



MEDIA RELEASE

THE HON DR BRENDAN NELSON

Minister for Defence

Thursday, 19 October 2006

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WARSHIPS TO BE SUNK OFF VICTORIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES

I am pleased to announce I have selected Victoria to be gifted the former Royal Australian Navy Guided Missile Frigate HMAS Canberra for sinking as a dive wreck. Victoria was the successful bidder for HMAS Canberra following her decommissioning in November last year.

The Howard Government will contribute up to \$2.8 million in funding toward the costs of sinking.

The Victorian Government has advised me the preferred location for the ex-HMAS Canberra is south of Barwon Heads on the Bellarine Peninsula.

I would especially like to thank my colleague, Mr Stewart McArthur MP, for his strong support and advocacy on behalf of his local community.

The ex-HMAS Canberra sailed nearly 800,000 miles serving Australia, and saw active service in the Persian Gulf and conducted operations in areas as diverse as the Southern Ocean and the Solomon Islands, east of Africa and south of Russia. The ship is 138 metres long, and when in commission displaced 4100 tonnes and had a crew of 210 including helicopter aircrew and maintainers.

New South Wales also stands to benefit, despite having been the unsuccessful bidder on this occasion for HMAS Canberra. The New South Wales Government will be offered first right to bid for HMAS Adelaide when she is decommissioned in late 2007. HMAS Adelaide is a ship of the same class as the ex-HMAS Canberra.

I am confident the NSW Government will be able to make an at least convincing bid for the second ship. The NSW Government has indicated the preferred location for a dive site as the NSW Central Coast.

My colleagues, Mr Jim Lloyd MP and Mr Ken Ticehurst MP, have been tireless and strong supporters of the Central Coast community. With their continued advocacy I am confident I will be in a position to gift the HMAS Adelaide to the NSW Government.

Tourism projects that have previously used former RAN warships to establish dive wrecks have reported annual revenues ranging from \$2.4 million to \$23 million flowing into local communities.

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Media contacts

Nigel Blunden

(Dr Nelson)

02 6277 7800

0407 632 931

Defence Media Liaison

02 6265 3343

0408 498 664

www.defence.gov.au