



Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Lands
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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HMAS ADELAIDE SCUTTLING BACK ON TRACK

The NSW Government today joined local central coast businesses in welcoming the decision of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to allow the scuttling the Ex-HMAS ADELAIDE.

Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, said the scuttling would be great for the Central Coast, establishing an artificial reef and dive site which will provide a tourist attraction for years to come.

“The broader community of the Central Coast has been disappointed by the delays to this exciting project, and it’s great that it can now proceed,” the Minister said.

“The scuttling will drive significant recreational, tourism and economic benefits for the region, as well as by the educational and scientific research opportunities.

“I am delighted these benefits can soon be realised for the Central Coast.”

The Ex-HMAS ADELAIDE was gifted to the NSW Government to create an artificial reef and dive site off the Central Coast.

Plans for the scuttling, originally scheduled for 27 March 2010, were temporarily halted pending the outcome of the decision on the appeal today by the Tribunal.

The Tribunal announced today the scuttling could proceed on the condition the ship be cleaned of all:

- Remaining wiring, including junction boxes, which might be associated with polychlorinated biphenyls; and
- Canvas insulation to permit inspection for and removal of any remaining exfoliating and/or exfoliated red lead paint.

In addition, two sites within the hull are to be added to those to be sampled for lead as part of the Long Term Monitoring and Management Plan.

“The fact is that scuttling the ship will have negligible risk to environmental and human health,” the Minister said.

The Tribunal said “...The level of pollutants now aboard the ship is low, and those that remain are either in very low quantities or inert and unlikely to cause any environmental problem...”

A new timetable for the scuttling will now be developed, factoring in the extra work needed, as well as weather patterns and whale migration.



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Background information:

The Ex-HMAS ADELAIDE was originally scheduled to be scuttled on Saturday 27 March 2010 after eight months of preparation to meet the stringent environmental standards set by the Commonwealth Department of Environment Water Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

Just days before the ship was to leave Sydney Harbour, an organisation called the No Ship Action Group (NSAG) appealed to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to review the artificial reef permit issued by DEWHA under the *Environmental Protection (Sea Dumping) Act*.

The NSAG listed 10 issues (comprising a total of 18 items) for the Tribunal to review, which was later reduced to 4 of these items.

The main focus of the initial appeal was a claim there could be 9.4 kilograms of PCB remaining on the ship from electrical equipment. After a comprehensive program of expert testing and assessment, the experts from both sides agreed that the *worst-case* scenario was less than 100 grams of PCB.

The AAT heard evidence from independent Australian and American experts on environmental monitoring and risk assessment, and from case studies of monitoring other artificial reefs created from former naval vessels.

Environmental risk experts gave evidence that the lead primer poses negligible risk to the environment or human health, as it is in the form of lead tetroxides which is very insoluble and not readily taken up by organisms.

The Commonwealth Government's expert assessor presented evidence that the copper in the anti-fouling paint was not a significant risk because of the age of the coating, which was last applied seven (7) years ago and hence is near the end of its useful life. The Royal Australian Navy's standard practice is to reapply the coating every five (5) years to retain its protective properties.

The Ex-HMAS ADELAIDE Project has followed the environmentally sustainable waste management principles of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle', as more than 524 tonnes of copper, aluminium, stainless steel and lead ballast have already been recycled from the ship, while the ship itself is being reused to create an artificial reef which will attract marine life and divers to the area and boost tourism.

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