THE BOSUN'S CALL

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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New Website Coming Soon..

Much work has been carried out behind the scenes preparing a new and improved version of the NAA website. Due to launch in early December, the new website features a more streamlined look, light/dark mode, online forms and more.

A decision was made to separate the website from the Member Database for security reasons so there is no longer any need to 'log in' to the website to see everything.

More details page 4.

The coat of arms of Canberra:
A City Emblem Born from a Warship

Canberra's coat of arms exists because a warship needed a badge. In 1927 the young national capital had a Parliament House but no emblem of its own. It took a request from the Department of Defence, on behalf of the Royal Australian Navy's new heavy cruiser HMAS* Canberra*, to set the heraldic process in motion. The result, granted by King George V in 1928, remains the ACT's oldest official symbol. It also began a naval lineage that now spans five warships in two navies.

A ship in search of a badge

HMAS *Canberra* was a County-class heavy cruiser built by John Brown & Company at Clydebank, Scotland. Princess Mary launched her on 31 May 1927, the first RAN ship launched by a member of the Royal Family. Naval tradition called for every ship to carry a badge, and for a ship named after a city, that badge normally drew on the city's arms.

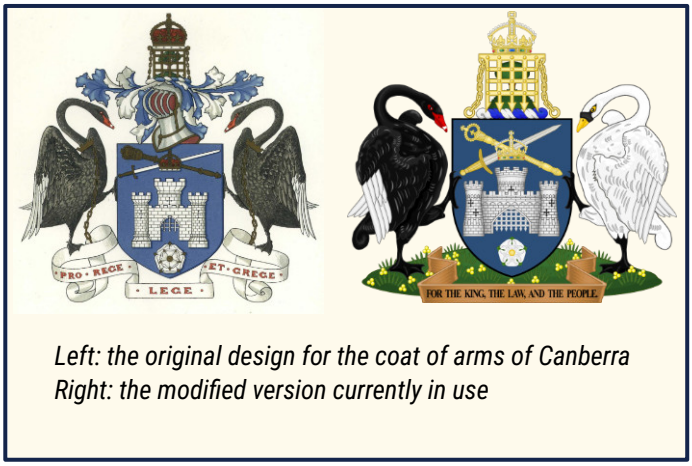
Canberra had none. Parliament had only moved to the capital that same month, when the Duke of York opened the provisional Parliament House on 9 May 1927. So in July 1927 the Department of Defence asked for a coat of arms to be created, one the Navy could adapt for the cruiser's badge.

From competition to royal grant

On 9 September 1927 the Department of Home Affairs and Territories launched a design competition on behalf of the Federal Capital Commission. It drew 35 entries, but none was adopted as submitted. The design that went forward was the work of Sydney heraldic artist Charles Roxburgh Wylie, in modified form.

Wylie's draft was sent to the College of Arms in London. His original had two black swans as supporters, but the College had recently approved a pair of black swans for Perth. To avoid duplication, one was changed to a white swan.

King George V granted the arms by royal warrant on 8 October 1928, three months after HMAS *Canberra* commissioned on 9 July. The supporters, crest and motto followed in early November 1928. Crucially, the grant named the "City of Canberra", not the wider Territory.



Left: the original design for the coat of arms of Canberra
Right: the modified version currently in use

Reading the arms

Every element speaks to Canberra's role as the seat of national government:

Crown: the authority of the Sovereign.
Sword of justice and parliamentary mace, crossed: the shared authority of the executive and Parliament.

- Three-towered castle: the dignity of the great city Canberra was expected to become.
- White Rose of York: the Duke of York, later King George VI, who opened Parliament in 1927.
- Portcullis before a gum tree (crest): a link to the Palace of Westminster, and the growth of Australia's garden city.
- Black and white swans (supporters): Aboriginal Australians and European settlers.

The motto was first rendered in Latin, Pro Rege, Lege et Grege, then in English from 1929: "For the King, the Law and the People". It read "Queen" from 1952 and reverted to "King" in 2022.

The ships that carried the name

The cruiser that prompted the arms was the first of three Australian warships named *Canberra*. Her loss in battle also led the United States Navy to take up the name, which it has now given to two ships of its own.

HMAS *Canberra* (I): the heavy cruiser, 1928–1942

Commissioned on 9 July 1928, the first *Canberra* and her sister HMAS *Australia* formed the core of the RAN's interwar fleet. She spent the 1930s on fleet exercises and flag-showing cruises around Australia and the Pacific. When the Second World War began she escorted troop convoys across the Indian Ocean and hunted German surface raiders. In 1942 she joined the Allied force supporting the American landings at Guadalcanal. In the early hours of 9 August 1942, at the Battle of Savo Island, a Japanese cruiser force caught her by surprise. She took more than twenty shell hits in about two minutes, and 84 of her crew died, including her captain, Frank Getting. With the cruiser unable to move or fight, American destroyers sank her that morning

in what became known as Ironbottom Sound. She was the largest Australian warship lost in the war until HMAS *Sydney*'s fate became clear later that year, and her loss shocked both Australia and the United States.

HMAS *Canberra* (II): the guided-missile frigate, 1981–2005

The name returned on an Adelaide-class guided-missile frigate, a modified version of the US Navy's Oliver Hazard Perry class, built by Todd Pacific Shipyards in Seattle. Commissioned on 21 March 1981, the second *Canberra* gave the RAN modern anti-air and anti-submarine capability and could operate a Seahawk helicopter. She made several deployments to the Persian Gulf, enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s and early 2000s, and took part in regional exercises and patrols across the Indo-Pacific. She was decommissioned on 12 November 2005. On 4 October 2009 she was scuttled off Barwon Heads in Victoria, where she now lies as an artificial reef and a popular dive site.

HMAS *Canberra* (III): the amphibious assault ship, 2014–present

The third *Canberra* is the lead ship of the Canberra class of landing helicopter docks (LHDs). Her hull was built by Navantia in Spain, and BAE Systems completed her superstructure and fit-out at Williamstown, Victoria. Displacing about 27,000 tonnes, she and her sister HMAS *Adelaide* are the largest ships the RAN has ever operated. She was commissioned on 28 November 2014. She can carry more than 1,000 troops with their vehicles, landing craft and helicopters, and she has become the centrepiece of Australia's amphibious and disaster-relief capability. She led the ADF response to Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji in 2016 and has taken part in major exercises such as RIMPAC and the regional Indo-Pacific Endeavour deployments.

USS *Canberra* (CA-70/CAG-2):
the cruiser that honoured an ally, 1943–1970

After the loss at Savo Island, President Franklin D. Roosevelt directed that a Baltimore-class heavy cruiser then being built, originally to be named *Pittsburgh*, be named *Canberra* instead. It was a rare tribute: no other American warship had been named after a foreign capital city. Lady Alice Dixon, wife of the Australian minister to Washington, Sir Owen Dixon, launched her at Quincy, Massachusetts, on 19 April 1943. She was commissioned on 14 October 1943 and fought in the Pacific with the fast carrier task forces until a Japanese aerial torpedo struck her off Formosa (Taiwan) on 13 October 1944. Her crew saved her, and she was towed to safety. After the war she was converted into one of the US Navy's first guided-missile cruisers and redesignated CAG-2. In 1957 she carried President Eisenhower to the Bermuda Conference. In the 1960s she provided naval gunfire support off Vietnam. She was decommissioned in 1970 and sold for scrap in 1980.

USS *Canberra* (LCS-30)
commissioned in Sydney, 2023–present

The second USS *Canberra* is an Independence-class littoral combat ship. Fittingly, she was built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama, the American arm of an Australian shipbuilder. Her sponsor was former Australian foreign minister Marise Payne. On 22 July 2023 she was commissioned in Sydney, the first US Navy ship ever commissioned in a foreign port. The ceremony marked the alliance between the two nations and recalled the sacrifice of the first HMAS *Canberra* eight decades earlier.

From ship to city

The emblem created for the first cruiser outlived her, and the name it served now belongs to an unbroken run of ships. When the ACT gained self-government in 1989, the new government adopted the 1928 city arms as its own.

That inheritance has raised questions. A 2019 inquiry noted the arms legally belong to the City, not the Territory. In 2024 the ACT Government admitted the swans had long been shown the wrong way round on public buildings, and opened consultation on a separate territorial coat of arms. Nearly a century on, a badge commissioned for a warship still frames the debate over how Canberra represents itself. Meanwhile the city's name continues to sail on Australian and American ships.



HMAS *Canberra*
Ships' Badge



USS *Canberra*
Ships' Crest

Sources

- *Coat of arms of Canberra — Wikipedia*
- *Canberra's Capital Flags — Flags Australia*
- *Symbols of the ACT — ACT Legislative Assembly*
- *HMAS* Canberra *(D33) — Wikipedia*
- *HMAS* Canberra *(FFG 02) — Royal Australian Navy / Wikipedia*
- *HMAS* Canberra *(L02) — Royal Australian Navy / Wikipedia*
- *USS* Canberra *(CA-70) — Naval History and Heritage Command*
- *USS* Canberra *(LCS-30) — US Navy / Wikipedia*

Ships' Badge or Ships' Crest

In the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Navy - the official term is a ship's badge, though people commonly call them ship's crests (the term used by the US Navy).

They are technically "badges" rather than "crests." In strict heraldry, a crest is only one specific part of a full coat of arms (the element mounted on top of a helm), whereas naval vessels are assigned a complete badge.

"Waves have Crests and Ships have Badges"



The redesigned NAA website: *safer, simpler and easier to read*

By Darren Rush, National Webmaster

From early December, members visiting navalassoc.org.au will find a new-look website. The Association's site has been rebuilt from the keel up, with a cleaner look, pages that work properly on phones and tablets, and a choice of light or dark display. Some of the most important changes, though, are ones you will never see: the new site has been designed from the start to be far harder to attack, and to keep members' personal information well away from the public internet.

This article explains what has changed, and why.

Security first

Like many organisations, the Association has to take online security seriously. Websites are probed by automated attacks every day, and older sites that run code on the web server are a favourite target. Two decisions shaped the new site more than any others.

Moving away from PHP

The previous website was built with PHP, a programming language that runs on the web server each time a page is requested. PHP has powered a great deal of the internet, but every piece of server-side code is a potential way in for an attacker, and keeping it patched and secure is an ongoing job.

The new site is built from static HTML pages. Each page is prepared in advance and simply delivered to your browser as it is. There is no program running behind the scenes, no code for an attacker to trick, and no database sitting behind the website waiting to be broken into. Fewer moving parts means fewer things that can go wrong, and the site is easier and cheaper to maintain as a result.

No more logins

The old website had a members' area that required a username and password. Each of those accounts, while convenient, was also a possible point of entry. Weak or reused passwords, phishing emails and stolen credentials are among the most common ways websites are compromised, and a site with thousands of accounts offers thousands of chances.

The content that once sat behind the members' login is now openly available on the website, so there is nothing to sign in to and no password to remember. Members can simply visit the site and find what they need.

Member details moved to a separate system

Just as importantly, members' personal details are no longer part of the website at all. The member database has been moved to a separate and independent system, kept apart from the public site for security reasons. Access to it is now limited to Sub-Section, Section and National administrators: the people who genuinely need it to run the Association.

The effect is significant. By removing member logins from the website and restricting the database to administrators, approximately 3,000 potential security breaches have been neutralised. Even in the unlikely event that someone tampered with the public website, there would be no member information there to find.

Light and dark mode

Readability was a priority throughout the redesign. The new site offers both a light mode and a dark mode, so you can choose whichever is more comfortable for your eyes.

Light mode gives the familiar dark text on a pale background, ideal in a bright room or outdoors. Dark mode reverses this, with light text on a deep background, which many people find easier on the eyes in the evening or in low light, and which can

reduce glare for those with certain vision conditions. The site will follow the setting already chosen on your phone, tablet or computer, and you can switch between the two at any time.

A streamlined appearance

The new design is deliberately clean and uncluttered. Pages have been simplified, unnecessary decoration removed, and text given room to breathe so that the information you are looking for stands out. Other improvements include:

- **Works well on phones.** Pages now adjust automatically to fit any screen, from a large desktop monitor to a mobile phone, with no pinching or sideways scrolling required.
- **Faster page loading.** Because static pages are ready to go, they arrive in your browser quickly, even on a slower connection.
- **Easier navigation.** Menus have been simplified so it takes fewer clicks to find Section and Sub-Section information, news and events.
- **News slider.** Pages now feature a slider showcasing the latest updates and news at a glance without having to scroll through the whole page.

What this means for members

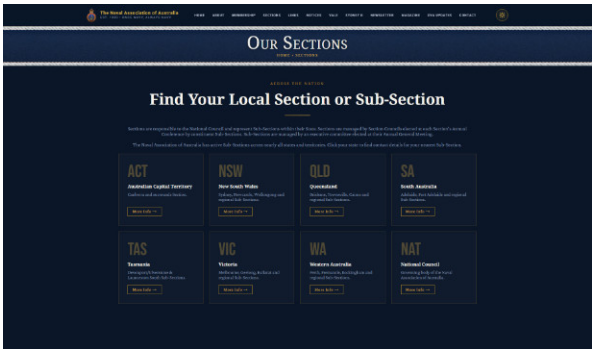
For most members, the change is simple: there is no longer any need to log in. Just visit navalassoc.org.au and everything is there. If you have the old website bookmarked, it is worth updating your bookmark to the home page, as some older page addresses have changed.

If you need to update your contact details or membership information, please speak to your Sub-Section or Section administrator, who will forward your request to the Membership Registrar.

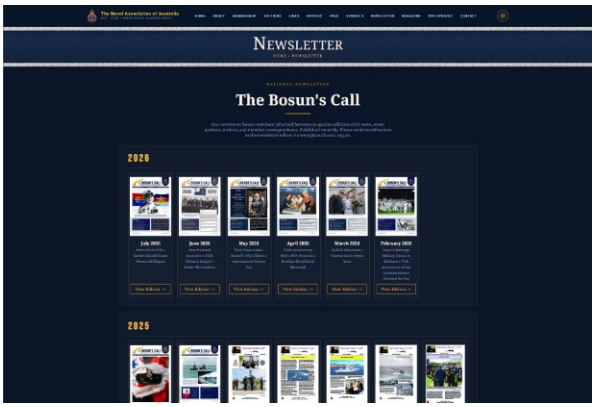
The redesign is an ongoing project, and feedback is always welcome. If you spot something that is not working as it should, or have an idea for how the site could better serve members, please get in touch through your Section or via the contact details on the website.

The Association has always looked after its people. The new website is one more way of doing just that: keeping members' information safe, while making it easier than ever to stay connected.











THIS DAY IN HISTORY

MELBOURNE
November 1920

The Ex-Navalmens Association was inaugurated in Melbourne, with approximately 100 members.



A Chance Meeting in Melbourne

The Naval Association of Australia (NAA) traces its origins to a small, almost accidental encounter on the streets of Melbourne in 1920. An ex-naval man, out for a stroll with his wife, spotted a former shipmate directing traffic on point duty as a policeman. The two men stopped to reminisce, and from that brief reunion came an idea: to bring together as many old shipmates as possible who had served in the Navy.

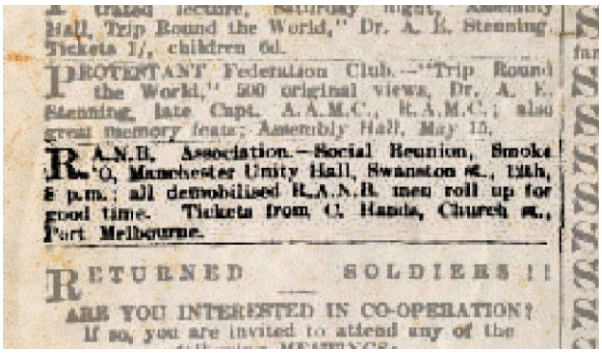
That idea quickly gathered momentum. In May 1920, around 100 former naval men met at the old Manchester Unity Hall on Swanston Street and agreed to form the "Ex-Navalmen's Association." The organisation was formally inaugurated later that year, in November 1920, giving Australia's navy veterans their first dedicated body to represent their shared interests and maintain the camaraderie forged at sea.



The old Manchester Unity Hall on Swanston Street where the Ex-Navalmen's Association was formed.

Early Growth and Amalgamation

The fledgling association did not stay static for long. In 1922, just two years after its founding, the Ex-Navalmen's Association amalgamated with the China Naval Contingent Association. That group's members had served during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, one of the earliest overseas deployments involving Australian naval personnel, and their inclusion broadened the association's membership base and historical reach.



Hall, Trip Round the World," Dr. A. E. Stenning. Tickets 1/, children 6d.

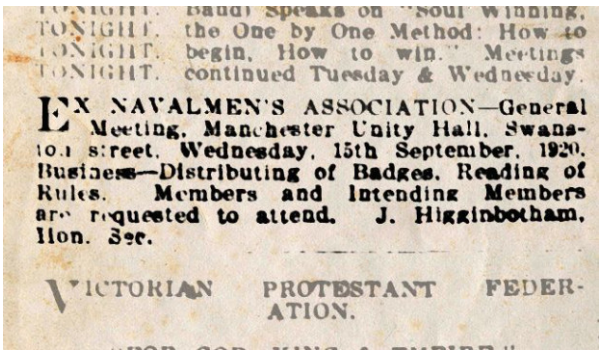
PROTESTANT Federation Club.—"Trip Round the World," 500 original views, Dr. A. E. Stenning, late Capt. A.A.M.C., R.A.M.C.; also great memory feats; Assembly Hall, May 15.

R.A.N.B. Association.—Social Reunion, Smoke 'O, Manchester Unity Hall, Swanston st., 11th, 8 p.m.; all demobilised R.A.N.B. men roll up for good time. Tickets from C. Hands, Church st., Port Melbourne.

RETURNED SOLDIERS !!

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN CO-OPERATION? If so, you are invited to attend any of the

Advertisement appearing in the Argus - 10 May 1920



TONIGHT. Baudi Speaks on "Soul Winning, TONIGHT. the One by One Method: How to TONIGHT. begin, How to win." Meetings continued Tuesday & Wednesday.

EX NAVALMEN'S ASSOCIATION—General Meeting, Manchester Unity Hall, Swanston street, Wednesday, 15th September, 1920. Business—Distributing of Badges, Reading of Rules. Members and Intending Members are requested to attend. J. Higginbotham, Hon. Sec.

VICTORIAN PROTESTANT FEDERATION.

Advertisement appearing in the Argus - 10 May 1920

The organisation's structure also began to expand beyond Victoria. In 1925, a New South Wales Section was formed in Sydney, marking the first step toward a genuinely national footprint. Growth within that state continued over the following decades, and by 1947 approval had been granted for NSW to establish Sub-Sections in other areas throughout the state - a model of local Sub-Sections under state-based sections that would eventually be mirrored across the country.

From "Ex-Navalmen" to the Naval Association of Australia

For four decades, the organisation operated under its original name. But by the late 1950s, its membership had evolved. It was no longer made up solely of men who had left the service - serving naval personnel were increasingly part of the fold as well. To better reflect this broader membership and its aims, the Ex-Navalmen's Association changed its name in 1960 to "The Naval Association of Australia," the name it retains today.



Member Badge of the Ex-Naval Men's Association *(1920-1960)*



Member Badge of the Naval Association of Australia *(1960-Present)*

This renaming was more than cosmetic. It signalled a shift in identity: from a group defined narrowly by past service to one embracing "both serving and ex-naval persons," as the association itself puts it. The change laid the groundwork for the NAA's enduring motto, "Once Navy, Always Navy." which continues to capture its founding spirit of mutual support and self-help among those with a naval background.

Purpose and Mission

From its earliest days, the NAA was built as a self-help organisation. Its central objective was - and remains - to unite former and serving naval personnel for their mutual benefit. Over time, this mission has broadened into several distinct pillars of activity:

- Supporting the welfare of serving and former Navy members and their families, including surviving spouses and dependants in necessitous circumstances
- Commemorating naval service and history
- Assisting and promoting the Australian Naval Cadet movement
- Fostering camaraderie among "the navy fraternity," in keeping with the association's belief that "Once Navy - Always Navy"

The association describes itself today as the premier organisation outside of the Royal Australian Navy dedicated to looking after the interests of both serving and former naval personnel, embracing all ranks and both men and women.

A National Structure

What began as a single gathering in Melbourne has grown into a nationwide network. The NAA now operates through sections in each state and territory - including New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, and the ACT - with numerous local Sub-Sections beneath them, from Bribie Island to Broken Hill-adjacent regions, Port Adelaide to Perth North. This layered structure, seeded by the NSW sub-section model approved in 1947, allows the association to maintain a genuinely local presence for naval veterans and serving personnel across the country while still operating under a unified National Council.

A Living Legacy

More than a century after that chance meeting near Young and Jackson's Hotel in Melbourne, the Naval Association of Australia continues to serve the community it was founded to support. It publishes newsletters and magazines, including the *White Ensign Magazine* and the *National Bosun's Call*, maintains archives of its history, and remains actively engaged in issues affecting veterans, including welfare and mental health support for the naval community.

The story of the NAA is, in many ways, the story of naval camaraderie itself: born from an informal reunion between old shipmates, and sustained ever since by the simple, enduring principle that once you have served in the Navy, you remain part of that family for life.



Serving Australia with pride

By LEUT Carolyn Martin - 21 Sep 26

NAVY NEWS

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR COLLINS-CLASS SUSTAINMENT

The Collins-Class Sustainment Program Office (Collins SPO) has marked a significant leadership transition, with CAPT Dylan handing over the role of director to newly promoted CAPT Wesley.

The change of leadership comes at a pivotal time for Australia's submarine enterprise, as the Collins-class fleet continues to deliver a critical capability while preparing for nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS pathway.

CAPT Dylan departed Collins SPO after providing strong leadership within one of Defence's most complex strategic assets.



Captain Dylan RAN, handing over Collins System Program Office Director Command to Captain Wesley RAN, at HMAS Stirling, Western Australia.

During his tenure, he oversaw the sustainment and support of the Collins-class fleet, helping ensure the delivery of safe, seaworthy and mission-ready submarines to Navy.

As he moves into a key role within the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program, CAPT Dylan brings extensive operational, engineering and sustainment expertise that will continue to support Australia's future submarine capability.

In a ceremony attended by Collins SPO personnel, industry partners and family members, COMAUSFLT RADM Chris Smith promoted CAPT Wesley and presided over the leadership handover.



Collins System Program Office (COLSPO) staff with Captain Wesley RAN, and Captain Dylan RAN, during the handover of COLSPO Director Command at HMAS

CAPT Wesley joined Navy as a marine technician in January 2003 and has served for more than two decades, building a distinguished career across the submarine and surface fleets.

A respected engineer and submariner, he achieved his submarine qualification as a sailor in 2005 and as an officer in 2014, while progressing from the engine rooms of the Collins-class fleet to senior engineering and leadership positions at sea and ashore.

Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Military Division in 2026, CAPT Wesley is recognised for combining deep technical expertise with people-focused leadership.



ADM AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MAGAZINE
SERVING THE BUSINESS OF DEFENCE

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FIJI GIFTED BLUEBOTTLE USVS

Australia is donating Bluebottle drone vessels to Fiji to aid in its fight against international drug traffickers who use the Pacific island group as a waypoint in transiting shipments of cocaine and other drugs to Australia and New Zealand.
That's a growing problem, with the Australian Federal Police saying 17 tonnes of illicit drugs, mostly cocaine, has been seized by local and international law enforcement in the Pacific region since January.

For all of 2025, the total seizure of illicit commodities in the Pacific region was about 4.6 tonnes, the AFP said.

Enough of the drugs find their way to Fiji to cause serious problems including a soaring rate of addiction and HIV plus corruption in the country's law enforcement.

The unspecified number of Bluebottle uncrewed surface vessels (USVs) are being gifted as a component of a $600 million package for the Pacific-led Australian supported Waqa Moana maritime security initiative to counter illicit drug trafficking, ABC reported.

The first are expected to arrive next year.

"Our biggest challenge is our waters are too big, we don't even have eyes on it, let alone have the capability to affect anything on it," said Fiji's Defence Minister Pio Tikoduadua.

He said the Bluebottles would help Fiji capitalise on its limited resources which now comprise two Guardian-class patrol boats, RFNS Savenaca and RFNS Timo, both donated by Australia though the Pacific Patrol Boat Program.

Bluebottle numbers are being deliberately kept vague to "keep drug dealers guessing," the minister said.

Minister Tikoduadua told ABC that Fijian personnel would control the Bluebottles which would be configured to monitor surface vessels as far away as 30 nautical miles.

Data would be transmitted to human operators at the Vuvale Maritime Essential Services Centre (MESC), an Australian-funded security hub near Fiji's capital Suva. That houses Fijian agencies including the navy, police and fisheries.

With North American and European drug markets well supplied, cartel attention has turned to Australia because of high prices. The United Nations says Australian and New Zealand drug consumers pay some of the highest street prices in the world.

The drug problem doesn't just relate to Fiji. Drug shipments have been seized off New Caledonia and abandoned drug vessels located in the Solomons.

A report by the Lowy Institute in April said Australia's demand for methamphetamine and cocaine was reshaping Pacific communities, turning island nations into key transit points on a global drug superhighway, and exposing them to violence, corruption and addiction.

It's not just drugs bound for Australia and New Zealand. One seized consignment included a number of handguns, valuable and highly desired by Australia's warring drug gangs.

Bluebottle would appear to be well suited to a counter-narcotics role, detecting drug vessels which can include yachts, fishing boats, freighters and even so-called narco-subs, difficult to detect semi-submersible vessels.

Bluebottle produced by Sydney-based Ocius is a seven-metre wind, solar and wave powered long endurance USV able to perform ocean surveillance, gather oceanographic data and even sense for submarines.

Fifteen have been delivered to the Navy with another 40 planned. These are in operational service, sailing 24/7 from HMAS Coonawarra in Darwin in support of the long running Operation Resolute, Defence's component of the national border protection mission.

Some have gone to New Zealand which deployed two to Fiji during a four-week joint operation which demonstrated their utility at detecting unauthorised fishing boats.

Bluebottle features a sophisticated sensor suite comprising day/night cameras and radar. The communications suite uses low and high bandwidth satcom.

Ultimately Bluebottles could be equipped with a small flying drone to increase surveillance capability.

Australian Bluebottles will be equipped with a sonar array to detect submarines.



DVA INFORMATION

Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

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 aver-age 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

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) continues to process outstanding claims as quickly as possible, to deliver much needed help to veterans and families sooner.

As part of our commitment to routinely, publicly, and meaningfully reporting on claims processing progress, each month DVA releases updated data via the claims processing page.

A snapshot of May 2026:

DVA received 8,979 claims in May bringing the total for the financial year to date (FYTD) to 98,799 claims – 7.3 per cent higher than the same period last year.

DVA made 7,042 determinations and has finalised 85,573 claims in the FYTD, 8.6% per cent less than the equivalent period last year. 70,344 claims were with an officer for processing, and 31,316 claims were yet to be allocated for processing.

The average time taken to process a MRCA IL claim was 361 days in the 2025-26 FYTD (1 July 2025 to 31 May 2026), compared to 311 days in the corresponding 2024-25 FYTD.

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

SAFE ZONE SUPPORT

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