

# Bosses, Qld Govt affirm support after Brisbane River LCH cruise



Heavy Landing Craft HMAS *Brunei* making way past the Brisbane CBD during the shopwindow last month. Inset: Chairman of the Queensland Defence Support Council Mr Tony Behm with Queensland Deputy Premier Ms Anna Bligh and CO *Brunei* LCDR Charles Bourne. **Pics by Graham Davis**



## From Graham Davis in Brisbane

The release by employers of employees so they can fulfil Reserve duties with the ADF is a 'win, win situation' for all concerned, the Deputy Premier of Queensland, Ms Anna Bligh, has declared.

The arrangement also supported the country, she said.

She said the Reservists brought specialist skills with them and returned to civilian life with attributes such as leadership.

Ms Bligh's praise came at the end of a Reserve Employer Support industry shopwindow held on board the RAN's 710 tonne heavy landing craft HMAS *Brunei* in April.

The shopwindow saw Ms Bligh, 15 employers and a similar number of Reservists take a two-hour cruise of the Brisbane River in the craft.

LCDR Bourne and his ship's company of 18 were on the last leg of a voyage which had taken them from their home base in Cairns to Norfolk Island, Sydney, Newcastle and Ballina.

CO *Brunei* LCDR Charles Bourne welcomed the guests to his ship from the RAN wharf at Bulimba Barracks.

The shopfront was hosted by the Chairman of the Defence Reserve Support Council, Mr Tony Behm.

Ms Bligh pointed out that 550 public servants of the Queensland Government are doing reserve service with the Navy, Army and Air Force.

She said Defence reservists were among the first into Innisfail after Cyclone Larry struck.

She also said she was only too willing to encourage other employers to allow their employees to join the Reserves.

One who knows only too well the value of RAN Reservists is the Commanding Officer Navy Headquarters South Queensland, CMDR Bob Plath.

"We have 1000 RAN Reservists on our books. Four hundred of them are on the 'active' list," he said.

"In the last year 200 have been provided paid work.

"They are an important part of our capability, particularly in filling roles where permanent RAN personnel are not available."

CMDR Plath said a number of Queensland Reservists make up the ships' companies of patrol boats serving in Australia's north.

The showcase involved tours of the ship, discussions with RAN members and breakfast on the tank deck.

The presence of a Navy vessel as far up the Brisbane River as the Story Bridge attracted much attention with waves from parties taking the bridge climb of the well-known span.

Ms Bligh and some of the party were transferred from the ship to the Eagle Street Pier by the DMS launch *Turtle*.

Before leaving *Brunei* Mr Behm and LCDR Bourne presented her with plaques.

For Ms Bligh it was her first trip in a Naval ship although she had been aboard HMAS *Diamantina 1*, held in dry dock and part of her electorate.



## He knew his way around

By Graham Davis

When RAN Reservist CMDR Andy Clowes stepped aboard the LCH HMAS *Brunei* in Brisbane the other day, he was quite at home.

You get to know ships when you serve in them as often as Andy has done in the past - having served in all six LCH's in various capacities from navigator through to CO.

Andy invited his civilian boss Stephen Conry (pictured with him above) aboard as guest of the Reserve Employer Support workshop which Andy had organized in his capacity as Director - Naval Reserve Support (QLD).

Mr Conry is the Queensland Head of the large property management company Jones Lang LaSalle.

Andy is the Asia Pacific Project Director and an associate director with the company.

He and his company have a good relationship and last year he was given six months leave to serve as the intelligence officer in HMAS *Newcastle* when she went to The Gulf.

"The company applauds the Reserves program," Mr Conry told Navy Reserve News. "It also appreciates the financial support given to it by the Federal Government when Andy is away on Reserve duties."

Andy's career began as a PNF member and as a submariner.

The boats and ships served in include *Orion*, *Otama*, *Tobruk*, *Jervis Bay* and *Stalwart*.

He switched from the PNF to the Reserves and was a Reservist officer in his numerous LCH postings.

His current Reserve duties see him the Director of Naval Reserve Support - Queensland and an intelligence analyst with the Joint Operations Intelligence Centre.

## Action onboard HMAS Dechaineux

### New Reserve public affairs officer SBLT Ben Willee reports on his first searide beneath the waves

By SBLT Ben Willee

I joined the Navy, and specifically the PREL branch, for action and adventure away from my mundane day job. This month it all came together. After plenty of emails and requests, calling in favours and bit of good luck I managed to get a sea ride in a submarine.

You can image my excitement on a cold *Cerberus* morning when I spotted HMAS *Dechaineux* in the distance on Westernport Bay.

We managed to scramble aboard thanks to some clever boatwork, a rope ladder and some safe hands. Then we headed below through a few hatches, down a ladder, around a corner and we're all in the weapons stowage department, one of the larger compartments onboard. I feel like a rabbit in the headlights.

Then comes the safety briefing by the Chief Tiff. He's talking about the lead acid batteries underneath our feet and the Mark 48 torpedoes and Harpoon missiles above our heads. It all sounds pretty scary but no-one seems too concerned.

We then begin our tour of the boat. Our tour guide points out a small screen that shows depth, heading and speed. These

screens are all over the boat, and strangely comforting. More importantly I become aware we are underway and I hadn't really noticed. This is just like being on an aeroplane at night, with one major difference - it's quiet, very quiet. In some parts of the boat, the loudest noise you can hear is the air conditioning.

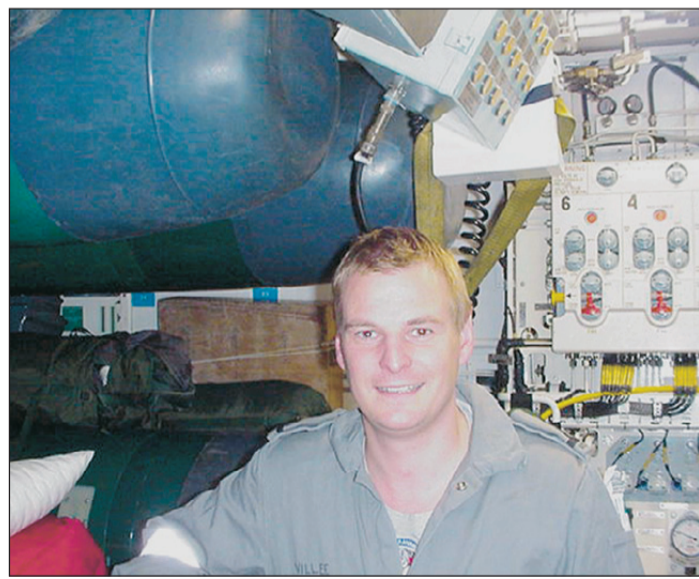
Passing the bust of *Dechaineux* himself we are encouraged to rub his nose for good luck.

I enjoy keeping fit so I was happy to see exercise equipment in a few different places. There's an exercise bike, a rowing machine and plenty of free weights. Exercise is an important part of 'keeping sane' according to many of the crew.

HMAS *Dechaineux* has had 216 Sea Riders in the last three-months. I assume this is tiresome for a bunch of people who just want to get on with their jobs.

"Quite the opposite," says the CO, CMDR Phil Stanford. "It's a great opportunity for the crew to show off their skills. They also get extra port visits as a reward."

I wonder how to broach the topic of the infamous flood. I casually mention that being open to sea riders must be helpful, given they've had some bad press in the past.



"Part of what we're doing here is showing the world these sailors are happy to be back at sea," one sailor says as he walks past. I soon notice it's a very tight crew and the formalities of other ships aren't relevant in this environment.

The highlight of the trip is undoubtedly a BINT or Basic Intelligence Task. In this case the sonar has spotted a Navy 'skimmer' where it shouldn't be. Suddenly the control room springs to life. The attack periscope is going up and down, and calculations on speed, depth and course are being shouted to the relevant people.

"So how will they know when we've sunk her then?" I naively ask. Normally they would send up a smoke grenade to let them know. Unfortunately they've run out so our friends on the surface are none the wiser.

Given the changes to recruiting, this is fantastic opportunity for potential recruits to get some first-hand experience. So next time you're at sea remember, one of these platforms is probably lurking, tracking and watching and unless you have eagle eyes, and can spot a periscope breaking the surface you'll be none the wiser.