with streamers from alliance countries. In partnering with Twitch streamer and Youtuber [ZeRoyalViking](#) to discuss NATO, cybersecurity and how video games can teach digital safety practices, they reached more than 40,000 people.

Australian government officials should do similar collaborations surrounding AUKUS with YouTube and Twitch streamers from Australia. These could be focused on explaining AUKUS or take a thematic slant aligned with the two pillars.

Keeping a finger on current trends and viral content also plays a critical role in the social media space. Part of the reason for the success of the NATO campaign was that the platform, games and streamers connected with what viewers were interested in at the time.

A comparable phenomenon can be seen with Kamala Harris's presidential campaign and social media account [@KamalaHQ](#). What has brought Harris's presidential campaign to the forefront of American youth was singer and songwriter Charli XCX tweeting that ['kamala IS brat'](#). This tweet—based off the pop culture trend of Brat Summer—spread to Harris's marketing campaign, in turn reinvigorating youth voters.

Social media engagement isn't a panacea, however. Youth organisations, especially at schools across the country, are also key.

Whether it's by sending AUKUS experts to speak at organisation meetings or hosting online webinars, there's room for engagement through connecting with those who have intersecting interests. This could look like hosting a Q&A panel or trivia night with student political organisations. Outreach should also engage science and technology organisations and vocational institutions to discuss job opportunities that will become available due to AUKUS.

The final area the Australian government must harness for youth engagement with AUKUS is a singular, dominant digital presence. Creating a first point of contact online ensures that information on AUKUS is accessible for Australian youth who wish to learn more.

A common way to link information is through services such as Linktree or with a website. Currently, the AUKUS partnership has neither. By linking sources from all three governments to associated social media accounts, the public will see trusted, verified sources to turn to alongside traditional media avenues. Starting this process now would generate a solid foundation for issues or addressing misinformation that may come up in the future.

Youth engagement with AUKUS is vital to its long-term success. Through ongoing messaging campaigns, Australia must continue to convince its citizens on why AUKUS matters, how it affects them and what it changes about the Australian way of life—because the fact of the matter is that, without Australia's younger populace on board, literally and figuratively, the future of AUKUS is uncertain.

### Author

**Amanda McCumber** is an analyst intern at ASPI DC.

# Maritime Day

# 2024

**Maritime Day is back!  
Come down to Fremantle  
Passenger Terminal and  
enjoy more than 90 displays!**

- ✦ Board a tug or emergency response vessel
- ✦ Free harbour boat rides
- ✦ Border Force display
- ✦ Royal Australian Navy interactive displays
- ✦ Kids! Dress up as a mermaid, pirate or fish and join our dress-up parade
- ✦ Free entertainment - music, mermaids, train rides, face painting, art
- ✦ Visit the WA Maritime Museum (by donation)
- ✦ Historic and modern photography display
- ✦ Shuttle bus from E Shed Markets on the half hour

Celebrate the maritime industry in our working port. Learn about exciting careers and maritime education opportunities



**Fremantle Passenger Terminal  
Saturday 2 November  
10am - 4pm**

**Enjoy an action-packed day  
with friends and family!**

**FREE ENTRY**



Save the date!

by Fatima Bahtić

**Shipbuilder Austal Australia has delivered the 21st Guardian-class patrol boat (GCPB) to the Australian Department of Defense.**



Credit: Austal

The vessel, Te Mataili III, was accepted by the Commonwealth of Australia by **Matt Keogh**, Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans Affairs, and then gifted to the Pacific Island nation of Tuvalu, represented by Prime Minister **Feleti Teo**. The handover ceremony was held at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia on October 16, 2024.

Te Mataili III will replace Te Mataili II, a Guardian-class patrol boat that was gifted to Tuvalu in 2019 and operated successfully until damaged beyond economic repair during twin cyclones that hit Vanuatu in 2023.

The 39.5-metre steel monohull patrol boat – designed, constructed and sustained by Austal Australia – is based on a design platform that has included the 38-metre Bay-class, 56-metre Armidale-class and 58-metre Cape-class patrol boats that are in service with the Australian Border Force and Royal Australian Navy.



Credit: Austal

Faster than the previous Pacific-class patrol boats, with improved seakeeping, better amenities, and an enhanced mission capability – including an integrated RHIB stern launch and recovery system – the Guardian-class patrol boats will carry out border patrols, regional policing, search and rescue, and many other operations, according to Austal.

The Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement Project was awarded to Austal Australia in May 2016, with subsequent contract options awarded in April 2018, November 2022 and June 2024, taking the project to 24 vessels, valued at more than A\$400 million, in total.

In July this year, Austal delivered the 20th Guardian-class patrol boat to Australia. The vessel, Tobwaan Mainiku, for the Republic of Kiribati, was accepted by representatives of the Department of Defense at the Austal shipyard in Henderson, Western Australia.



### First ex-Royal Navy nuclear submarine to be disposed of enters final dismantling phase

Work has started on the third and final phase of the project to dismantle ex-HMS Swiftsure. As the demonstrator project for the dismantling programme, she will be the first former RN SSN to be fully disposed of.

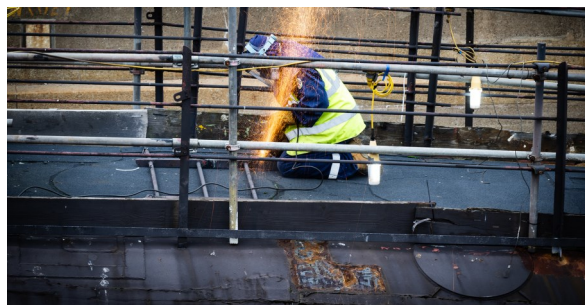
The glacial project to safely scrap the growing fleet of decommissioned boats has finally begun to make some progress at Rosyth in the last few years. Each submarine will undergo a three-step process which involves Low Level Radioactive Waste (LLW) being removed first. The second and most demanding stage involves the removal of the Reactor Pressure Vessel that holds the reactor core and is classed as Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste (ILW).

The final stage is to ensure the submarine is completely free of radioactivity and radioactive material as well as removing any remaining elements that are classified. At this point, the submarine can be cut up and around 90% of the remaining material, mainly steel and other metals, can either be reused or undergo conventional recycling. Swiftsure appears to be slightly ahead of the initial schedule, having completed Phase 1 (December 2016 – August 2018) and now Phase 2.



Swiftsure was brought into number 2 dry dock at Rosyth on 27 July 2023 to undergo final dismantling and recycling.

Swiftsure's disposal is a notable achievement as the first Pressurised Water Reactor (PWR) anywhere in the world to be dismantled. Other nations use a much simpler process and cut the entire reactor compartment out of the submarine and transport it structurally complete for burial in land storage facilities. The US has successfully disposed of over 130 nuclear ships and submarines since the 1980s. The Russians have disposed of over 190 Soviet-era boats (with some international assistance) since the 1990s while France has already disposed of 3 boats from their much smaller numbers.



Last week some former submariners visited the boat and a formal cutting mark was made to make the beginning of the boat being broken up.

Besides the progress with Swiftsure, LLW has been safely removed from ex-HMS Resolution, Revenge and Repulse. As experience has been gained working on successive boats techniques have been refined and more waste has been managed to final disposal at reduced cost. The optimisation of the process allowed 50% greater tonnage of waste to be removed in 75% of the time it took for Swiftsure. So far the work has been completed safely on budget and on time. Work has yet to begin on ex-HMS Dreadnought, Churchill and Renown still afloat in the basin at Rosyth.

While there is positive progress at Rosyth, 14 Dock at Devonport is still not ready to accept the first boat to begin defuelling and dismantling. There are now 15 decommissioned submarines filling up the basins in Plymouth (soon to be 16 when HMS Triumph goes in 2025). Work to get rid of this legacy cannot start soon enough. At least the lessons learned in Rosyth should give the teams at Devonport an advantage although the majority of these boats still have their nuclear fuel on board and will have to undergo a 4-stage process.



## Agreement reached on transfer of ownership of Australian naval shipbuilder



### Rendering of an Arafura-class offshore patrol vessel Luerssen

Australia's Cvmec and NVL of Bremen, Germany have entered into a non-binding heads of agreement detailing the framework for the transfer of ownership of Luerssen Australia to Cvmec.

Luerssen Australia's sole business is the building of six [Arafura-class offshore patrol vessels \(OPVs\)](#) for the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) under the existing SEA1180 contract with the Australian Department of Defence (DOD).

Upon completion of the potential transaction, NVL will transfer all its shareholding in Luerssen Australia to Cvmec, including all assets, employees, and licences. Cvmec said this ensures the uninterrupted design and build of the Arafura-class OPVs at the Osborne South shipyard in South Australia and the Cvmec-owned facility in Henderson, Western Australia. The proposed change of ownership and control of Luerssen Australia is subject to the Australian government granting its consent. In order to obtain such consent as soon as is possible, Luerssen Australia and Cvmec will immediately begin engaging with the government in the required administrative approval process, with the parties working towards a target date of December 31, 2024.

The non-binding heads of agreement is subject to satisfactory due diligence and meeting conditions precedent. In parallel with the government's consent process, an effective date in the coming months will allow the parties to conduct necessary due diligence and detailed planning.

The immediate priority is to agree on a framework for the interim period in which Luerssen Australia and Cvmec will closely cooperate in managing the SEA1180 project, ensuring that the DOD, the RAN, and industry all benefit from the efficiencies and advantages of the agreement.







When naval capability is minimal, it's also brittle

[Jennifer Parker](#)



Image of the HMNZS *Manawanui*: [New Zealand Defence Force](#).

It is rare for a developed nation's navy to lose a big vessel in peacetime. The sinking of the Royal New Zealand Navy's HMNZS *Manawanui* after it [ran aground](#) on a Samoan reef this month—the country's first naval loss since World War II—has raised important questions about naval preparedness. Fortunately, all 75 crew members were rescued, a testament to the ship's commanding officer and crew.

Although the exact cause of the incident is under investigation, it highlights broader issues about the state of readiness, not just for New Zealand but also for allied and partner navies, including Australia.

This incident underscores several concerning issues about naval preparedness: insufficient naval capability, workforce challenges, budget constraints and the failure to invest in critical enablers. Each is acutely relevant to New Zealand and Australia, highlighting key vulnerabilities.

*Manawanui* was the only mine warfare and hydrographic survey vessel in the New Zealand fleet, a crucial asset for a maritime nation with the fifth-largest exclusive economic zone in the world. The loss of this ship leaves a glaring gap in New Zealand's naval capabilities.

New Zealand's navy, like many smaller ones, has long been operating with minimal capability across several domains. *Manawanui's* loss illustrates the risks inherent in this minimalist approach: when one ship is the sole platform for a critical capability, losing it—even temporarily—paralyses that mission set.

This situation should sound alarm bells in Australia as well. The country's decision to scrap its future mine warfare ship program, alongside the expansion of its at-sea replenishment capabilities in the latest Defence Integrated Investment Program, echoes New Zealand's dangerous underinvestment in niche but vital capabilities.

The justification for cancelling the mine warfare ship program was that autonomous systems would replace the capability. However, without a ship to deploy from, these systems cannot cover the full spectrum of operations needed to protect Australia's shipping routes from naval mines—something it should expect in the event of a conflict in the region.

During World War II, Australian waters were heavily mined. There were minefields between Sydney and Newcastle, in the Bass Strait, off Hobart and in the Spencer Gulf.

Australia's hydrographic capability, used for seabed surveys, is in a precarious state, with five of its six ships decommissioned in the past three years and the last likely to follow soon. The 2020 decision to outsource nearly all of the navy's hydrographic responsibilities has severely weakened its capacity in this area.

Another issue exacerbating the challenges in enabling capabilities is the shortage of Australian replenishment vessels. Both of the Royal Australian Navy's replenishment ships are [out of action](#) until 2025, and while the problems are reportedly being dealt with under the warranties, it raises a broader question: why does Australia have only two? The money allocated to expanding this capability was removed in the latest Defence Integrated Investment Program.

There are many examples of such underinvestment in the navy's enabling capabilities. The failure to maintain and expand these powers now could leave the country dangerously exposed in the event of a maritime crisis. The underinvestment and lack of preparedness come at a time when Australia's defence strategy has stopped assuming that the country will get a 10-year warning period of an emerging conflict.

Despite the Australian government's recent [Defence budget uplift](#) in May, the funding allocation, which equates to about 2.1 percent of GDP, is simply not enough to tackle the issues.

While the figure in nominal terms might be historic, in real terms as a percentage of GDP, it is low—particularly at a time when Defence, and specifically the navy, are going through a major recapitalisation following the underinvestment since the end of the Cold War.

According to the 2024 Australian National Defence Strategy, the country is facing its most challenging strategic environment since World War II. Yet, this has not been met with equally robust investment.

During the Cold War, Australia's defence spending averaged 2.7 percent of GDP and was even higher during periods of heightened tension or major recapitalisation.

Despite the current strategic environment and the largest defence recapitalisation in decades, defence spending is projected to reach only 2.4 percent of GDP by the end of the decade—well below the Cold War average.

Although funding has been allocated for new surface combatants and submarines, there is little left to enhance other naval capabilities, leaving many of these atrophying and compromising naval preparedness at a critical time.

This inconsistency between our strategic statements about the chances of conflict in the region and our investment is glaring—and our naval preparedness is paying the price.

The sinking of HMNZS *Manawanui* should be a wake-up call for Australia and New Zealand. A [conflict](#) in the Indo-Pacific region is no longer a distant hypothetical. Regional tensions are rising and our naval forces are likely to be at the forefront of any confrontation. The ability to prevail in such a conflict depends not just on major warships and submarines but also on the enabling capabilities that underpin maritime operations: replenishment, hydrography, mine warfare and other niche but vital domains.

#### Author

**Jennifer Parker** is an expert associate at the National Security College, Australian National University, an adjunct fellow at the University of New South Wales and Nancy Bentley Associate Fellow in Indo-Pacific Maritime Affairs at the Council on Geo-strategy. She has more than 20 years of experience in the Australian Department of Defence working in a broad range of operational and capability areas. This article was first published in [The Australian Financial Review](#).

### Russia begins design work on submarines for LNG transport



The Russian Navy nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine *Imperator Aleksandr III* during its commissioning ceremony, December 11, 2023 [United Shipbuilding Corporation](#)

[Baird Maritime](#)

A senior official of the Russian government has confirmed that design work has begun on new nuclear-powered submarines for the transport of LNG from the Arctic to Asia via the Northern Sea Route.

Mikhail Kovalchuk, director of Russian nuclear research facility the Kurchatov Institute, said the submarines are being presented as an alternative to traditional LNG carriers, which are unable to navigate year-round in Arctic waters without ice-breakers providing escort.

Western sanctions imposed on Russia's LNG production following the outbreak of the ongoing war with Ukraine has led to a shortage of available ships for transporting gas cargo. Although whatever vessels available are being used for transport, the difficulty of navigating in Arctic ice conditions has led to shipping delays.

Russian state media confirmed that each submarine will have a length of 360 metres and a capacity of 180,000 tonnes of LNG. Each will also be fitted with the same type of nuclear reactors being used on Russia's current fleet of heavy icebreakers.

Because the submarines will be capable of navigating while submerged and will thus not be affected by surface ice conditions, they can lessen sailing times to and from the Arctic. Officials expect the submarines to be able to complete a voyage from the Arctic through the Northern Sea Route in 12 days, whereas an LNG carrier will need 20 days to cover the same distance.



**Main image: RFA Fort Victoria berths temporarily on Liverpool Cruise Terminal on 7th October. Photo: Stratus Imagery.**

### **RFA Fort Victoria to be placed in long-term lay up**

The sole UK solid stores support ship RFA Fort Victoria is being prepared to be laid up for at least a year, joining RFA Tiderace and RFA Wave Ruler in Seaforth Docks, Liverpool in long-term reserve.

Fort Victoria was moved out of Cammell Laird shipyard this week where she has been inactive or undergoing maintenance since she arrived there in September 2023. She was temporarily berthed at the Liverpool Cruise Terminal (pictured above). She has not conducted a RAS since 2021, there is no crew available or plans for her to rejoin the fleet anytime soon. CL has continued to conduct maintenance and a recent dry-docking as part of the pre-existing In-Service Support contract with the MoD. Over the last decade, large sums have been spent on maintaining this ship including [converting her rigs](#) to be compatible with the QEC carriers.

Besides the lack of sailors, the cost of bringing Fort Victoria's firefighting and munitions handling safety equipment up to more stringent modern standards to meet Lloyds certification is believed to be prohibitively expensive. In the short term, the RN carrier strike group is going to have to rely on solid stores support from Norwegian Auxiliary HMNoS Maud and VERTREP transfers of stores from RFA Tidespring.

In the longer term, the RFA will have a problem generating experienced crews to operate the 3 new Fleet Solid Support ships they are not able to reactivate Fort Victoria. The replenishment at sea of liquids (RAS(L) using hoses is a challenging evolution at the best of times but the transfer of solid stores by heavy jackstay (RAS(S)) is even more demanding. To safely manage this in all weathers requires sailors with niche seamanship skills that are regularly rehearsed both by the RFA and by RN warships.



RFA Proteus on the temporary berth at West Float, Birkenhead. 4th October (Photo: Christopher Triggs).

Cammell Laird needs to make urgent repairs to the lock gate so ships have been moved out of the wet basin this week including RFA Fort Victoria, RFA Proteus and RFA Tideforce.

In more positive developments, Proteus has been moved to a temporary berth but it is believed she will sail soon and finally begin work in her intended role of protecting critical undersea infrastructure. RFA Tideforce left the Mersey this week on completion of her refit but will be laid up in a 'hot state' in Portland. There are not enough sailors to crew her sufficiently to act as the FOST tanker.



RFA Tideforce onto the LCT berth temporarily after brief sea trials before leaving on the 7th Oct (Photo: Christopher Triggs).

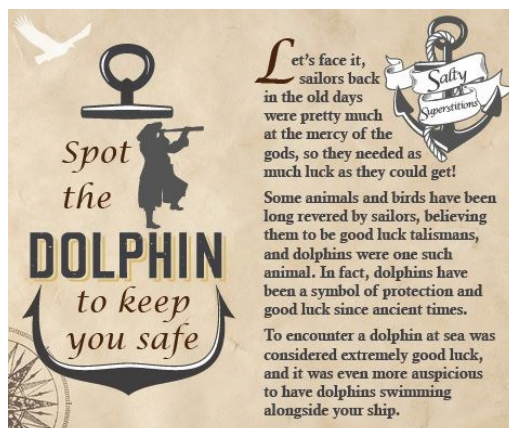
With personnel numbers continuing to fall, the RFA is verging on collapse. There is an internal debate about how many of its 13 ships it can operate simultaneously. This will be 6 ships or less, moving between readiness states depending on priorities and available personnel.

RFA Argus returned to Portland this week after nearly a year on the [Littoral Response Group \(South\)](#) deployment with RFA Lyme Bay. As [previously reported](#) RFA Cardigan Bay is in Portland with no crew available even to take her to Falmouth for refit and her maintenance work has now been postponed to next Spring. RFA Lyme Bay is also making her way home to the UK and may also be left without a crew upon her return. RFA Stirling Castle is alongside in Portland effectively out of action with a crane defect and skeleton crew only. The RN has tasked Serco vessel SD Northern River to support autonomous MCM trials in her absence.



RFA Cardigan Bay, RFA Stirling Castle (and former naval trimaran hull research vessel Triton) alongside in Portland (Photo: Andy Amor).

The new government failed its first serious test of its commitment to defence by stalling on the the RFA pay issue. (Meanwhile, junior doctors and train drivers were quickly awarded very substantial pay rises.) There has been no further progress in the last few months or any meaningful government response to the unprecedented series of strikes and the increasingly desperate state of the RFA.





### **US Navy successfully transfers Mk 41 missile canister at sea**

With significant implications for sustaining warships in combat, the US Navy has succeeded in passing a strike-length missile canister from a naval auxiliary to a cruiser at sea.

Civilian sailors on board the USNS Washington Chambers passed an empty missile canister to the cruiser USS Chosin at sea off the coast of San Diego on 11th October. The hydraulically-powered Transferrable Reload At-sea Method (TRAM) device was then used to insert the canister into the ship's MK 41 Vertical Launching System.

The ability to re-arm warships at sea has been made a priority by US Secretary of the Navy, Carlos Del Toro. The USN needs greater firepower, especially in the Pacific at a time when the number of its VLS cells is declining with the retirement of its cruisers and falling hull numbers. The ability to replenish missiles at sea would remove the need to return to port to rearm, drastically increasing the power of the fleet in a future war that may feature exchanges of large numbers of missiles.

The USN has been pursuing this concept for some time with limited success. A VLS reloading capability was developed in the early 1990s when the USN was bringing the AEGIS system into service and beginning to standardise on vertical launch magazines. This never got beyond the working prototype stage as the navy did not have adequate stocks of missiles to justify it at the time. More recently various crane-based options were tried but abandoned as impractical. Handling a suspended 8-meter canister on a moving platform proved unsafe even in the lightest of weather conditions due to the swinging motion and the need to precisely align the canister with the cell mouth. A canister containing a Tomahawk land attack missile weighs approximately 2.8 tonnes and is challenging to insert safely into a VLS even on land.



The work done in the 1990s has formed the basis for TRAM. In July 2024 a successful land-based demonstration was conducted at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD) in California.

In simple terms, the system works by transferring a loaded VLS canister across from the auxiliary to the sliding padeye post erected on the deck of the receiving ship. The canister is lowered to the swing arm by the sliding padeye and then released from the transfer rig. The canister is swung around and picked off from the swing arm by the rearining device which has two rings that are closed, clamping it in place. The canister is moved by the rearining device to a position over an empty cell. The cell hatch is opened and the rearining device raises the canister to the vertical position. The canister is lowered by wire rope into the cell and the rig is then disconnected. The cell hatch is closed and the canister is connected to the VLS circuits in the silo below decks. When the evolution is completed, the rearining device and the specialist team are returned to the support ship.



The photos show the trial took place in very benign weather conditions. The USN says it conducted the transfer in Sea State Four. Wave height and wind conditions are likely to be an even greater limiting factor for this evolution than a standard RAS/UNREP procedure.

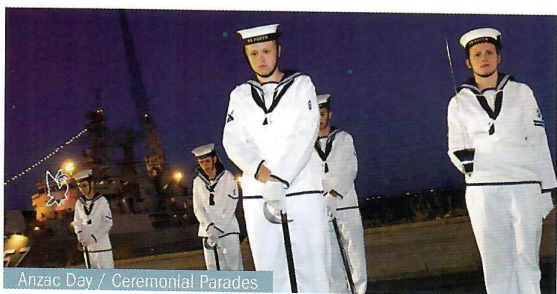
For the Royal Navy, this development is potentially important. The RN appears to be standardising on Mk 41, selected for Type 26, and Type 31 frigates and likely to the Type 83 destroyer. In general, European warships have fewer VLS cells than their USN counterparts and the need for rapid reloading could be just as critical. While the RN currently has no solid stores support ships available, work will start on 3 new ships next year and consideration of reload capability, especially for Type 83 should be given consideration, should the USN solve all the issues involved.

The recent example of HMS Diamond [leaving the action on the Red Sea](#) to sail back to Gibraltar to reload missiles is an example of what a difference at-sea resupply could make. Of course, before this may be considered, not only does the RN need to regenerate its withering logistic support fleet, but it must also ensure it has deep stocks of missiles to reload empty cells. Combat experience indicates missile and ammunition expenditure always exceeds peacetime expectations.

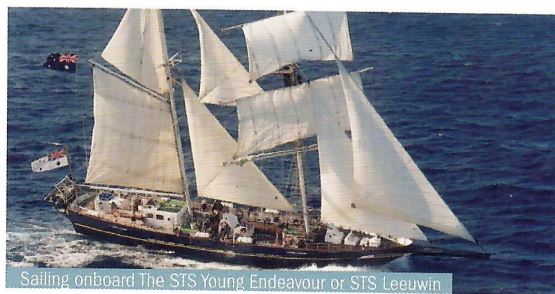
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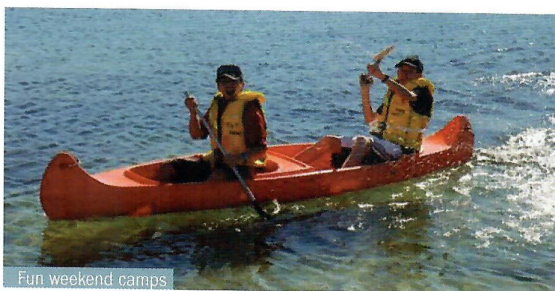
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