

THE NAVY

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THE JOURNAL OF THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



125 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY • THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA



**INTERCEPTING THE PONY EXPRESS
- OPTIONS FOR A2D2**

JSF CHALLENGES FOR AUSTRALIA'S LHDs

THE SUBMARINE AND SEA POWER 2025

FACING UP TO AUKUS REALITIES

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THE NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

KEEP WATCH
EDUCATE; ADVOCATE; SUPPORT



THE LEAGUE'S 125TH CELEBRATION

On the evening of 26 November 2025, the Navy League of Australia marked a truly historic milestone - the 125th anniversary of its first branch being established in Australia. The commemoration, held in the prestigious new auditorium of the Australian War Memorial, was not simply a celebration, but a reaffirmation of a century and a quarter of steadfast advocacy for Australia's maritime strength.

Distinguished guests and VIPs gathered to honour the League's enduring mission: championing a powerful maritime defence, nurturing the next generation through cadet support, and educating Australians on a truth as vital today as it was in 1900 - that command of the seas safeguards our freedom, underpins our democracy, and secures our way of life. This was more than an anniversary; it was a reminder of the Navy League's unbroken commitment to Australia's destiny as a maritime nation.

Video messages of support and congratulations were sent by the Governor General, The Hon. Sam Moyston AC; Mr Larry Salter, President of the Navy League of the United States, and, Mr Owen Rae, NZ Navy League Auckland President.

Indo-Pacific 2025 Exhibition

At our 2024 Annual Meeting, the League resolved to establish a stand at the Indo-Pacific 2025 exhibition in Darling Harbour. This was a major step in raising our profile within the naval and defence community. With the help of VADM Tim Barrett we secured a site and established a Navy League Stand for the first time.

The exhibition itself was impressive:

- 1,019 participating companies from 24 nations
- 241 official delegations from 62 nations, including 32 Chiefs of Navy or equivalents, and
- 28,322 attendances across three days

We distributed close to 1,000 copies of *THE NAVY* and welcomed many new member applications, had we brought 10,000 magazines we would have still been left short, such was *THE NAVY*'s appeal. The event was a marketing success, creating valuable links with groups and businesses that can support the League into the future.

Project Albert

The Navy League's most ambitious education and advocacy initiative to date was the video series *The Sea and Australia*, produced in the 1980s at a cost exceeding \$200,000 (over \$1 million in today's figures).

This landmark program was only possible through the generosity of Mr Robert "Otto" Albert, a remarkable benefactor whose philanthropy was so extensive that the Governor-General herself gave a speech in his honour at the funeral following his passing a few years ago.

The two-and-a-half-hour series, comprising six episodes, covered:

1. The Voyage of the First Fleet, Sydney Cove, and Early Settlement
2. The Nature of the Sea
3. The Resources of the Sea
4. Commercial Shipping, Ports and Harbours
5. Navigation and Safety at Sea
6. Protection and Conservation (including RAN history)

Distributed free to over 2,500 secondary schools with the support of six state education authorities, it remains a landmark in Australian maritime education.

With this legacy in mind, the League recently voted at its Annual Meeting in Canberra to support a new initiative called Project Albert, named in honour of our dear friend and benefactor.

Project Albert will encompass three phases:

- **Phase 1:** Ensure that every high school library within an hour's drive of a naval cadet unit receives *THE NAVY* magazine, with each issue including a dedicated page inviting young Australians to consider joining the cadets.
- **Phase 2:** Expand the initiative to reach every primary school in the nation, planting the seeds of maritime awareness and pride even earlier.
- **Phase 3:** Acquire and digitally restore *The Sea and Australia*, making it available on our new YouTube channel. If sufficient funds can be secured, we aspire to reshoot the series for a modern audience, ensuring its enduring message continues to resonate.

Just as the original film was made possible through Mr Albert's generosity, so too will the success of Project Albert depend on the support of those willing to invest in Australia's maritime story. If you know of someone with the means and the vision to leave their mark on this vital cause, I invite and implore you to connect them with us.

The Defence Budget Pie

It is increasingly evident that the government's spending across all portfolios has reached a level where alarm bells are ringing. Inflation is edging out of control, with the Reserve Bank already preparing the public for large interest rate hikes.

In an effort to rein in expenditure, the government has directed all departments to impose a 5% cut across the board. Whether Defence has been quarantined from this measure remains unclear, though one might reasonably suspect not.

The AUKUS submarine project alone demands immense resources, yet without additional supplementation funding to reflect its nation building significance, there is a real risk that the rest of Defence will slide back into the bad old days of service infighting - marked by backstabbing, deal making and damaging leaks to the media - over who secures the larger share of a shrinking budget. That would not be good for Australia with the threat of Chinese aggression in the region only 13 months away, and counting.

With this looming date in mind, the League continues to urge for the modification of our Canberra Class LHDs to operate F 35B Joint Strike Fighters. These aircraft need not be Australian (although given the short timeframe that option has passed anyway) but rather allied F 35Bs, forming a genuine coalition statement of resolve.

The F 35B is currently operated by the US Marine Corps, the Royal Navy, Japan and Italy. Even if Australia were simply operating alongside these nations, the ability to cross deck their aircraft onto our ships would serve as a powerful force multiplier, delivering credible combat power to sea in the shortest possible time and for minimal outlay.

As this page is written, rumours abound in the Australian media of another Chinese naval surface action group of unknown composition heading toward our region. This follows a visit to Australia by China's third ranking official - whose discussions with our Government remain cloaked in secrecy - and a non-coincidence call to President Trump in which Xi Jinping asserted that Taiwan's "return" is an "integral part of the post war international order". Xi's message is clear: if that order does not conform to Beijing's design, then disorder will be the result. Such language is not mere rhetoric; it is a signal of intent, a reminder that China seeks to redefine the very architecture of regional stability.

1 December 2025

Mark Schweikert

President, Navy League of Australia
president@navyleague.org.au



NLA President Mark Schweikert with Chief of Navy VADM Mark Hammond AO RAN. (NLA)



(From L to R) Mr Matt Anderson, Director Australian War Memorial; Senator Raff Ciccone; Mr Mark Schweikert, NLA President; Mr Ohad Katz, CEO Raytheon Australia, and, RADM Matt Buckley AM CSC RAN Deputy Chief of Navy. (NLA)



At the Sydney launch of The Sea and Australia educational video are (from L to R) John Grover, RADM Andrew Robertson, Geoffrey Evans, Robert Albert and Rob McCauley of McCauley Productions. (NLA)



Cross decked USMC F-35Bs operating from the IZUMO-class light fleet carrier KAGA. (JMSDF)



Mark Hammond
Chief of Navy
Vice Admiral AO, RAN



Marking 125 Years of Service to Australia

This year our Navy will mark a significant milestone in our history – the 125th anniversary of the formation of the Commonwealth Naval Forces in 1901, which ten years later became the Royal Australian Navy.

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) stands as one of the most enduring pillars of Australia's national security and prosperity.

Its origins trace back to the Federation of Australia, when the newly formed Commonwealth assumed responsibility for naval defence from the individual colonies.

The RAN's baptism of fire came during World War I. HMAS SYDNEY's victory over the German cruiser EMDEN in 1914 was a defining moment, showcasing the professionalism and courage of Australian sailors on the global stage. HMAS AE2's successful and unprecedented passage at the Dardanelles in 1915 underlined the RAN's exceptional skill in submarine warfare.

Throughout the war, RAN ships escorted convoys, hunted enemy raiders, and supported Allied operations, ensuring vital sea lanes remained open. These contributions underscored the strategic importance of naval power to Australia's security and trade.



Submarine HMAS AE1 with the battlecruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA (I) in the background, WW1. Source Seapower Centre Australia



HMAS ARUNTA I as viewed from HMAS SHROPSHIRE on 27 September 1944 shortly before the Battle of Surigao Strait. Source Seapower Centre

The outbreak of World War II saw the RAN expand rapidly, operating across the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Pacific. Australian ships fought in pivotal battles—from the Mediterranean campaigns to the defence of convoys in the Indian Ocean.

The RAN played a critical role in the Pacific theatre of the Second World War, particularly after Japan entered the war. The loss of HMAS SYDNEY in 1941 and HMAS CANBERRA in 1942 were sobering reminders of the cost of war, yet they reinforced the Navy's resolve. By war's end, the RAN had grown into a formidable force, integral to Allied victory and the defence of Australia's shores.

In the post-war era, our Navy adapted to new strategic realities. During the Korean War, our ships provided naval gunfire support and escorted UN forces. In Vietnam, our destroyers and clearance divers contributed to maritime security and riverine operations. These deployments reflected Australia's commitment to collective security and regional stability, reinforcing the Navy's role as a reliable partner in international coalitions.

From the late 20th century onward, the RAN underwent a technological evolution, commissioning advanced platforms such as the *Anzac-class* frigates, *Collins-class* submarines, and more recently, the *Hobart-class* destroyers and *Canberra-class* amphibious ships.



Anti-aircraft gunners aboard HMAS PERTH I, WWII.
Source Seapower Centre Australia



HMAS CHOULES evacuates civilians from Mallacoota bushfires in 2020.

These modern capabilities enable the RAN to project power, deliver humanitarian assistance, and respond to disasters and crises across the Indo-Pacific. Operations in East Timor, the Solomon Islands, and the Middle East have demonstrated the Navy's versatility—whether combating piracy, enforcing sanctions, or providing disaster relief.

As we reflect on our Navy's proud history and contribution to operations across the globe, it's important to remember the RAN's mission extends beyond warfighting. Over 99% of Australia's exports and imports move by sea, and our connectivity to the internet and international financial system depend on sea bed cables. Access to the sea is an existential issue. By safeguarding Australia's maritime approaches and trade routes, the Navy assures the nation's prosperity.

RAN officers and sailors also play a key role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and foster goodwill and stability across our region as Saltwater Diplomats in floating Australian Embassies. Their professionalism, resilience, and dedication embody the values of service and sacrifice, ensuring Australia remains secure in an increasingly complex strategic environment.

From our humble beginnings in 1901 to our status as a modern, technologically-advanced maritime force, the Royal Australian Navy has been central to Australia's defence and prosperity.

The proud history of our Navy is written in the courage of its people—officers and sailors who have served with distinction in peace and war. As Australia faces new challenges in the Indo-Pacific, the RAN's enduring commitment to protecting the nation and contributing to regional security remains as vital today as it was over a century ago.

Thank you to all who have served, continue to serve and to those who will serve in the years ahead.



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL FLEET REVIEW SERVING AUSTRALIA WITH PRIDE

The intention is to commemorate the Navy's 125th Anniversary with an International Fleet Review; bringing together around 30 warships from 10 different nations, reaffirming Australia's enduring naval heritage and its strong ties with maritime partners across the globe.

It is hoped warships from allied and partner navies—including vessels from the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and North America—will join the RAN in Sydney Harbour. Their presence underscores the importance of international cooperation in maintaining maritime security and stability. The Fleet Review may include:

- Ceremonial entry of ships into Sydney Harbour, with crews lining the decks in salute.
- Aerial displays by the Royal Australian Air Force, showcasing precision flying and maritime support capabilities.
- Public open days, allowing visitors to tour selected ships and meet sailors from around the world.
- Commemorative ceremonies, honouring the sacrifices of past and present naval personnel.
- Night-time illumination and fireworks, casting Sydney Harbour in a dazzling glow to conclude the day's festivities.

For Australians, the Fleet Review is a national moment of reflection and pride. It connects communities with their maritime heritage, honours the service of veterans, and inspires future generations to consider careers in the Navy.

SOME CHICKEN; SOME NECK!

We do not regard the Navy as a toy - we regard it as a deadly instrument, which may have to be used some day in the maintenance of our independence and liberty.

Senator Hon. George Pearce, circa 1917

The first 2026 issue of *THE NAVY* begins with a bang and major program initiatives announced by the President at the NLA's anniversary dinner and Chief of Navy's article introducing the events to mark the 125th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy. *THE NAVY* has also gone to a 40 page full colour publication, for this and subsequent issues.

The themes this issue are concentrated about Drones, Carriers, and Submarines – as outlined in the updated *Statement of Policy*, revised during the recent NLA annual general meeting.

Paper 1 this issue, *first prize professional essay entry*, is by Andrew Baird, entitled *Intercepting the Pony Express – Options for A2D2*. Pointing towards rapid adaptation and mobilisation, Andrew concludes, *inter alia*:

Many of the [drones] that have been described are relatively small and require very little space to operate from. A large number of [suitable operating] vessels are sitting out of the water in Australia's fishing ports. In the event of an imminent threat to Australia, getting these vessels ready again would be possible in a relatively short period of time. Semi-retired mechanics and boat builders would undoubtedly be willing to help out if the homeland was under threat.

Very rapidly, as in 1942 (and 1914), Australia may find it is relying on the ingenuity and ability of its younger generations, our remarkable *Millennials and Zoomers*, to hold the line – and rebuild ubiquity into the wartime fleet. The second paper is by Mark Boast entitled *JSF Challenges for Australian LHDs*, maintaining NLA emphasis on the need to restore fixed wing aviation to the Fleet. It is understood that, recently, F-35B may have been offered to ADF? – which is the variant RAAF should have selected all along. Boast advises the Prime Minister:

...to start with, we need to purchase at least one squadron of approximately 12 STOVL aircraft and training systems; train the pilots on a different variant of an existing aircraft but one that flies differently; develop our engineers and flying operations people overseas with one of our major allies, which we've done before, and integrate the new squadron onto the ship overseas using our allies support for up to a year.

The third and fourth papers return to NLA focus on submarines. Longstanding contributor and NLA Member, Captain Christopher Skinner RAN (Ret) comments in *The Submarine and Sea Power 2025*, that

...there will be changes affecting the Australian submarine force arising from the introduction of nuclear propulsion via AUKUS. The process must be transparent and open to public scrutiny in order to engender trust in the safety and security of the undertaking. The associated issue of dealing with a possible interim reduction in submarine capability following *Collins-class* withdrawal from service must not be permitted to disrupt the SSN acquisition strategy and the myriad preparations in train that are essential for introduction of a nuclear submarine force with the highest level of safety, security and environmental protection, as will be demanded by the Australian community in return for their full support.

In the final paper this issue (*first prize, essay non-professional entry*), Rober McKeown in *Facing up to AUKUS realities*, concludes:

Consider a scenario where a Chinese carrier battle group is sent to conduct a Pearl Harbor-style attack against Australia as part

of an offensive against Taiwan. An undetectable Australian SSN with high speed and long endurance lying in wait would pose a significant threat to the attacking force. Australia's journey to a nuclear-powered submarine fleet is likely to take longer than originally expected, but the payoff will be a sea denial weapon that an aggressor challenges at its peril.

The peril Australia faces is today, more than tomorrow when – as the President and the late General Senator Jim Molan concluded – “we will have to fight with what we've got.” As the Army might say: “eighty percent today, is better than 100% tomorrow!”

Other 2025 NLA Essay prize winners, whose papers will be published in 2026, include:

Kelvin Curnow 2nd Prize Professional Entry	Building a Navy for the 2030s and beyond
Murray Dear 2nd Prize Non-professional Entry	Seizing Samoa
George Galdorisi 3rd Prize Professional Entry	Australia's Pivotal Role in Regional Maritime Security Needs an “Inside-Out” Approach
Walter Burroughs 3rd Prize Non-professional Entry	Three Ships that caught us napping

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Longstanding NLA member and *THE NAVY* Contributor, Commander Greg Swinden RAN, reminds us in his paper *Creating the RAN* for the *Naval Historical Review* (December 2025), that:

The creation of the Royal Australian Navy did not happen overnight and was not the product of any single politician or naval officer. It was a long term, but deliberate undertaking by many people, such as Pearce, who saw the vast continent of Australia, was girt by sea. The sea lines of communication, more commonly known as ‘sea-lanes’, that brought migrants to the continent and took the wool, wheat, gold and other produce to the rest of the world could also be a highway for an enemy, who sought to control or dominate the new nation.

The founding father of the Royal Australia Navy, Vice Admiral Sir William Rooke Creswell, KCMG, KBE, noted somewhat caustically in a 1902 Parliamentary report, that:

The spectacle of some 5,000,000 Australians, with an Army splendidly equipped, unable to prevent the burning of a cargo of wool in sight of Sydney Heads, is only the ordinary consequence of a policy of naval impotence.



The Great White Fleet First Division *Connecticut-class* make headway in John Charles Roach's painting. (Image USNI)



PLAN Surface Action Group visits Sydney Harbour 3-5 June 2019 Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Thieneman Massacre.

While much has changed, some things stay the same. Australia's population is much larger and wealthier, in many regards, than previous generations, but our reliance on the sea and our girt for managing the flows of trade and data, remains our constant. The linkage between the maritime and the oceans remains the same. As between our economies, and the rules-based order that – for almost half-a-century (through UNCLOS, adopted in 1982) – has allowed for free trade across, under, and above the seas.

The RAN is both a founding and core institute of Commonwealth and the States which formed the Colonial Naval Service. Noting Prime Minister Deakin's invitation to the US Navy to visit Australian waters in 1908, during the conduct of its world cruise – from the start Navy has looked both to the Royal Navy and the US Navy. The US *Great White Fleet* sailed through the Sydney Heads on 20 August 1908 - comprising sixteen battleships plus auxiliary support vessels – entering Sydney Harbour five years before the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) fleet, led by the battlecruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA (I), on October 4th 1913. A grand entry including cruisers MELBOURNE & SYDNEY, training ship ENCOUNTER, and destroyers WARREGO, PARRAMATTA, YARRA. This was a huge national event, with the RAN assuming command of the Australian Station and showcasing Australia's new sea power. Less than 12 months before the outbreak of World War I.

Meetings without Coffee

The increasingly secretive Albanese Government appears again to be on the back foot. In late August, Richard Marles was summoned to Washington for discussions with the Vice President and US Secretary of State, and a fly-by with the Secretary of War. The details of these discussions have not been broadcast – but it appears a *Gypsy's Warning* was given, regarding AUKUS and Defence spending. Perhaps reciprocating BRISBANE's un-announced FONOPS with HMCS VILLE DE QUEBEC through the Taiwan Strait (and Pacific Island Defence negotiations),

Zhao Leji, the third-ranking official in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chairman of the National People's Congress, visited Australia in late November 2025. The Australian Parliament was electronically shut down during his visit – and a detailed readout has yet to be provided. Shortly afterwards, a formidable Surface Action Group (SAG) comprising an Amphibious Assault Ship (*Yushen*-class, Type 075 LHD, carrying up to 30 Helicopters and UAV), a *Renhai*-class (Type 055) cruiser, a *Jiangkai*-class (Type 054A) frigate, and a *Fuchi*-class (Type 903) tanker transited the Philippine Sea. Potentially operating co-dependently with the carrier PLAN LIAONING (CV 16). Subsequently, Japan accused the PLAN for one of the aircraft operating from the carrier locking its radar onto Japanese fighter jets near the Japanese island of Okinawa. This followed an extraordinary attack by China's Consul General in Osaka, Xue Jian, on the Japanese PM (following concerns expressed about a Chinese attack on Taiwan) that:

[the CCP] have no choice but to cut off that dirty neck that has lunged at us without a moment's hesitation. Are you [Japan] ready?

Despite being a longstanding ally and QUAD member, neither the attack on the Japanese PM, Sanae Takaichi, nor the radar locking of Japanese aircraft, have apparently drawn comment or condemnation from the Australian Government. Prompting former Japanese Ambassador to Australia, Shingo Yamagami, to question “why, when Australia came under tremendous pressure from China and was subject to similar economic coercion, Japan stated out loud that Australia was not walking alone” and asking “is it too much to expect the same from our Aussie mates in times of need?” Why indeed. The Chinese SAG has multiple options, including visits to CCP island “allies”. As per Soviet planning, it appears the SAG could run south over the Christmas period. It is to be wondered if it will make a “surprise” entry to Sydney Harbour over the New or Chinese New Years – as per the 2019 PLAN SAG? Which somewhat unexpectedly, visited Fleet Base East in June 2019, coinciding with the 30th Anniversary of the Thieneman Massacre. Demonstrating either incompetence or ignorance on behalf of the LNP Government at the time. ■

For the maintenance of the Maritime wellbeing of the nation. The Navy League is intent upon keeping before the Australian people the fact that we are a maritime nation and that a strong Navy and capable maritime industry are elements of our national wellbeing and vital to the freedom of Australia. The League seeks to promote Defence self-reliance by actively supporting defence manufacturing, research, cyberspace, shipping, transport, and other relevant industries.

Through geographical necessity Australia's prosperity, strength, and safety depend to a great extent upon the security of the surrounding seas and island areas, and on unrestricted seaborne trade.

The strategic background to Australia's security is changing and, in many respects, has become much less certain following increasing tensions, particularly in East Asia involving major powers, and in Europe and the Middle East. The League believes that Australia should rapidly increase the capability to defend itself, paying particular attention to maritime defence.

The Navy League:

- Believes Australia can be defended against attack and that the prime requirement of our defence is an evident ability to control the sea and air space around us and to contribute to defending essential lines of sea, undersea and air communication with our Allies and trading partners.
- Supports a continuing strong alliance with Five Eyes, AUKUS and QUAD partners.
- Supports close relationships with all nations in our general area particularly PNG, Indonesia, the Philippines and the South Pacific Island States.
- Advocates the acquisition of the most capable modern armaments, surveillance systems, sensors, and decision support to ensure decisive advantage over forces in our general area.
- Advocates a strong deterrent element in the ADF.
- Believes the ADF must be capable of protecting commercial shipping both within Australian waters and beyond, in conjunction with allies.
- Endorses the development of the capability for the patrol and surveillance of all of Australia's ocean areas, its island territories and the Southern Ocean.
- Supports Government initiatives for rebuilding an Australian commercial fleet capable of supporting the ADF and the carriage of essential cargoes to and from Australia including in times of conflict.
- Supports Government intention to increase maritime preparedness and increase defence expenditure to 4.0% of GDP.
- Urges the strength and capabilities of the Army (including particularly the Army Reserve) and Air Force be enhanced, and the weaponry, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, cyberspace and electronic capabilities of the ADF be increased, including an expansion in its UAS, UAV capability.
- The Navy League believes maritime Defence requires a joint integrated endeavour across Navy, Army and Air Force.
- Considers that the level of both the offensive and defensive capabilities of the RAN should be strengthened, in particular with a further increase in the number of surface combatants noting the need to ensure indispensable fuel and other supplies, and the many other essential maritime tasks.
- Recommends bringing forward the start date of the destroyer replacement program to both strengthen the RAN and mitigate the local industry capability gap.
- Recommends the urgent replacement and increase in numbers of the current mine-countermeasure force.
- Strongly supports the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines.
- Recommends very early action to provide a strategic submarine base on the Eastern seaboard and further development of Western Australia facilities.
- Notes the potential combat effectiveness and flexibility of the STOVL version of the Joint Strike Fighter (F-35B Lightning II) and supports further examination of its application within the ADF through the LHDs.
- Supports the development of Australia's defence industry, including strong research and design organisations capable of the construction and maintenance of all warships, submarines, and support vessels in the Navy's order of battle, and welcomes the Government decision to provide a stable and continuous shipbuilding program.
- Advocates the retention in maintained reserve of operationally capable ships that are required to be paid off for resource or other economic reasons.
- Supports a strong and identifiable Naval Reserve with consideration as to remobilising the Port Divisions in support of securing the maritime and homeland base.
- Promotes and supports the Australian Navy Cadets organisation.
- Advocates urgent Government research and action to remedy the reported serious naval recruiting and retention problem.

As to the RAN, the League, while noting vital national peacetime tasks conducted by Navy, including border protection, flag showing/diplomacy, disaster relief, maritime rescue, hydrography and aid to the civil power:

- Supports the maintenance of a Navy capable of effective action in hostilities and advocates a build-up of the fleet and its afloat support elements to ensure that, in conjunction with the Army and RAAF, this can be sustained against any force which could be deployed in our area of strategic interest.

The League:

- Calls for a bipartisan political approach to national defence with a commitment to a steady long-term build-up in Australia's defence capability including the required industrial infrastructure.
- Believes that, given leadership by successive governments, Australia can defend itself in the longer term, within acceptable financial, economic and manpower parameters.

This was the first attendance of the Navy League of Australia at the world-renowned INDOPAC following the death of John Jeremy AM (NLA VP and Chair of the IMC), earlier this year. Planning for the NLA to attend INDOPAC began in early 2025 and was given the blessing of Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN, the Chair of the Board, ADMA Foundation. Admiral Tim Barrett is a longstanding supporter of the Navy League of Australia, who contributed significantly to the nation (and *THE NAVY*) during his time as Chief of Navy. [1, 2]



Vice Admiral Tim Barrett AO, CSC, RAN with NSW NLA Div President Mr Colin Bold. Showing the model of USS Missouri (BB-63) – *Mighty Mo* – on loan from the Australian National Maritime Museum.

The NLA Stand was ideally situated in terms of *Feng Shui*, at a confluence beside our excellent longstanding advertisers (see cover) *C4i Solutions*, opposite *Shield AI*; at a juncture between *Raytheon* and the *US Partnership Pavillion* suites – providing the wind-water, positive flows of people (sailors) and energy necessary for harmony, balance, and prosperity.



The NLA stand on opening – with copies of *THE NAVY* either side and the NLA approved flags: the Australian Flag; the Australian White Ensign; the Australian Red Ensign; and the NLA Flag.

The stand was busy throughout. Perhaps offering the many hundreds of sailors, Defence personnel, public servants, ministers, and industrialists – of all ranks from AB to Admiral – a moments respite? A welcoming watering hole – albeit without coffee (perhaps a space for *Navy Canteens* at INDOPAC 2027?) – and time for reflection, away from the hard sell?

The NLA was honoured by the attendance of Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, who dropped in on several occasions, at the beginning and end of INDOPAC. Providing kind support and encouragement for the NLA 125th anniversary – leading into the RAN's 125th in 2026.



The Hon Angus Taylor MP Shadow Minister for Defence and NLA President Mr Mark Schweikert.

In preparation, 1000 additional copies of *THE NAVY* were run off for INDOPAC 2025. Demand was intense – by the end of the first day, well over half of the magazines had been distributed – with a subsequent upswing in memberships, both on the day and subsequently. Subscribing on the day, also included a copy of Malcolm Longstaff's book, *KEEPING WATCH – a history of the Navy League Australia 1895-2015*.

The response from the many hundreds of sailors, marines, diggers, and aviators attending the NLA stand was humbling and exhilarating. Keeping the stand crew (the President, Federal Vice President, NSW DIV President supported by Captains Chris Skinner RAN (Ret) and the Hon Peter Collins AM, RFD, KCRAN (Ret)), busy!



Rear Admiral Christopher J. Cavanaugh USN Commander, Submarine Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet with NLA Vice President Captain Simon Reay Atkinson RAN.

Being close to the US Pavillion suite also meant that the NLA had the opportunity to meet senior US officials – between meeting – including the excellent new ADC (Lieutenant Submariner, USN) to Admiral Cavanaugh.



Raytheon SeaRAM (Rolling Air Frame Missile) System will enter service with the Royal Australian Navy as fitted to the *Mogami-class* general purpose frigate.

Raytheon was in significant attendance at INDOPAC and gave support to the NLA – including the loaning of a model *Collins-class* submarine for the NLA 125th Anniversary Dinner, at the Australian War Memorial 26 November 2025. *Raytheon* lead on Guided Weapons for Australia and are likely to form a pivotal role in the recently announced *Defence Delivery Agency*. The *Raytheon-Kongsberg* partnership manufactures the missile launcher system for the *Naval Strike Missile* (NSM). The partnership involves both companies producing the launchers and missiles, with Kongsberg focusing on production in Norway and Australia, and Raytheon handling production in the U.S. The NSM is a stealth cruise missile designed for sea and land targets – allowing for various platforms, including naval vessels and land-based vehicles, to deploy the missile.



Brigadier Will Taylor OBE RM (Rtd) General Manager Raytheon Australia, with NLA VP.

There were many delegations attending including the JMSDF and Chilean Admiralties – amongst whom were old ship mates. The Japanese delegation mentioned the *Mogami-class* and the papers written on the Japanese Navy (IJN and JMSDF) from its foundation, in *THE NAVY*. The Chilean delegation was most interested in connections with Admiral Cochrane, and the shared experiences of the Type 23s (ex RN) and FFGs (ex-RAN). Both Admirals emphasised the need to “remember our past, to secure our futures.”



Model of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) *Mogami-class* to be manufactured under licence for the RAN.

The overall impression was one of being amongst friends – providing a friendly place and ear. Including amongst *THE NAVY* contributors, such as Captain Chris Skinner and Major General Ash Collingburn.

There was some commentary that INDOPAC 2025 was subdued, with few major announcements (the *Mogami-class* announcement expected at INDOPAC, was delivered earlier) and some Primes not in attendance. Reportedly due to conflicting exhibition demands (Italy), uncertainty, and budget cuts continuing to impact the ADF. On the other hand, there was invigorating discussions on *Autonomy* and *Drones* – a debate on which the NLA and *THE NAVY* have been contributing to, over many years. Discussions arising also amongst media colleagues and the editor, *Aeneas*.



NSW DIV President with the President and Major General Ash Collingburn AM DSM, Commander Australian 1st Division.

Several younger sailors (at the Midshipman and AB level) highly commended *THE NAVY* as being an essential historical and analytical source for their studies and background knowledge. *THE NAVY* PDF magazines on the NLA webpage were “their first port of call.” A reference-author list of articles going back to 1921 (and 1938) is perhaps something the NLA might contribute during its 125th anniversary?



The President in earnest conversation with Xavier Vavasour, founder and Editor-in-Chief of *NAVAL NEWS*, a supporter of the NLA and reader of *THE NAVY*.

There are a few lessons to learn – including more copies of *THE NAVY* (the last 50 were distributed on the last day). Notwithstanding, NLA attendance at INDOPAC 2027 is already being considered. The NLA wishes to thank INDOPAC 2025 organisers, Admiral Tim Barrett and the many friends, mariners, and shipmates who took the time to swing by the NLA plates. ■

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DEFENCE BUDGET ANALYSIS

The Editor was congratulated by members of the Press Corps attending INDOPAC for providing what they saw “as the most detailed and consistent analysis of the ADF Defence Budget of any publication!” This raises two questions – the first as to why analysis in depth is not covered by the Canberra-based press corps; the second why *THE NAVY* is not referenced accordingly when applied. As this publication does for all quotes taken from the main stream media. Including “our ABC.”

As outlined in the October issue:

To pay for the promises made during the Election, the Government is undertaking what is euphemistically termed its *Integrated Capability Assessment, 2025*. Driven by the Auditor General’s Office (AGO), this program is ostensibly about optimisation. It is a 10% cut, year on year, of the Defence budget – to 2027/28. The consultancies running the Government and AGO (behind the scenes) have constructed the budget to show an overspend of the program, as much as 33%. Less is always more in consultancy world.

AN ADAPTIVE BUDGET

An adaptive Budget for a complex system (such as Defence) requires maintaining both growth and decline, over time. Being a system, it needs to be considered and assessed actuarially – not simply by linear accountants, who run Governments and dominate the top two international consultancies and the Big Four.

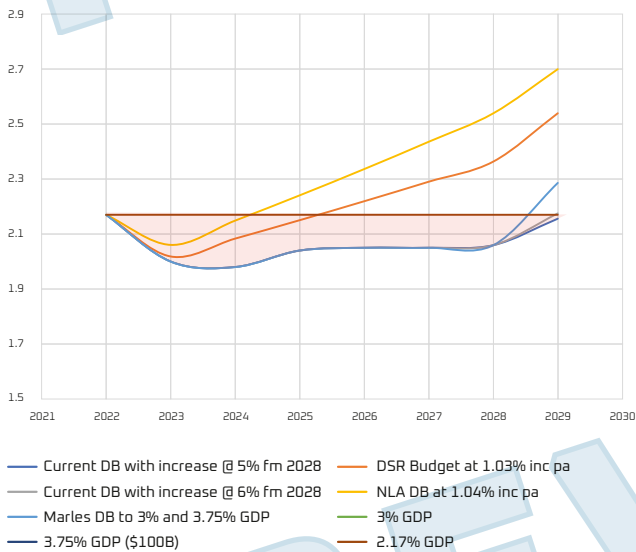


Figure 1: The Defence Budget (s) "Below the Straight Line"

The DSR author’s Professor Peter Dean, Sir Angus Houston, and the Hon Stephen Smith (High Commissioner to the United Kingdom) clearly recommended that the Government made cuts to the then (2022) budget but also – and significantly – maintained increases at about 1.03% pa. Where it had been under the previous LNP Government. This point was reiterated by the Hon Kim Beazley speaking at INDOPAC (Sea Power Conference) in November 2023. Despite these clear recommendations, the accountants and consultants who advise (control) ministers chose to cut and freeze Defence spending at 2022 levels. The result has been catastrophic for Defence.

As Aristotle observed “nature abhors a vacuum,” – against a complex adaptive system, one might say “nature abhors a flat line.” It is featureless, non-navigable, and can neither be encountered by the senses nor does its imposition lend additional explanatory power.

The ignorance of the accountants, consultants, senior APS, and Ministers responsible for the Defence budget in Treasury, Defence, and the AGO appears profound. A long-standing factor in all peacetime Defence budgets is Defence Cost Inflation (DCI). [1-27] Running at about 6-8% compound depreciation a year, DCI acts like a “force” on all existing capabilities, including crewing. Unless the budget increases proportionally or new designs are built (at half-life), fleet sizes halve every 25 years. For example, six RAN FFG, replaced by 3 x DDG.

Table 1: Examination of Five Different Defence Budgets

	3% GDP	3.75% GDP	Growth From 2028-9 (per annum)
Current DB Cuts / Growth @5% from 2028	Not Reached	Not Reached	5%
DSR DB Cuts / Growth @ 3% pa	2032	circa 2037	5%
Current DB Cuts / Growth @6% from 2028	Not Reached	Not Reached	6%
NLA DB Cuts / Growth @ 4% pa	2031	circa 2036	5%
Marles DB Cuts / Growth to 3% and 3.75% GDP	2032	2034	11.75%

The DSR budget (as applied by Defence) cut \$4-5 Billion a year from 2022-23, until 2032, upon which, in 2025, was imposed the *Integrated Capability Assessment, 2025*. An additional 10% cut (per annum) running through to 2028-9. When, according to Defence Forward Estimates, the budget is set to increase between 5% and 6%. Additionally, The DPM (and Minister for Defence) – in late 2024 – variously claimed the Defence budget will reach 3% GDP by 2032 and \$100B (3.75% GDP) by 2034.

ACTUARIAL ACTUALITY

Five Defence Budgets have been examined by NLA Defence analysts. One is the Current Defence Budget, increasing at 5% pa from 2028; the other at 6% pa. As identified in the forward estimates. The Smith, Houston, and Dean (and Beazley) budget increasing at 3% pa (and 5% from 2028) is calculated, along with the NLA Defence Budget (at 4% and 5% from 2028) and the Marles budget (to meet 3% in 2032, and \$100B in 2034). All budgets have DCI and ICA25 applied.

From Figure 1, it will be seen that the current Defence budget(s) have created exactly the type of straight-line (flat earth) budget warned about. With the Government, after initial cuts maintaining the budget at or about 2.05% GDP, through underspends, cash injections, and AUKUS transfers. There is no new money – “it is the cash flows that count.” The result, in 2025, is that Defence is in crisis – unable to afford the current operational force (even pay for fuel), and unable to invest in the future. With no way out, other than consuming its own.



AUKUS SSN (Image BAE Systems-ASC).

Most Defence experts (and Richard Marles) recognise that AUKUS becomes viable at about 3% GDP – 1% on AUKUS, and 2% on conventional Defence. The story does not end there. To maintain AUKUS and conventional capabilities requires increasing Defence spending to 3.75% GDP (\$100B) by the mid-2030s, and towards 4% GDP in the 2040s. See NLA Statement of Policy.

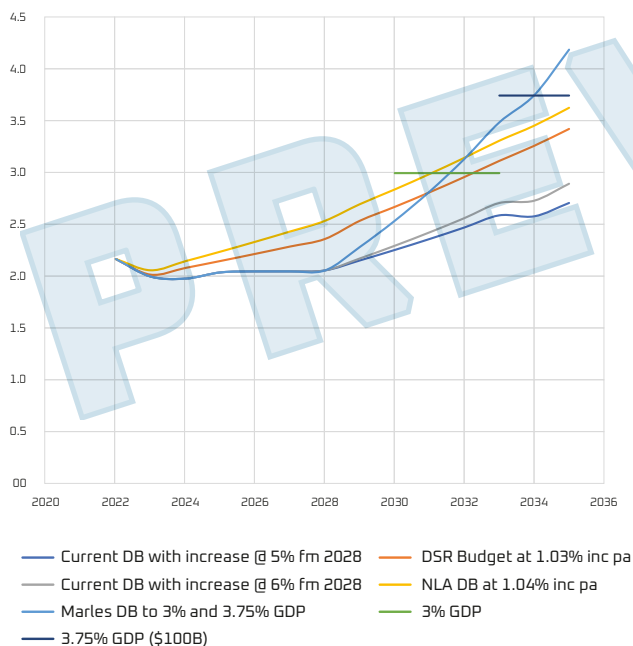


Figure 2: Five Defence Budgets 2022-2035

Judged against this criteria neither of the current Defence Budgets will reach 3% (or 3.75%) in the early / mid-2030s, see table 1. These two budgets, along with the Marles budget, create exactly the type of black hole “straight line” budgets warned against (by the NLA, and Smith, Houston, and Dean (and Beazley) – SHDB). Quite literally sucking the life out of Defence. See figure 1.

The “SHDB budget” increasing at 3% pa (to 2028) would have achieved 3% GDP by 2032, and 3.75% circa 2037. It shows exactly the complex adaptive budget response designed – recovering from the cuts (and DCI) downswing by 2025. It recognises that change requires investing in. One cannot fatten the calf, by cutting it.

The recommended NLA Defence budget at 4% pa (to 2028) – applying the same criteria – would have achieved 3% by 2031, and 3.75% circa 2036. It would have exited the Defence downswing (recession) in 2024.

Significantly, the SHDB and NLA Defence Budgets exhibit the responses, and flows that would have allowed the ADF to adapt, change, invent, and innovate to changing strategic stimuli.

THE INCREDIBLE AND THE MIRACULOUS

The Marles Defence Budget is a linear, non-adaptive response to fixed KPIs (3% and 3.75%). It assumes that one can simply turn on the tap – and Defence will respond, linearly. Despite being flattened and cut for 7 years. Where the cuts generally are people – when those that can leave, leave. Leaving, often, an ageing rump – who cannot afford to retire. Which makes the Marles Defence budget both incredible and miraculous. It assumes all the cuts, freezing, and DCI of the Current Defence budget(s) and by flicking the on-switch, that Defence can respond like a control system to the new demand.



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese – Australian Submarine Service? (Image social media)

Despite the depressed and flattened (linear) state of the ADF in 2025 —let alone 2028—the incredible is that Marles (and Defence, the AGO, and Treasury) assume that funding (at 11.75% pa) can simply be turned on in 2028-9. The miracle, is that any future Government – in peacetime – will be able to sustain at 11.75% pa for seven or more years. Particularly at a time, when Australia may be recovering from a 2027-2029 recession. And having to address the rorts, inefficiency and inflationary pressures of renewables, Net Zero and the *Welfare Industry Complex*. All robbing Australia of the very productivity necessary to sustain the economy, defence and industry, in the new (synthetical) scientific age, 2020-2065.

Richard Marles announced in December, the merging of three failing Defence capability groups - the Capability, Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG), the Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Group (GWEOG), and the Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group (NSSG) - into a new Defence Delivery Agency (DDA). Called the biggest defence reform in 50 years, the DDA aims to improve project delivery, address cost blowouts, and increase efficiency in the use of the defence budget. The new agency will be led by a national armaments director and is intended to provide "a much bigger bang for buck".

The DDA is being set up for failure. Whereas two negatives may make a positive, three make for cascading failure. It is already being considered as yet another cut (by as much as 25% to each group) - meaning the fewer will do less. It will be based in Canberra (not Melbourne, where it needs to be), meaning the same merry-go-round of APS, ADF, ex-political advisers (or POLAD), ex special advisers (or SPAD), accountants, and consultants will crew it.

Outsourcing to agencies failed in the 2000s - since when insourcing has been the driving factor. Ask the Secretary of War. For which reason, the unions may also oppose. Finally, the DDA will not come into being until 2027/8. In other words, after the next election - and far too little, too late. With no additional funds provided to enable systemic change.

IT WOULDN'T MATTER

...if Australia was not at such a dangerous inflection point, facing a potential closing if not overtaking threat. When, as the NLA President and Jim Molan have maintained, "we will have to fight with what we've got [and not cut]" – which is less for less. [18, 24, 25, 28]

From a Defence budgeting perspective, it will be too late by 2028-9. The damage will have been done. If the Government in 2025/6 began to invest appropriately in Defence, ADF might just have enough time to implement changes by 2027, and achieve 3% and 3.75% GDP spending by the early to mid-2030s. At this stage, it would require a real cash injection – new money – of \$15B, and a commitment to

increasing the Defence Budget by 4% pa until 2028 and then 6% pa thereafter. To achieve adaptation, cuts and change to reach 3% GDP in about 2032, and 3.75% GDP by mid-2035.

All of this will be irrelevant, unless Defence also abandons the non-adaptive, reductionist (*reductio-ad-absurdum* and *reversion to the mean*) Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) program, which is further freezing Defence and preventing change and adaptation. As similar models have done in the UK. The \$15B ERP program (which can never be delivered) is already costing Defence \$500,000,000 a year, just to maintain and sustain. The sunk or anchored risk-cost-dilemma facing Defence is to keep going – rather than cut early. Even though ERP has never worked elsewhere. It would take courage and real leadership to enact such a decision. Irony, how the costs of ERP match those required to be injected into Defence, in 2025/6.

Perhaps, in earlier years where Service Secretaries owned their budgets – and knew their briefs – they would have acted earlier. And resisted the program in the first instance. There may though still be time for the Service Chiefs to withdraw all their personnel and resources deployed to ERP (up to 1500 ADF and APS pers) and direct them to the front line? Acting also to reduce control from the centre, and the Canberra-merry-go-round – where up to a third of the Defence budget never leaves Canberra.

PENSIONS AND STEEL TRAPS

It is said that the Roman Empire began to collapse when it could no longer afford to pay the pensions of its retired legionnaires. Whether this was symptom, or a cause the pension was awarded to:

Roman legionaries who had completed 25 years of good service, who received a retirement package that typically included a lump sum of cash or a grant of land in a frontier province, along with Roman citizenship for non-citizens. This allowed them to start a new life, often in new veteran colonies designed to "Romanise" conquered territories. Those retained, became *evocatus*, paid higher wages and applied more in the supporting, than supported (front-line) roles.

The pension was actuarially based; addressing the life-cycle of the Roman Army – for 1200 years, from formation in 600-700 BC to collapse in the 5th Century. With aspects continuing in the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire until the 7th Century.

The actuarial purpose of the Roman pension – as translated into very similar schemes in the British Empire, including RAN, RAAF, and Army until the early 2000s, was threefold:

1. To enable / encourage people to leave at a recognised career break point and avoid job blocking, by;
2. Providing a lump sum payment that would purchase a property in all but the inner cities – where few servicemen and women choose to live, anyway, and;
3. A half-salary pension that would enable the serviceman/woman to live in genteel comfort, pursue volunteer work (such as the cadets etc.) or transfer, possibly at a lower initial grade, to start a new career. For example, in the Public Service.

The accountants and consultants running Defence, since at least the 1990s, failed to understand ADF as a complex system and were jealous of the pension schemes. Which, interestingly, also used to apply to MPs – for the same reasons (1., to 3.). As a result, these schemes were reduced or abandoned in the UK and AS. In Australia to be replaced by SUPA, which was never the same.

Previously, pension break-points occurred for officers between the ages of 37 and 40, and for sailors between 40 and 43. It could be argued, officers were "culled" earlier – which, in a technical service – reliant on the quality of its senior sailors – probably matched system demands.



Hon Richard Marles inspects Ghost Shark submarine. Interestingly he is piped aboard RAN warships as Minister for Defence not DPM. (Image ADF)

The removal of the pension in the ADF has had predictable results. Since about 2012, for example, the number of Captains, Colonels, and Commodores still serving including in a reserve capacity has doubled. Australia apparently now has about three hundred service personnel for every star ranked (Commodore and above) officer, compared to 600 to 1 in the US Armed Forces.

Steel Traps

Senior officers and sailors who previously would have been able to retire have done the math. It is better for them to stay, since (without the pension) they cannot afford to leave. As always, those with talent leave – meaning that a steel trap is created. Where senior officers and sailors – often cynical and of lesser quality than those that could leave – “stag on.” Meaning the all-important flows – which the pension scheme was intended to enable – become choked. Creating job blocking, bitterness, and reduced opportunities throughout the system – or “steel traps”, particularly at the senior Chief, Lieutenant Commander / Commander levels. At the same time, the average age continues to go right – meaning (in a front-end population), that the recruiting tail is constrained (fewer opportunities).

To an extent, Navy's technical reliance on its senior officers and sailors and expansion has masked the problem. Since these jobs require doing – while constant freezing of APS recruiting and cuts to consultants, means this body has provided what contingency ADF has. All other Dollars being cut or frozen.

It is worse, because there is no defined pension date. Instead of working to that date, some sailors spend the last two years of their service actively seeking Comcare awards – for injuries and associated rehabilitation. For some officers, it is even worse. They are not allowed to actively seek redundancy – against which a package might be settled – so they commence a dance in the last two years. Seeking to be made redundant or placed in a job that is ending, so that they can “be given” a lump sum contribution, while being transferred to the reserves.

It is disgraceful and encourages the very worst of behaviours. Senior officers left begging and reliant on the grace and favour of bureaucrats, through a smoke-and-mirrors system. Not so much buying their commission, but their de-commission.

The accountants and consultants who run Government (the top 2 and the big 4) have now woken up to the increasing number of senior officers (across Defence), they created by removing the pension in the first instance. Of course, their answer is to cut the Reserve body, by drastically (and probably unlawfully) reducing the Reserve Days awarded – and making those remaining feel unwanted. Which represents the only contingency (as in Risk Management) Defence has remaining. As always, those that can, leave – so reinforcing the steel trap.

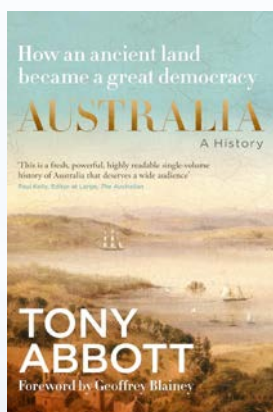
At the same time, to manage the “problem” vast bureaucracies such as the DVA have been set up, costing billions to process claims. Most of which would have been dealt with by paying veterans an adequate pension on leaving. At vastly lower costs to Commonwealth and ADF than maintaining these sclerotic, non-productive, expensive agencies. Where, the rich and lawyers continue to get rich, veterans poorer, and litigation escalates.

There is some resistance appearing from the operational commands – since jobs need doing, and commitments have been made. But it may simply be too late. ■



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AUSTRALIA: A HISTORY

How an ancient land became a great democracy

By Tony Abbott

Harper Collins AU

13 Oct 2025

ISBN-10: 978-1460768297

Softcover: \$50.00

Tony Abbott speaking or, in this instance, writing off-the-cuff was always much better than the scripted, constrained version – under the Canberra cosh – seen during his brief time as Prime Minister. Perhaps, given all he delivered in his brief 23.75 months – Tony Abbott may one day be described as the best PM, Australia was never allowed to have?

His book is driven, expansive, providing a big-hand history of Australia, winning praise from all sides of the political divide, historians, and politicians alike. As Kim Beazley AC observes, Abbott strives through “massive research for balance.” To provide, as Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price reflects “a compelling reminder of our inheritance, which gives us a reason to be proud of who we are and the country we’ve become.” Although mostly a political history, Geoffrey Blainey AC, reflects on how few politicians could write such a history – let alone to praise his opponents such as Beazley, Keating, and Bob Hawke. A *noblesse oblige* not seemingly evident in today’s politicians.

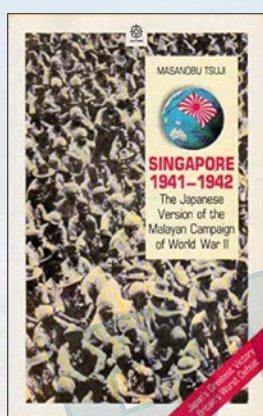
In Abbott’s striving for balance, he offers new insights and evidence – not in support of one side, but to provide understanding and a

“voice” to our ancestors, from wherever and however they came to our distant shores. On the one hand a historical romp – on the other (as Blainey observes) a readable, provocative, tolerant, and patriotic treatise, without being flag-flattering. For those who saw Tony Abbott through the eyes of the ABC, this may come as a surprise. For those, including Indigenous communities, who worked with him directly, it will be less so. As Churchill is said to have observed “history is written by the victors.” Perhaps *Australia a Legacy* – will be Abbott’s lasting testimony to his beloved country, rather than his time as PM?

The critical period Abbott also addresses, is from the fall of Singapore. Speaking separately, he noted that “as the Japanese swept down the peninsula, Australian troops achieved the few modest allied wins of that campaign: the stand at Bakri; the ambushes at Gemas and Jemaluang; and the fighting withdrawal from Muar where the Australians went into battle singing *Waltzing Matilda*. Almost 1,800 Australians gave their lives in the fight for Malaya and Singapore, and over 1,300 were wounded. When Singapore fell, some 15,000 Australians became prisoners of war, and 7,000 perished in captivity. Australians were some 10 per cent of the defenders but suffered some 70 per cent of the battle casualties”. It was the most disastrous campaign in British military history – essentially ending the British Empire.

Abbott traces the subsequent years, from the *Battle of the Coral Sea*, and *Kokoda*, the redefining of Australia’s relationship with the UK, US and regional partners to his (correct) 2015 decision to pursue the *Soryu-class* submarines, and strengthening the QUAD, and Australia’s relationship with Japan and India.

Abbott also reflects the journey Australia has been on since Federation and before – to rapprochement with old enemies (and longer standing allies) to facing the realities of today. In some respects, echoing the passionate 2014/15 debate in NSW DIV between Strang, Roberston, Baird, Albert, Jeremy, Bold, Longstaff, and Aeneas – recognising that Japan had never fully apologised – outweighed by the need (while protecting our moat) to move on. A great summer read.



SINGAPORE 1941-1942

The Japanese Version of the Malayan Campaign of World War II

By Masanobu Tsuji

OUP Australia and New Zealand, 1 April 1988

ISBN: 978-0195888911

Format: Softcover \$145.00

Masanobu Tsuji is a controversial figure – a Japanese war criminal, potential double agent, escapee who worked with the CIA, elected to the Diet in 1952 (and twice thereafter), he fought also for North Vietnam (and China), then kidnapped by the CCP and never heard from again after August 1962.

Singapore, 1941-42 (シンガポール陥落 – *Fall of Singapore*) is an excoriating read – and should be essential reading to any considering conflict in South East Asia today. Interesting the days of the week

in 2025-2026, match entirely with the days and dates in 1941-1942. Allowing for a reconstruction of events in post-real time. For example, the amphibious assault of Malaya in non-optimal climatic conditions, tracking through to the bombing of Darwin, the “British Pearl Harbor” when the IJN attacked British Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in April 1942, the *Battle of the Coral Sea* and the *Battle of Midway*, and *Kokoda*.

Assumptions made regarding Japanese skill of arms, planning, capabilities, and morale were almost all found wanting. With lessons today, for those contemplating the rise of a militaristic CCP, with ambitions over the same co-prosperity sphere (including Taiwan and Korea) captured by Japan between (1874)/1931 and 1943.

Tsuji concludes, *inter alia*:

As Mr Churchill proclaimed the surrender of Singapore was Great Britain’s “hinge of fate”. In this single issue, England was weighed in the balance and found wanting and she forfeited the dignity of hundred and twenty years. In military operations we conquered splendidly, but in the war, we were severely defeated. But as if by magic [a few years later] India, Pakistan, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Ceylon and the Philippines one after another gained independence overnight. The reduction of Singapore was indeed the hinge of fate for the peoples of Asia [and Australia].

Those serious about understanding our past and so contemplating our future should take the time to read this book, and that of Mr Abbott’s.



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**JOIN US IN THIS
IMPORTANT NATIONAL TASK**

*If you live in Tasmania, please post the form to the Hon. Secretary of the Victoria Division.
If you live in the NT, please post the form to the Hon. Secretary of the SA Division.
If you live in the ACT, please post the form to the Hon. Secretary of the NSW Division.*

SCAN TO JOIN



Subscriptions are due on 1 July of each year, and your membership will be current to 30 June immediately following the date on which you join the league, except that if your first subscription is received during the period 1 April to 30 June in any year, your initial membership will be extended to 30 June in the following year. For more information, visit www.navyleague.org.au



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To: The Hon, Secretary, The Navy League of Australia (see address details above)

Division _____

I wish to join the Navy League of Australia, the objectives of which I support, and I enclose a remittance for \$50.00 (including \$4.54 GST) being my first annual subscription to 30 June next.

Name [Mr] [Mrs] [Ms] [Rank] _____

Postal Address _____

State _____ **Post Code** _____

Phone _____ **Mobile** _____

Signature _____

Date ____/____/____

DONATION

**Please complete this section
if you wish to donate.**

I wish to donate the following amount to the Navy League of Australia. My details have been included in this form.

On receiving your application, banking details (EFT) will be forwarded to you by your state division with an introductory letter.

DONATION AMOUNT

\$ _____

HATCH



USS MASSACHUSETTS (SSN 798)
Virginia-class submarine to
be commissioned in Boston
March 2026.

Image USN

MATCH



Third *Arafura-class*
NUSHIP PILBARA (OPV 205)
Launched for Sea Trials
November 2025 – a much more
capable class than first envisaged.

Image RAN

DESPATCH



HMAS BATHURST (II),
HMAS ALBANY and
HMAS CHILDERS line the upper
deck at the decommissioning
ceremony, HMAS COONAWARRA
December 2025. The last of the
Armidales. Thank you for your
great service.

Image LSIS Lauren Pugsley