



**THE HON GREG COMBET MP**  
**Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement**

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**SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT ON  
WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY  
20 JUNE 2008, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA**

**Check against delivery**

- Your Excellency, Mr Charles Lepani, Papua New Guinea High Commissioner to Australia;
- Ms Sharon Bird, MP, Member for Cunningham;
- Mr Jim Turnour, MP, Member for Leichardt;
- Rear Admiral Allan du Toit, Commander Border Protection Command;
- Commodore Rod Nairn, RAN, the Hydrographer of Australia;
- Mr Joseph Kunda, Hydrographer of Papua New Guinea;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my honour to be here this morning to help celebrate World Hydrography Day and to speak about a hydrographic capacity building success story – the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Hydrographic Chart Recompilation and Modernisation Project.

As we have heard, in 1975 when PNG became an independent nation, Australia agreed to continue to provide support to its hydrographic surveying endeavours and to publish hydrographic charts of PNG waters on behalf of that country.

Over the many years since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Australian Hydrographic Service has been surveying and charting PNG waters, with the local support of the PNG national Hydrographer. However, many of the existing charts of the region were the legacy of former colonial surveys compiled in imperial units and based on dated information.

With the emergence of modern electronic navigation chart systems onboard ships, the incompatibility of these imperial charts presented a serious challenge for the PNG Hydrographer and the Australian Hydrographic Service.

In 2005 in conjunction with the PNG National Maritime Safety Authority, the Asian Development Bank agreed to underwrite the Rehabilitation of the Maritime Navigation Aids System Project for the region. The project's main objectives focussed on reconstructing the network of navigation aids to an acceptable international maritime standard, establishing a self-reliant hydrographic service, and institutionalising sustainable operation and maintenance of navigation aids.

Management of the \$8 million chart modernisation component of this larger project was assigned to the Australian Hydrographic Service, with the actual charting work being contracted to HSA Systems Pty Ltd, a long-standing industry partner of the Australian Hydrographic Service.

Under the project, which commenced on 1 June 2005, 39 paper charts were recompiled in metric units.

Concurrently, electronic versions of these paper charts were also prepared for use and a further 17 existing electronic charts were also updated.

The project included the confirmation of the positioning of navigational aids, wharves, jetties and buoys. Additional tasks included, shoal and wreck investigations, and surveys of several harbours. This initial activity was followed by further deployments of RAN survey ships in support of the project throughout 2006 and 2007.

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008 the final deliverable paper chart and corresponding electronic chart was accepted by the Australian Hydrographic Service, marking the completion of the project.

This unique project was a collaborative venture that brought together international agencies, government and private industry from across the world.

This project has been highly successful and has delivered an outcome from which PNG and the international maritime community will gain a long term benefit.

Hydrographic capacity building is not just about providing new charts and agreeing to update them in the future. It is also about training PNG personnel to undertake this work themselves.

To this end the Australian Hydrographic Service has and will continue to make training places available for PNG personnel at the RAN Hydrographic School in Sydney.

We will also provide nautical cartographic training both here in Australia and in-country. This will enable the PNG national Hydrographer to assume a greater role in the collection and dissemination of marine safety information and the updating of PNG charts published by the Australian Hydrographic Service.

Australia looks forward to continuing its close relationship and cooperation with our closest neighbour in this vital area of hydrography. This will enhance global navigational safety, maritime trade and protection of the environment; issues that are of equal importance for Australia as they are for PNG.

For PNG in particular, the modernisation of these will assist in lowering the cost of maritime transport while improving the safety of maritime cargo and passenger movements.

It will help improve the distribution of goods and services and support the development of markets and generate income opportunities in remote coastal communities. It will also significantly raise the confidence of mariners

navigating throughout PNG coastal waters and enable them to provide improved transportation services at a lower cost and with lower risk.

Today as part of World Hydrography Day celebrations and in the spirit of the capacity building theme, on behalf of the Australian Government, I am proud to be able to present the PNG High Commissioner to Australia with a symbolic representation showcasing the Recompiled and Modernised Hydrographic Chart Folio of PNG waters.

Your Excellency –

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