

Media Release – 9 July 2020

## **VICE ADMIRAL IAN MACDOUGALL AC AFSM RAN (RTD)**

*Public statement from the President of the Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA), Mark Sander:*

“On behalf of Australia’s submarine community, the Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA) is deeply saddened by the passing of Vice Admiral Ian MacDougall AC AFSM RAN (Rtd).

“In his 40 years of service, Vice Admiral MacDougall was a trailblazer for submariners – the first one, two and then three-star successful submariner.

“Vice Admiral MacDougall was the first and only submariner to hold the position of what is now Chief of Navy, he was the first graduate of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) College to command our submarine squadron, he was the first submariner to command an RAN surface ship and he was the first submariner to be Fleet Commander.

“His naval career also included several years on exchange with the Royal Navy. Initially to achieve his submarine qualification and gain submarine experience, and later having successfully passed the ‘Perisher’ course, he commanded Royal Navy submarine HMS Otter (1968-71). On return to Australia, he commanded Australian submarine HMAS Onslow (1972-73). He commanded the surface ships HMAS Hobart and HMAS Supply. He attended the US Naval War College in 1980.

“Vice Admiral MacDougall was a change-maker – always ready to challenge the status quo if this obstructed better performance. His legacies for the navy were a full appreciation of the responsibilities in a ‘parent navy’ for its new ships and submarines, and he led the cultural change needed for the full and effective integration of women serving at sea.

“Given all of these achievements, Vice Admiral MacDougall was probably the most influential submariner Australia has ever produced.

“The SIA strongly supports the accolades of Australia’s current Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan AO RAN, who has said ‘Australia’s navy and its people are stronger for his service’.

“Vice Admiral MacDougall had a significant public service career after retiring from the navy.

“From 1994-2003, he was the first Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW, following which he was honoured with an Australian Fire Service Medal.

“During this period, he was credited with modernising the organisation’s communications and technology, and he was appointed as President of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council.

“Vice Admiral MacDougall was ever considerate and supportive of others. His good humour and conviviality was a focus of his character.

“In every measure, he was a leader – a man of principle – but always one who could see the tactical dilemma (and resolution) of an adverse situation.

“He was a founding Vice President of the SIA and National Patron of the Submarines Association Australia. His guidance, friendship and support for submariners, at every level, has been invaluable and will be sorely missed.

“On the passing of Vice-Admiral MacDougall, it is appropriate to recount a section of the keynote speech he delivered in 2017 at the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of the HMAS Platypus submarine base on Sydney Harbour and the unveiling of a new submariners’ memorial at the site.

“He said: *There is a measure of sadness today that many who were here 50 years ago have passed away; in submarine parlance, still on patrol. They are not forgotten and are owed a debt of gratitude for building the foundations upon which the submarine force of today grew and will continue to do so.*

“This is a poignant statement in reflection of his own passing.

“Having already done so privately, the SIA wishes to publicly convey its condolences to Vice Admiral MacDougall’s family.

“The SIA salutes Vice Admiral MacDougall as he pursues his eternal patrol.”

**Further information:**

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