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ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY



Chief of Navy appoints Russell Crowe an honorary Commander in the RAN

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Friday 27 February 2026

In a ceremony aboard HMAS Sydney V, it was a Russell Crowe was appointed an honorary Commander in the Royal Australian Navy.

The honorary appointment acknowledges Russell's enduring advocacy for the Royal Australian Navy, his contribution to public understanding through storytelling and support to the Defence community.

It is an honour to recognise an individual who has meaningfully reinforced the Navy's relationship with the Australian people.

Russell's contributions across film, sport and public advocacy have honoured Navy's story with authenticity and lasting commitment. BZ!

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AUSTRALIA ACQUIRES LONG-LEAD ITEMS FOR AUKUS SUBMARINES

The Government has announced a \$310 million payment for the acquisition of long-lead items from the United Kingdom to support Australia's future sovereign conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability.

"Australia continues to work with the United Kingdom and United States to develop the capabilities, skills and knowledge that will underpin our ability to build, operate and maintain nuclear-powered submarines," Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, said.

"Early investment in components such as the nuclear propulsion systems will be critical to the delivery of AUKUS."

This will directly support the manufacture of critical components for nuclear-powered submarines which will be built at Osborne in South Australia, including the nuclear propulsion systems of Australia's first two SSN-AUKUS.

Under the AUKUS program, the United Kingdom will deliver complete, welded nuclear propulsion systems for Australian-built SSN-AUKUS boats, with work already underway at the Rolls-Royce Submarine facility in Derby.

Early progress on reactor manufacturing is essential to maintaining program momentum, sustaining specialist skills, and align industrial schedules across the AUKUS partnership.

"Starting work early on critical submarine components is essential to keeping this program on track. The next-generation SSN-AUKUS submarines will be an extraordinary capability, designed and built by trusted partners and powered by a company with decades of nuclear-propulsion experience," Minister for Defence Industry, Pat Conroy, said.



Australia and the UK will deliver SSN-AUKUS, a new conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine, based on a UK design and using Australian, UK and US technologies Credit: Defence

"Australia's investment is helping to lay the foundations for a sovereign capability that will keep Australians safe for decades to come. This is a concrete example of allied industrial capacity delivering real benefits for Australia."

This investment is in addition to Australia's contribution of GBP 2.4 billion (approx. A\$4.6 billion) over 10 years to expand the production capacity of Rolls-Royce Submarines.

This announcement has followed Minister Conroy's engagement at the Australia-United Kingdom Defence Industry Dialogue (AUKDID) which was held in London.

AUKDID – which was held for the first time since 2018 – has provided an opportunity to build on areas of shared interest between Australia and the United Kingdom, including submarine industrial base cooperation.

The outcomes that have come from AUKDID, according to Minister Conroy, include a deepening cooperation on advanced radar technology, such as exploring the use of Australian radar technologies on UK projects, increasing cooperation on collaborative combat aircraft (CCA), particularly payload integration of UK weapons into the MQ-28A Ghost Bat, strengthening work on directed

energy or laser weapons, and greater work on resilient supply chains and critical minerals.

"And we've also flagged an increase in a number of Australian embeds at the BAE submarine construction yard of Barrow. We're also supporting UK weapon testing of systems destined for Ukraine on Australian ranges," Minister Conroy affirmed at AUKDID.

On the deepening cooperation on advanced radar technology, it will principally be focused on Active Electronically Scanned Array radars, which are mostly in CEA's domain. More specifically, Australia will be looking into AESA radars.

Conroy also made further statements in relation to the Ghost Bat situation.

"What we're looking at now is expanding that into the European family of weapons that will potentially facilitate exports of Ghost Bat to European nations who might be interested in it," Minister Conroy indicated.

The purchases that were announced in relation to the long-lead items for AUKUS have occurred over two years and are the first parts to go into the nuclear reactors for the submarines. According to Minister Conroy, these purchases mark the start of the construction process for the reactors.

The visit has followed the Australian Government's recently announced investment of \$3.9 billion as a down payment to deliver the new Submarine Construction Yard in Osborne.

This week in Western Australia, HMS Anson, a United Kingdom Astute-class submarine, is at HMAS Stirling for maintenance, marking the first time a UK nuclear-powered submarine has undergone a maintenance period in Australia.

Swapping the Union Jack for a cork hat and thongs

Navy News - 6 February 2026

After about a quarter of a century in service to the United Kingdom's Royal Navy, one of HMAS *Kuttabul*'s newest sailors has swapped the grey skies of London for the sunny streets of Sydney.

Petty Officer Hadleigh Hannington-Daley was born in south-east London in the 1970s and followed in the footsteps of his family to join the Royal Navy as a stores accountant.

During his 24-year naval career, Petty Officer Hannington-Daley served on seven ships, worked alongside 30 Commando Royal Marines and had multiple overseas deployments.

But it was his time with the Australians that had a lasting impact on his life, and part of the reason he is now serving under the Australian white ensign.

"Having previously served alongside the ADF overseas and during joint operations, there was something drawing me in," he said.

"It wasn't just their no-nonsense approach and strong camaraderie, but the stories of outdoor Australian life at the beach, camping and hiking that sealed my decision to join the RAN [Royal Australian Navy]."

In 2022, Petty Officer Hannington-Daley began the process of joining as an overseas lateral entrant.

'Having previously served alongside the ADF overseas and during joint operations, there was something drawing me in.'

It was at Australia House in London that Petty Officer Hannington-Daley pledged his allegiance to his Australian brothers and sisters.

He arrived at the gates of Kuttabul in April



Petty Officer Hadleigh Hannington-Daley at HMAS Kuttabul, NSW. Photo: Leading Seaman David Cox

2025, joining as a petty officer, maritime logistics supply chain.

While setting up his new life in Sydney, Petty Officer Hannington-Daley said the support he received from the personnel support unit was invaluable, assisting with housing, allowances, account setup and adapting to cultural differences.

He has even overcome the most glaring barriers: the dialect differences.

"I'm now fluent in Australian. I found adding an 'O' to the end of most words is the trick," he said.

On Australia Day, Petty Officer Hannington-Daley officially became an Australian citizen.

"I hope to continue progressing through the ranks, with the goal of becoming a warrant officer before retiring for a final time," he said.

Overseas lateral entry is for skilled foreign military personnel, currently serving and recently retired, to bring their knowledge and relevant service experience to Australia. More information can be found on the ADF Careers page.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

GARDEN ISLAND

February 1788



The name Garden Island appears to be at odds with the reality that it is not an island at all. The fact is that it was an island up until World War II. It achieved its role in Australia's naval history in the early days of the establishment of the Sydney settlement in 1788.

The local Aborigines called it Boorooawang or Bar-Ing-Hoe, believed to mean a fishing place or an island, or even a ship. It consisted of two small hills, some scrubby vegetation and no natural water supply, but was very close to the new settlement.

However, it became part of Australia's naval history on the 11th February 1788, just 16 days after the settlement was established at Sydney Cove, all because of scurvy. The Royal Navy was aware that fresh vegetables would help to prevent this and so it was their practice to establish simple gardens growing onions and corn wherever they were likely to be for any significant period.

Governor Arthur Phillip chose this little island as the site for such a garden for the crew of HMS *Sirius*, as it was secure from the settlement. So the entry appears in the log of HMS *Sirius* tells of a party of sailors being sent to the island to establish their ship's garden – thus the name.



The oldest graffiti

GRAFFITI – 1788

An early maritime requirement in a new location was the surveying of the waterways, and these were undertaken very quickly after the arrival of the First Fleet. One such survey was carried out by William Bradley, the First lieutenant of HMS *Sirius*. He was accompanied by a seaman, Frederic Meredith and a marine, Private Joseph Radford.

During their survey, they carved their initial into the sandstone on the northern hill of the island – these are still visible today and are the oldest marks made by Europeans in the Sydney area. Bradley is remembered today by the landmark Bradleys Head, on the northern side of Sydney Harbour.



HMS *Sirius* Log 1788

The garden was used by *Sirius* up until she was lost off Norfolk Island in 1790, then continued its role with other Royal Navy ships until 1807.

The island was used for various functions in those early years, including an anti-smuggling guardhouse, a gun battery, and even a residential cottage.



HMS *Sirius*: Flagship of the First Fleet to Australia

SHIP'S SUPER STEWARDS EXCEL

Navy News - 25 February 2026

It's a stunning transformation that couldn't be undertaken without military planning and precision.

Less than six hours after HMAS *Toowoomba* pulled alongside in Indonesia, the maritime logistics support operations team had the ship's flight deck transformed from a lethal military platform into a plush, five-star pavilion.

Instead of supporting flying operations by a seven-tonne MH-60R Seahawk helicopter, the flight deck became a venue for welcoming dozens of diplomats, Indonesian government and military representatives, and other invited guests.

Petty Officer Jess Gunning declared it was a task that couldn't be achieved by any other team.

"Having an aircraft on it one day, to a five-star reception the next, it takes a lot of work," Petty Officer Gunning said.

"Setting up the marquee, that is a whole crew evolution, and a huge effort by everyone to have that established.

"Having done it as an able seaman and now a petty officer, you know the steps of what you want it to look like."

Arriving in Tanjung Priok in Jakarta in early February, *Toowoomba* was on the first port visit of her regional presence deployment across South-East and East Asia.

As well as maintaining a near-continuous presence in the region, these maritime deployments allow Australia to deepen its partnerships with other nations across the region.

'We're not just here to put up three meals a day. We're pretty good at what we do, and it's a great opportunity to demonstrate this.'

This includes the ship's own 'saltwater diplomats' conducting cultural exchanges to forge working-level relationships.

"It's impressive, they do an unreal job. It is a daunting task, they are conversing with high-ranked officers, but they are not scared to speak person-to-person in this forum," Petty Officer Gunning said.

"It does bring you pride, the final touches when we get it all systems go, the lights, the variety of plants and serving areas established it makes it rewarding."



The Maritime Logistic Chef Department responsible for the service provided at the official reception of HMAS *Toowoomba* during their visit to Jakarta. Photos: Leading Seaman Zac Dingle

For any visiting international guests, coming on board *Toowoomba* is an opportunity to enjoy the best cuisine Australia has to offer.

Navy chefs created signature dishes incorporating kangaroo and crocodile, before finishing off with staples like Tim Tams and lamingtons that have evolved into cheesecakes and desserts that would be at home in any five-star patisserie.

Maritime Logistics Chef Petty Officer Todd De Bont said while official receptions took weeks of planning, the reception menu was a chance to highlight what Navy chefs can actually do.

"Years of experience knowing the expectations of what other countries would like from us, we capture the flavourings of Australia," Petty Officer De Bont said.

"That's the chef's spin; they brainstormed and did some trials and it came up with some things that were really special.

"We're not just here to put up three meals a day. We're pretty good at what we do, and it's a great opportunity to demonstrate this."

In the heat of the kitchen, Petty Officer De Bont said it was easy for junior chefs to miss the essential role they're playing in international engagement.

"I don't think our junior chefs understand the gravity of it, but in the future, they'll have a good understanding of what their contribution is and how much influence they can have on our international partnerships," Petty Officer De Bont said.



Institute of Veterans' Advocacy, now accepting membership applications.

23 February 2026

The independent Institute of Veterans' Advocacy (IVA) has commenced accepting applications for membership, marking a significant milestone in its establishment as Australia's professional association for veterans' advocates. Membership to the IVA is open to all veteran advocates who meet the competency, training, and professional standards.

Chair Michael von Berg, MC OAM described the milestone of accepting membership applications as an exciting time.

"The Board has been working hard to establish the foundations of the IVA, and we're now looking forward to engaging with the membership and building an organisation that supports this incredibly important sector," Mr von Berg said.

The IVA's establishment has been supported through targeted government investment and forms part of broader work to strengthen protections for veterans and improve professional oversight, ethical and professional standards in the advocacy sector.

The IVA will set competency and training standards for the veterans' advocacy sector, establish and implement a formal code of conduct, and provide supervision of advocates' work.

More information about the IVA, including membership categories and details about how to apply for an IVA membership are available at: www.iva.org.au.

DVA will continue to work with the IVA as the professional body for veterans' advocates and encourages all professional advocates to register with the IVA.

Open Arms group programs

24 February 2026

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling offers a suite of free online and face-to-face group programs for current and former serving ADF members, partners and other eligible family members:

- Connected Couples
- Managing Anger
- Managing Depression
- Managing Pain
- Parenting programs
- Recovery from Trauma
- Relaxation and Stress Management
- Sleeping Better
- Stepping Out (transition from military to civilian life)
- Understanding Anxiety

Open Arms' group programs are generally co-facilitated by a clinician alongside a Lived Experience Professional, who understand the military and veteran families' experiences.

Group programs are designed to be supportive, inclusive and strengths-based, offering a safe space to learn, share and grow. The group format supports experiential learning, shared insight, and skills practice in a peer-supported setting, fostering both individual and collective growth.

We use a strengths-based approach to foster empowerment, resilience and self-efficacy in individuals, and prioritise emotional safety, choice and control, collaboration and empowerment, cultural sensitivity and respect for all forms of lived experience.

To find out more or enquire about joining a group, clients can contact Open Arms on 1800 011 046 or visit the group page: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/treatment-programs-and-workshops> to find a group program scheduled in their region.

If you have any questions, please email OpenArms.Groupprogramspathways@dva.gov.au

DVA UPDATES



Show your Veteran Card. Get the care you deserve.

17 February 2026

Health providers need to confirm what treatments are covered under your DVA entitlements. Showing your Veteran Card—physical or digital—helps providers understand your eligibility and prevents delays.

If you hold a Veteran White Card, bring details of your accepted conditions to your appointment. This helps them understand what treatment DVA will fund.

How to find your accepted conditions

If you have linked MyService to your myGov account, you can view your accepted conditions under your DVA Veteran Card in MyService. From MyService you can generate a list of your accepted conditions to be saved as a PDF which you can choose to share with your provider.

- Step by step guidance to help you find your accepted conditions is in MyService, visit: [How to find your accepted conditions and check your legislation in MyService](#).
- If you don't have MyService it's easy to set up, visit the DVA website to find out how.
- Call the Veteran Access Network on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) and ask us to send you a letter listing your accepted conditions.

Tips for a hassle-free visit

- Check before booking: Contact the health provider to find out whether they accept Veteran Cards before making the appointment.
- Keep records handy: Give permission to your GP or other regular health providers to store your accepted conditions in your health records. This makes future appointments easier.

Need help?

- Support is available. If you're having trouble with MyService or unsure how to find your accepted conditions, DVA staff and Veteran Support Officers can assist. Contact DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).

For further information on MyService visit <https://www.dva.gov.au/about-myservice>.





DVA Contact Numbers

Provider invoicing & billing enquiries: 1300 550 017

Provider enquiries: 1800 550 457

Transport bookings: 1800 550 455

Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre (VAPAC): 1800 552 580

Hearing or speech impairment assistance

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service](#) (NRS):

Talk To You (TTY) users phone 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 838 372

Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 838 372

Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1800 838 372

Information on health services may be obtained from DVA. The contact numbers for health care pro-viders requiring further information or prior financial authorisation for all States and Territories are listed below:

TELEPHONE: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

INTERNATIONAL CALLERS: +61 2 6289 1133

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Health Approvals & Home Care Section

GPO Box 9998

BRISBANE QLD 4001

DVA WEBSITE: <http://www.dva.gov.au/providers/allied-healthprofessionals>

DVA EMAIL: For prior financial authorisation: health.approval@dva.gov.au

The appropriate prior approval request form can be found at: <https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/servicesrequiring-prior-approval>

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

For information about claims for payment visit: www.dva.gov.au/providers/how-claim

CLAIM ENQUIRIES: 1300 550 017 (Option 2 Allied Health)

Claims will take a variety of times to complete based on whether or not the claim is prioritised for allocation to a decision maker and the complexity of the claim itself. For example, if the service of the individual crosses two or more Acts or contains a lot of health conditions and injuries or both. This results in some claims being decided faster than the average time, while some claims take longer.

For any condition, to make the claiming process smoother, follow these 3 steps:

- Step 1: Get your medical practitioner to con-firm your diagnosis.
- Step 2: Supply the documents you need to;
- Step 3: Check if you are already eligible for free health care and treatment.

CLAIMS PROGRESS

As at 31 October 2025, DVA had 89,597 claims on hand, comprised of 22,820 unallocated claims and 66,777 claims being processed.

In the financial year to date (FYTD) (1 July 2025 to 31 October 2025):

DVA received 39,032 claims

DVA made 36,099 determinations

For all claims on hand including older claims being processed the average TTTP for MRCA IL was 333 days, up from 304 days in the previous FYTD. The median TTTP was 271 days.

There have already been some significant improvements in processing timeframes for new IL claims received and determined within the last 12 months.

For claims received within the last 12 months, the average TTTP for MRCA IL was 110 days. The median TTTP was 96 days.

OPEN ARMS

Veterans & Families Counselling

Open Arms provides mental health and wellbeing support to anyone who has served at least one day of continuous fulltime service in the ADF and their immediate families.

1800 011 046



Free and anonymous counselling line for all current and ex-serving ADF personnel, veterans and their families. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

1800 142 072

DEFENCE FAMILY HELPLINE

Available 24/7 or online at www.defence.gov.au/members-families/defence-helpline.asp. Staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

1800 628 036

DEFENCE ALL HOURS SUPPORT LINE

24/7 confidential telephone service for Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families to facilitate access to ADF or civilian mental health services.

1800 628 036