



THE HON DR BRENDAN NELSON MP

Minister for Defence

Monday, 23 July, 2007	
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HOWARD GOVERNMENT TO FUND AND SINK ex-HMAS CANBERRA

In October 2006 I announced that the Howard Government would provide the former Royal Australian Navy Guided Missile Frigate HMAS Canberra to the Victorian Government for sinking as a dive wreck. At the time, I also announced that the Howard Government would provide \$2.8 million towards the cost of the sinking.

I have become concerned at the delay of the Victorian Government towards implementing this important project for the people of the Surf Coast and the associated recreational dive industry.

Accordingly I have directed my Department, through the Defence Material Organisation, to assume Project Management responsibility for this project. I have also made \$7 million in funding available to ensure the quickest possible schedule for the sinking of the ship.

I have written to the Victorian Premier, The Hon Steve Bracks MLA, and the Victorian Minister for Tourism, the Hon Tim Holding MLA informing them of my generous offer. Should additional funding be required beyond to \$7 million, I have requested the Victorian Government make that funding available. This is more than reasonable.

The Howard Government has now provided the vast bulk of any funding needed, the project management team to sink the ship and the ship itself. The Victorian community now expects all levels of government to cooperate and get this job done as soon as possible.

I encourage the Victorian Government to welcome this announcement and commit to a cooperative effort to now quickly sink this ship.

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