

# VARS News Update



**Friday, 25th May 2007:** The Victorian Artificial Reef Society (VARS) is aware that many divers are starting to wonder what VARS has been doing with regard to the ex HMAS Canberra project.

- VARS is **continuing to monitor progress on negotiations** between Tenix and Tourism Victoria.
- VARS has been active in keeping the project in focus through **articles in the press**. (Please refer to the ex HMAS Canberra web site, [www.hmascanberra.com.au](http://www.hmascanberra.com.au), for the latest press clippings.)
- VARS is maintaining **strong communication links with both Federal and State politicians** on the ex HMAS Canberra project. This has produced positive outcomes.
- VARS has raised serious concerns with all parties involved as to the effects the proposed channel dredging project will have on the Victorian dive community. VARS is now insisting **the warship must be scuttled before dredging starts**.
- The goal of VARS is to establish Victoria as a **world class temperate water diving destination** with the ex HMAS Canberra as the centre piece. To this end, VARS has established a strong working relationship with Geelong Otway Tourism (GOT). VARS is working with GOT to ensure the **ex HMAS Canberra will be promoted as a dive tourist attraction both Nationally and Internationally**.
- VARS has established the ex HMAS Canberra web site ([www.hmascanberra.com.au](http://www.hmascanberra.com.au)), as the focus point for those seeking to learn more about coming to dive in Victoria.
- VARS has formulated plans for additional “in house” marketing and has the services of a Marketing Manager. **Plans for festivities** on both sides of the southern end of the bay to welcome the vessel on its arrival at the heads are in hand. It is possible a Dive Ball (maybe even a Black Tie Ball) will be held to celebrate the sinking.
- Canadian Artificial Reef Consulting appears to have been selected to handle the scuttling project. It is widely known this group are **world leaders in ship scuttling**, having successfully scuttled the Swan, Perth, Hobart, Brisbane, Troy D and a number of confiscated poaching vessels in WA.

Whilst outwardly it may appear the ex MAS Canberra project has gone quiet, much has been achieved to date by the VARS Committee and more is being put into place “behind the scenes”.

VARS is expecting a further update from Tourism Victoria, around the end of May 2007.

**John Lawler**

President, Victorian Artificial Reef Society

Keep up to date with the “Let’s Sink the HMAS Canberra” project at  
[www.hmascanberra.com.au](http://www.hmascanberra.com.au)