

## **Report of HMAS *FARNCOMB* incident was sensationalist**

The Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, AM, CSC, RAN says the report in the Australian newspaper today that a Navy submarine was involved in a 'near disaster' last month are sensationalist and will have upset the families of the Navy's submarine force.

HMAS *Farncomb* was at sea off the coast of Western Australia conducting operational training last month when the boat suffered a propulsion failure. As there was a delay in restoring propulsion in emergency mode the Commanding Officer chose to take the submarine to a safe depth in accordance with standard procedures.

Having been unable to restore propulsion immediately the Commanding Officer conducted a normal blow of *Farncomb's* ballast tanks, this did arrest the descent and the submarine started to ascend. To increase the rate of ascent, the Commanding Officer then decided to use the emergency blow system to surface. Throughout the incident the Commanding Officer had positive control and did have the emergency propulsion unit available.

Propulsion was restored on surfacing and *Farncomb* returned alongside under normal power.

'Our submariners are trained for this type of situation and the team in *Farncomb* handled it superbly' Vice Admiral Griggs said.

A number of aspects of the report were either incorrect or in the case of the depth the submarine descended to, are exaggerated. *Farncomb* operated well within her safe operating depth profile throughout. Navy will not discuss specific depths as this discloses sensitive operational performance data. The operating parameters regarding our submarines will remain classified.

Since the incident, HMAS *Farncomb* has rectified the defect which caused the incident and returned to sea to complete an operational training period.

Vice Admiral Griggs expressed his concern regarding the nature of the reporting of this incident because of the impact it has on the families of Navy's submariners.

'Our submarine families have to deal with their loved ones operating in a very challenging environment every day, this type of sensationalist reporting takes no account of its impact upon them' he said.

The full information Defence provided on this incident to the newspaper concerned can be found at the On the Record section of the Defence website:

[http://www.defence.gov.au/on\\_the\\_record/index.htm](http://www.defence.gov.au/on_the_record/index.htm).