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MEDIA RELEASE

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HMAS ADELAIDE SCUTTLING DELAY

The proposed scuttling of the former navy frigate, HMAS Adelaide, off the Central Coast has been postponed indefinitely.

NSW Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, expressed his disappointment that organisers have been forced to put off Saturday's event and festivities by court action.

"Police were predicting a crowd of up to 50,000 people, while virtually every hotel and motel in the area had been booked out," the Minister said.

"The big losers are the tens of thousands of people living on the Central Coast who've been waiting for this event for more than two years, some for almost a decade.

"Six million dollars has been spent preparing for the scuttling and the day's activities, so the Central Coast could benefit from the economic boon such a dive site would bring.

"I am sorry to all the hundreds of small businesses on the Central Coast which were going to benefit from Saturday's scuttling.

"One event which will still go ahead is Saturday's night charity ball, a major fundraiser for the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter, which will be attended by around 500 people."

After yesterday granting a stay on the scuttling, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal today listed the matter for mention on April 23 and hearing on May 5. In the meantime, both parties have agreed to mediation.

Mr Kelly said the vessel is safe sitting where it's located at Glebe Island.

"At this stage, explosives which are onboard are not active, they require sophisticated detonators which only an expert can bring in and connect," the Minister said.

"The experts involved faced a similar situation late last year, when the former HMAS Canberra was delayed from being scuttled off Barwon Heads in Victoria for eight weeks due to poor weather.

"However, the ship is completely secure as the explosives are being removed today."