

HMAS *Hobart* Launch Speech

Chief of Navy

23 May 2015

Your Excellency the Hon. Hieu Van Le, AO, Governor of South Australia, Minister for Defence, the Hon. Kevin Andrews, MP, The Hon. Jay Weatherill, Premier of South Australia, The Hon. Will Hodgman, Premier of Tasmania, Mrs Nicola Hodgman, ship sponsor for Hobart, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The launch of a major new warship is a significant day for the Navy and the nation. When that ship is the first of class, it is a momentous occasion. Navy will ‘own’ Hobart for a generation. The last HMAS *Hobart*, the Green Ghost, was in service for 34 years.

But today is her launch day. She is no longer just inert steel in an industrial site. She has reached the point in her construction when she no longer belongs ashore. As she floats clear of her synchro lift today we will recognize *Hobart* as being a future Australian warship, in her natural environment - the sea.

As the Minister has said, it is time to fit her with her sensors and her weapons and prepare her for her future duties. She has many months of fitting out before her acceptance trials. Only when they are completed and passed can Navy commission her into the Fleet as HMAS *Hobart*.

To get her to this point has been a feat of imagination, engineering, logistics and administration. On behalf of the Navy I thank all those skilled people who have done the work. I will be more specific in my thanks when she is commissioned into the Fleet.

That Fleet she will join is growing in size, in strength, in agility, in intelligence and in lethality. As Chief of Navy I know that we are on track to have an extraordinarily capable fleet and one that provides our island continent with the sure shield at sea it needs in the decades ahead. *Hobart* will take her place in that “next generation” fleet.

Our twenty first century Navy is manned by highly educated and technically trained men and women who are motivated by, and enjoy new technology. They are up for the challenges of taking our existing fleet and our new ‘smart’ ships wherever our Government requires us to go to meet our mission. Navy people provide us with capability. They allow us to achieve the tasks that the Australian people need us to do.

Within a very few years our ships will be operating together in Task Groups and coalition formations.

HMAS *Canberra* and *Adelaide* will often be major platforms in such a Task Force. *Canberra* is at sea on her first of class trials and *Adelaide* will join her next year.

So this event is not just the launch of this ship it is the beginning of an era of new naval capability which will last for decades.

We are delighted to have as our Launching Lady and Ship's Sponsor Nikki Hodgman, the wife of the Premier of Tasmania.

In every generation since Federation Tasmania has made a disproportionate contribution to the Navy. Young Tasmanians enter the Navy who already seem to have salt water in their veins and they make fine sailors.

Famous men who gave their last full measure of devotion to the Navy have come from Tasmania. Their names live on in the annals of the RAN and in our collective memory.

The Premier's grandfather, great uncle, and father all served in the Navy in peace and war and his uncle is still doing so.

Nikki it is most fitting that you should take the honour of launching Hobart.
[Presentation of bouquet to Ms Hodgman by CN.]

I have no doubt many Tasmanian sailors will serve in this ship. Over the years to come HMAS *Hobart* will visit Hobart and host the residents of the city whose name she will carry proudly around the world.

I know I speak for serving and former serving members of the Royal Australian Navy, particularly members of the Hobart Association, when I say that this floating off of our first Air Warfare Destroyer is a moment of great satisfaction and expectation.

Thank you.