

The Navy and the Nation

Today the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) must assert its power in an increasingly contested maritime environment, and position itself for success in future conflicts. In the years between federation and World War One (WW1), Australia faced similar challenges, and overcame them with admirable results. This essay will argue that such an example has significant implications for the modern RAN. In order to understand both historical and the contemporary circumstances, it is helpful to think through a theoretical framework, such as neoclassical realism. This identifies that states respond to the pressures placed on them by the international system, but can only act insofar as their domestic structures enable them too. Far from being 'black boxes', the internal workings of a state have a large impact on their interaction with the world around them.¹ Thus particular focus will be placed on the strategic similarities between the two time periods, and key internal factors that influence outward actions.

In light of this, the point will be made that for a state to ensure its security, it must be able to marshal sufficient domestic power to implement strategies and capabilities of enough absolute power, to combat likely threats.² In short, the Australian people must support the development, maintenance, and deployment, of the Royal Australian Navy, so as to meet the challenges posed by a turbulent region. The success of Australia's first naval buildup was the result of an enormous public push for an Australian Navy, thereby enabling rapid and successful naval development. As the modern RAN expands and seeks similar outcomes, it must reassess its relationship with the Australian community. It is crucial for Navy to treat public support as a key enabler if it is to excel at its mission and succeed in the future.

The Present Outlook

The future of the Indo-Pacific is contested, and Australia, straddling this maritime domain, will have to act with dexterity and resolve in order to ensure its security and prosperity in a shifting regional order. China, Indonesia, and India are all likely to pursue extensive economic and military expansions.³ Additionally the willingness and capability of the United States to provide dual deterrence in the Asia-Pacific is being called into question, and the exercise of military capability has become central to achieving political and diplomatic goals. There are several potential crises and military contingencies in which the USA may expect Australia to participate. Whether such action is in the national interest remains unclear.⁴ Such developments make Australia's future position increasingly uncertain. Tim Barrett posits that "the only certainty is change," consequently the RAN's strategies and capabilities must position it to overcome "uncertainty and unpredictability, discontinuity and ambiguity."⁵

¹ Rose, Gideon. 1998. "Neoclassical Realism And Theories Of Foreign Policy". *World Politics* 51 (1): 144-172. doi: 10.1017/s0043887100007814.

² Australian Defence Headquarters, ADDP 00 2: Preparedness and Mobilisation (Provisional), Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2004, p. 3-1, para 3.1.

Rose. "Neoclassical Realism And Theories Of Foreign Policy".

Layton, Peter. 2019. "Social Mobilisation in a Contested Environment" *Occasional Paper Series no.9*. Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society

³ Department of Defence. 2016. "2016 Defence White Paper". Canberra.

⁴ Dibb, Paul. 2018. "Why We Need A Radically New Defence Policy". *Centre Of Gravity Series* 44: p6.

⁵ Barrett, Tim. 2017. *The Navy And The Nation*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Though the future has always been uncertain, in decades past, military planners could rely on the fact that it would take a foreign adversary at least ten years to develop the capabilities necessary to seriously threaten Australia. Therefore the Australian Defence Force (ADF) could focus on lower level regional operations (such as stabilising the Solomon Islands and intervening in East Timor) and “armed conflicts of choice” such as operations in the Middle East.⁶ However as a result of increasing, and accelerating, capability levels throughout the region the potential warning time for both low and high level contingencies has shortened.⁷ Furthermore “grey-zone” operations by foreign adversaries have the potential to undermine Australian responses to aggression or coercion.⁸ As regional actors become more capable of engaging in high intensity conflict, Australia will experience a significant reduction in its ability to defend its interests and exercise influence over other states. Even with a security guarantee from the United States, this would be a substantial loss in relative power.

To safeguard the nation’s prosperity and security, and to maintain its relative power, Australia must increase its absolute power. Defence planning has long relied on a “core force and expansion base.”⁹ The RAN will now be expected to deal with more strenuous contingencies at much shorter notice, therefore Navy must be able to deal with “vital non-discretionary tasks” as they occur, and expand rapidly to meet looming threats.¹⁰ This can be achieved through an increase in capability, and increasing force projection and presence.¹¹ As regional navies are rapidly expanding and becoming technologically more proficient, Australia will have to do more to achieve battle-space superiority. Consequently continued use, and rapid acquisition, of superior weaponry, platforms, command and control systems, and battle-space intelligence is absolutely essential.¹² Navy needs to identify systems that it may need and position itself to acquire and employ them within a short time frame. Given that even America’s military might has been insufficient to deter China from its recent assertive and provocative military activities, many people question whether Australia’s forces will be of much use.¹³ It is therefore apparent that military capability alone will not provide strategic security, rather it is the credible threat, and application, of force that achieves the desired outcome.¹⁴ Since its inception Australia has expected Navy to be ready and willing to

⁶ Dobb, Paul. 2019. "The Importance Of The Inner Arc To Australian Defence Policy And Planning". *Security Challenges*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer 2012), p. 15.

⁷ Brabin-Smith, Richard and Paul Dobb. 2017. “Australia’s Management Of Strategic Risk In The New Era”. *ASPI Strategic Insights*.

⁸ Campbell, Angus. 2019. "You May Not Be Interested In War... But War Is Interested In You". Speech, Australian Strategic Policy Institute International Conference - 'War in 2025', Canberra, 2019.

⁹ Brabin-Smith, Dobb. “Australia’s Management Of Strategic Risk In The New Era”.

¹⁰ Dobb, "The Importance Of The Inner Arc To Australian Defence Policy And Planning" p15

Brabin-Smith, Richard. “Future Challenges and a New Defence Policy” *Centre Of Gravity Series* 44: p10

¹¹ Fairall-Lee, Sam. 2019. "Australia Must Do More Than Flag-Wave In The South China Sea". *The Strategist*. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australia-must-do-more-than-flag-wave-in-the-south-china-sea/>.

¹² Dobb, "Why We Need A Radically New Defence Policy". p5.

¹³ Beeson, Mark. 2019. "The Great Defence Debate We’ve Never Had". *Australian Institute Of International Affairs*. <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/defence-debate-never-had/>.

¹⁴ Dobb, "Why We Need A Radically New Defence Policy”.

Schreer, Benjamin. 2019. "Why US-Sino Strategic Competition Is Good For Australia". *Australian Institute Of International Affairs*. <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/why-us-sino-strategic-competition-is-good-for-australia/>.

deploy to higher risk contingencies in order secure Australian interests, whether in partnership with a major ally or without.

Historical Precedent

In the years following Australia's federation, power was primarily determined by states' abilities to coerce and constrain one another with naval force; and the dynamics of power in the Pacific were shifting quickly.¹⁵ At the turn of the twentieth century, Australia's security was guaranteed by the Royal Navy. Given that Britain maintained sea control in the Indo-Pacific, the defence of Australia and her strategic interests was considered relatively simple. The only credible threat was from covert surprise attacks on major ports which could be defended with only a limited number of ships and shore batteries.¹⁶ However with the emergence of new naval technologies and strategies this security began to decay. In 1906 the Imperial Japanese Navy annihilated the Russian 2nd and 3rd Pacific Squadrons at the Battle of Tsushima; between 1907 and 1909 the United States' 'Great White Fleet' demonstrated its capability as a modern blue water naval power; and in the first decade of the new century Germany, France and Holland all consolidated their colonial territories and secured them with their navies.¹⁷ Furthermore, Germany's enormous naval buildup in the North Sea posed a serious threat to Britain's maritime dominance and security.¹⁸ Therefore the British Admiralty reneged on the Naval Agreements of 1903 and 1909, which promised Australia broad protection by the Royal Navy, and moved its greatest assets to the theatre in which it faced greatest threat.¹⁹ This meant that there was a significant shift in relative power away from Australia due to the reduction of British firepower in Pacific and Australian waters. Consequently the safeguarding of Australia's strategic interests required significant military independence.²⁰

Procurement of an Australian Navy began in 1909 and was undertaken with haste. The outcome was that by 1914 the nation possessed a formidable Navy that could exercise dominance over the German Pacific fleet.²¹ This largely guaranteed the security of sea lines of communication, as well as the capture of German colonies when war broke out. Throughout the war Australia was secure its interests, its region, and its security. When the decision was made to acquire significant Australian naval capability, there had already been extensive debate and consideration as to what kind of assets would be needed. Since federation senior military officers and Members of Parliament had been advocating for an Australian Navy that, in the absence of a powerful Royal

¹⁵ Meaney, Neville. 1976. *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-1914*. Sydney: Sydney University Press pp1-14, 159-195

¹⁶ Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence upon a General Scheme of Defence For Australia, 1906, in *Documents on Australian International Affairs 1901-1918* edited by Greenwood, Gordon, and Charles Grimshaw. 1977. p133

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey) on separate Dominion navies and a common foreign policy, 26 May 1911, in *Documents on Australian International Affairs 1901-1918*. p193

¹⁷ Meaney. *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-1914*. pp1-14, 159-195

¹⁸ Evans, Alun. 1986. *A Navy For Australia*. Sydney: ABC. p94

¹⁹ Meaney. *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-1914*. pp230-32

²⁰ Menhinick, Richard. 2019. "A 'Clever' Australia Needs A Larger, More Potent Navy". *The Strategist*. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/clever-australia-needs-larger-potent-navy/>.

²¹ Evans. *A Navy For Australia*. pp55-56

Navy squadron, could keep Australia's immediate region secure from aggressors, protect Australian shipping on the high seas, and defend crucial ports.²²

Australia's naval planning and implementation in the years preceding WW1, was driven as much by the public as it was by politicians. Throughout the first decade of nationhood, the debate regarding an Australian Navy was taking place in Australia's newspapers, however the broadsheets were not concerned with the extent to which Australia required naval defence and capability, rather they discussed the most effective methods for ensuring such security. In the decades after federation, Australia's had a keen sense of being a part of the British Empire, whose power and prosperity was ensured by maritime control.²³ Consequently, the security of Australian ports and waters was a priority for the public, and any government who sought re-election. The prevailing cultural view was that an independent nation, required an independent Navy.²⁴ News of Tsushima, the arrival of the American fleet in 1908, and the 'Dreadnought scare' were reported widely and made Australians feel that their region was dangerous and contested.²⁵ The sense of insecurity was exacerbated by the extensive discussion surrounding the Admiralty's doctrine that British ships on the Australia Station could be called to a European theatre of war, leaving the nation unprotected.²⁶ These developments elicited significant public response. The press goaded the New South Wales and Victorian governments to jointly offer the Admiralty the cost of a battleship, the 'Dreadnought Fund' from the city of Sydney helped establish the Royal Australian Naval College, and in the 1908 election Labour, who sought to establish an Australian Navy, ousted the Liberal government who had proposed an unpopular reworking of the 1903 Naval Agreement.²⁷ In the five financial years of the initial naval buildup, defence expenditure measured fully 14.95% of total Commonwealth expenditure, compared to today's 5.1%.²⁸ The euphoria that surrounded the 1913 fleet entry into Sydney Harbour highlighted the extent of public support for the newly formed Royal Australian Navy. The advent of the First World War, less than a year later, revealed the importance of this significant national force.

²² Meaney. *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-1914*. pp76-78

Frame, Tom. 2004. *No Pleasure Cruise: The Story Of The Royal Australian Navy*. p90

Extract from the Report, 6 August 1906, of the Director of Naval Forces (Captain W.R. Creswell) on his visit to England in 1906 [March-May], to inquire into the latest Naval Developments, in *Documents on Australian International Affairs 1901-1918*

²³ Evans, Michael. 2013. "The Withheld Self: The Impact Of National Culture On The Development Of Australian Maritime Thought". *Sea Power Series*.

²⁴ Greenwood, and Grimshaw. *Documents on Australian International Affairs 1901-1918*. p125

²⁵ Bell, Christopher 2015. "Sentiment vs Strategy: British Naval Policy, Imperial Defence, and the Development of Dominion Navies, 1911-14," *The International History Review*, 37:2, 262-281 (p264)

²⁶ Bach, John. 1983. "The Royal Navy In The South West Pacific: The Australia Station 1859-1913". *The Australian Maritime History Association* 5 (2): 116-132. (p120)

²⁷ Stevens, David. 2001. *The Royal Australian Navy*, p19

Lewis, A.N. 2019. "Royal Australian Naval College | Naval Historical Society Of Australia". *Naval Historical Society Of Australia*. <https://www.navyhistory.org.au/royal-australian-naval-college/>.

Frame. *No Pleasure Cruise: The Story of the Royal Australian Navy*, p89

²⁸ 1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 2001. 2019. *Australian Bureau of Statistics* <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/featurearticlesbytitle/282E4CEB102B52BBCA2569DE00203314?OpenDocument>.

"Military Expenditure (% Of General Government Expenditure) | Data". 2019. *Data.Worldbank.Org*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.ZS?locations=AU&view=chart>.

Tales as Old as Tide

The initial buildup of Australian naval power gained impetus from three core drivers: strategic necessity, public support, and clear planning. In this paper the current strategic risks, and approaches to overcoming them, have been discussed at their most basic level. Just as in 1909, they are clear, and urgent, challenges that must be addressed to overcome a decline in relative power. There is however, a stark contrast between the strategic narratives of 1909 and today. There are five characteristics of successful narratives, all of which were fulfilled in the pursuit of the first Australian fleet. In the prewar years the need for a navy, to uphold Australian security, independence, and nationhood was *readily understood* and engaged with by the population. This narrative was easily *connected to the real world*, and it proposed a *clear method for succeeding* in the above aims. The argument for a navy was *more compelling* than other courses of action, and it *identified the adversaries* to overcome.²⁹ No such narrative exists within the modern Australian imagination. Herein lies the great difference between the development of Navy now, and 110 years ago. Today, as then, public opinion is an enormous driver in determining the shape, readiness, and deployment, of Australia's armed forces, but Navy, lacks the necessary support to expand and act as a truly threatening force. Without a clear understanding of the necessity and capability of the Navy, Australians will not offer the engagement that enables the RAN to achieve its mission.

It is tempting to argue that the current bipartisan approach to defence ensures that policy is formed independently of public opinion, however research demonstrates otherwise. Across all societies, leaders' decisions on defence and security are considerably shaped and swayed by public perception. This extends even to significant great power decisions.³⁰ In recent times Australian governments have cut Defence expenditure in order to deliver a budget surplus, which was deemed more politically valuable at the time. Defence was the unlucky loser because similar sized cuts to other areas would have been met with greater public backlash.³¹ In a liberal democracy, such as Australia, governments and taxpayers place value on various goods, according to their perception of their own needs. When the human and monetary costs seem high, the public displays reticence to adopt new defence strategies.³² Likewise when people feel that their security needs are being met, they are unlikely to support greater risks or further expenditure. This becomes problematic when the public disengages with, or misunderstands, their security institutions. Today the Indo-Pacific is witnessing a strategic transition, characterised by reduced warning times and increased ambiguity. If the public remains ignorant of strategic necessities, then the Australian government and military will be hamstrung in their preparation for, and responses to future crises. For Navy to fulfil its mission in the future it must enjoy sustained, positive, engagement with the Australian people.

The clear implication is that public support should be viewed as a Key Enabler for Navy. The 2016 Defence White Paper states that "even the most capable platforms and systems cannot be

²⁹ Layton. "Social Mobilisation in a Contested Environment"

³⁰ Carr, Andrew. "Is Bipartisanship on National Security Beneficial? Australia's Politics of Defence and Security" *Australian Journal of Politics and History*: Vol 63, (2), 2017, pp.254-269.

Aldrich, John H. *et al.*, "Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection", *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9 (2006).

Barnett, Michael and Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73", *International Organization*, Vol. 45, 3 (1991), p.378;

David, Steven R. "Explaining Third World Alignment", *World Politics*, Vol. 43, 2 (1991), p.236.

³¹ Carr, "Is Bipartisanship on National Security Beneficial? Australia's Politics of Defence and Security"

³² Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict 1947-1958*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996, p.20.

effective without the enabling capabilities that allow those platforms to operate effectively and be sustained.”³³ As an instrument of politics by other means, Navy is inherently governed by political realities, and must therefore heed the maxim that “the will to win and to endure is as important as to possess the more concrete forms of power.”³⁴ This requires a fundamental reframing of the way the Navy interacts and engages with the public. As previously outlined, in order to rapidly acquire and employ new capabilities, and respond to high risk contingencies at short notice, the RAN needs strong popular and political support. If Australians are apathetic, “funds will not be allocated for defence and recruits will not apply.”³⁵ Resolving this is made difficult because the population is primarily concerned with immediate domestic issues. Furthermore, in an information saturated environment, the role of Navy in shaping the long term international environment is lost among many other claims for people’s attention.³⁶ In order to change this Navy must overcome both a widespread lack of engagement, and increasingly, foreign interference.

The Australian public is not well engaged with either Navy or its mission. The emphasis on the ANZAC legend, and a national lore of the outback, contribute to a strong continental ethos. The quip that Australia is “girt by beach”, aptly captures the popular Australian relationship to the sea.³⁷ Commentators have noted that it is not the achievements of the wider fleet that grasp the public imagination, rather it is “[i]ncursions into Indonesian waters, cracks in vessels, [and] blown-out construction costs”. The apparent reality is that a “navy looks like an expensive, wasting asset ... until you need it.”³⁸ Navy’s own research data indicates that the prevailing public view of the RAN is of a costly force on border protection operations.³⁹ While Australians are broadly supportive of Navy activity in the South China Sea (though this is declining), key groups markedly differ.⁴⁰ University graduates, social professionals and young people generally express less support for Defence.⁴¹ This is crucial, because in the same way that Navy develops and trains a fighting force to deal with future contingencies, it is these people who will be making judgements and driving policy attitudes in the future. The notion from senior ranks that Navy’s need for “more and better professional skills” is understood and supported by the community, simply doesn’t match reality.⁴² According to a Department of Defence report, many people in Australia “[do] not feel they received enough information or explanation about the ADF and defence policy.”⁴³ There is however strong

³³ Department of Defence. 2016. "2016 Defence White Paper". Canberra.

³⁴ B.H. Liddell-Hart, *The Decisive Wars of History: A Study in Strategy*, London: G. Bell & Sons, 1929, p.150.

³⁵ Betts, "Who Cares About Defence? Attitudes of Australian Voters and Candidates in Federal Elections" p31

³⁶ Layton. "Social Mobilisation in a Contested Environment"

³⁷ ³⁷ Menhinick. "A 'Clever' Australia Needs A Larger, More Potent Navy".

³⁸ Corbett, Claire. 2019. "The Royal Australian Navy's Struggle For Our Hearts And Minds". *The Monthly*. <https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2014/march/1396270800/claire-corbett/royal-australian-navys-struggle-our-hearts-and-minds>.

³⁹ Kemp, CMDR RAN, Director Communications and Media - Navy, at HMAS *Creswell*, February 2019

⁴⁰ The Lowy Institute. "Security And Defence - Lowy Institute Poll 2019".

⁴¹ The Lowy Institute. 2019. "Security And Defence - Lowy Institute Poll 2019". <https://lowyinstitutepoll.lowyinstitute.org/themes/security-and-defence/>.

Betts, Katherine. 2007. "Who Cares About Defence? Attitudes of Australian Voters and Candidates in Federal Elections". *People And Place*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2007, Page 41

⁴² Barrett, *The Navy and the Nation*, p70

⁴³ Peter Jennings *et al.*, "Guarding against Uncertainty: Australian Attitudes to Defence: Report on Community Consultations", ed. Department of Defence (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2015). p.5.

support for intervention in cases of genocide, or a failing state in the region.⁴⁴ This demonstrates a 'last resort' view military force, and a lack of understanding regarding Navy's ability to achieve diplomatic and strategic goals. Australians acknowledge the importance of defence, however most people are preoccupied by other priorities.⁴⁵

As Australian forces seek to marshal public engagement to fortify strategic manoeuvrability, foreign actors now have greater capacity and will to manipulate the population for their own ends. The outcomes of such interference range from a decline in political support for the ADF during peacetime, through to a resistance to deploy military forces on key operations.⁴⁶ The warning time for serious contingencies has become more limited, so too is the ability of institutions to mobilise popular backing. This is due to a general neglect of defensive soft power, and the increasing sophistication cyber technologies that enable adversaries' to engage in counter mobilisation.⁴⁷ The Chief of Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, has noted that foreign states engage in "grey-zone" warfare utilising a variety of measures short of war to secure their own interests.⁴⁸ This means that by the time a conflict erupts, the Navy and the nation could already be in a losing position. If Australia does not actively work against foreign operations, then the public are likely to be influenced by them. There is therefore an urgency required in positively mobilising the Australian public, in order to position Navy to fight and win at sea. This necessitates a change in the relationship between major security institutions and the public.⁴⁹ In a contested environment Navy must win the hearts and minds of Australians, and must communicate a narrative that engages Australia's diverse peoples, and builds cohesion among them.⁵⁰

In conclusion, public support is a pre-condition for establishing and maintaining strategic power. During times of transition and uncertainty, states must be equipped to negate threats and secure their interests. In the Indo-Pacific this manifests itself in the expansion of naval power. While Australia's hardware and deployments are key indicators of power to other states, the credible threat of force, and therefore relative power, rest on domestic circumstances. The naval buildup between 1909 and 1913, which established the Royal Australian Navy and ensured security throughout WW1, occurred during such a time of regional transition. The pace and success of this development were products of a public drive to achieve an independent naval capability. Today the Indo-Pacific is witnessing yet another strategic transition, characterised by reduced warning times and increased ambiguity. In order to maintain its position in the regional order Australia must equip Navy with the capability to overcome growing threats and competition. Such an effort requires sustained, positive, engagement with the Australian people, so as to secure political and professional concord. In recent times the level of public engagement with the military was sufficient to support operational

⁴⁴ Jennings *et al.*, "Guarding against Uncertainty: Australian Attitudes to Defence: Report on Community Consultations"

⁴⁵ Betts, "Who Cares About Defence? Attitudes of Australian Voters and Candidates in Federal Elections" p34

Wlezien, "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending",

⁴⁶ Layton. "Social Mobilisation in a Contested Environment" p4

⁴⁷ Longstaff, Simon. 2019. "Ethical Infrastructure And The Inversion Of Soft Power". *The Strategist*. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/ethical-infrastructure-and-the-inversion-of-soft-power/>.

Layton. "Social Mobilisation in a Contested Environment" p11

⁴⁸ Campbell. "You May Not Be Interested In War... But War Is Interested In You".

⁴⁹ Layton. "Social Mobilisation in a Contested Environment" p4

⁵⁰ Longstaff. "Ethical Infrastructure And The Inversion Of Soft Power".

Layton. "Social Mobilisation in a Contested Environment" p11

necessities. This is no longer the case. The needs of the ADF have become greater, and the ability to garner support is now contested by foreign actors. Navy must recognise that an informed and engaged populace is a Key Enabler in the pursuit of its mission. Without it, Navy and the nation could enter the next major crisis with an insurmountable disadvantage. In moving forward with new platforms and capabilities, the RAN should remember its origins and the society that conceived it. Engaged, proactive, supportive, Australians are a pre-condition for delivering a potent and independent Navy.

Born in Tamworth in 1997, Midshipman Noah Learoyd grew up in the rural town of Cooma, New South Wales. From a young age he was fascinated with sport and military aviation. Not being a particularly skilled cricketer, he decided to give up on his dream of playing for Australia and turned his attention to becoming a pilot. Initially he had hoped to fly fast jets with the RAAF, however his older brother, an engineer in the RAN, counselled him otherwise and suggested that operating a Seahawk off the deck of a destroyer was a much more interesting job.

During high school Noah played rugby union and was a member of the Army Cadets. He thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie and leadership that both offered. Upon graduating, he took a gap year in the UK as a sports coach and boarding master. Returning to Australia, he worked in a pub and a nursing home before moving to Canberra to study a double degree of International Security and Engineering at the Australian National University. While there, he applied to join the RAN as a helicopter pilot. After completing 18 months of his degree he received a letter of offer, and was appointed as a Midshipman in January 2019. He is currently posted to HMAS *Albatross* while awaiting the start of Basic Flight Training School, and continues his studies part time.

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