

MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Lands
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council**



Friday, 27 November, 2009

Celebration of ex-HMAS Adelaide scuttling at annual Westpac Rescue Helicopter ball

Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly has today announced that the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service has invited the NSW Government to join with them in celebrating the scuttling of the Ex-HMAS Adelaide at its Annual Charity Ball on 27th March, 2010.

“The black tie event will raise much needed funds for this community owned and operated service and celebrate the creation of ex-HMAS Adelaide dive site,” Mr Kelly said

“I am also very pleased to announce that all efforts will be made to scuttle the ship on the morning of the ball.

“Work is well underway on preparing the ship for scuttling and it is exciting that our focus is now on the celebrations that will see this project become a reality.

“It is important the community understands, however, this is a highly weather dependent exercise and this scuttling date is tentative.

“It is critical that the weather conditions are fine and calm for the ship to be scuttled successfully.

“The Ex-HMAS ADELAIDE was gifted to the NSW Government to create an artificial reef and dive site in waters off Terrigal, on the NSW Central Coast.”

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service General Manager, Richard Jones, said the service is thrilled to be a part of this wonderful initiative for the Central Coast.

“The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service provides aero medical retrieval services for the Central Coast-Hunter-Mid North Coast and New England and North West regions.

“It is a not for profit community based organisation which provides its services free of charge to the public.

“The annual ball raises funds to support the provision of a free emergency rescue service to over one million people, covering a region of 132,000 square kilometres.

“We thank the NSW Government for supporting such a vital service for the local community.

“Sinking the ship and celebrating this event at the ball afterwards will be an unforgettable event for the Coast and the service.

“We now just need to pray for good weather on the day”, Mr Jones said.

Member for The Entrance, Grant McBride, said there is still work to be completed on the ship but the first major environmental inspection earlier this month passed with flying colours.

“I was fortunate to be present when the mast was removed from the ship on November 12. It is exciting to see such real progress on this important initiative and I will keep the community informed as we progress with the work.

“This is a unique time to be living on the Central Coast. The dive site will be the first attraction of its kind in NSW and a world class recreation facility.

“The public can follow the progress of the project at www.hmasadelaid.com.”

More information about the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service can be found at www.rescuehelicopter.com.au.

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