



Know your warships!

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The concluding part of this series continues to explain the purpose and uses of different types of warships operated by the Royal Australian Navy. It concerns those vessels that support the fleet by performing supply, survey, training, boom defence, transport and amphibious warfare duties. As there are far too many vessels to list comprehensively, the more important types have been chosen to illustrate the complexity of the support required for a twentieth-century navy.

As with the previous parts, the vessels listed are mostly purpose-built for the navy, although requisitioned vessels are more common among fleet support vessels than among combat vessels. Many are warships converted from combat roles.

The following details are provided:

Service dates:

From commissioning to decommissioning *or* conversion to or from another role.

Displacement:

The displacement of a ship is determined by the weight of water it displaces. Standard displacement is given. For requisitioned merchant vessels gross tonnage is given.

Dimensions:

Given as length by beam (width) by draught (depth of the ship beneath the water), in metres.

Maximum speed:

Given in knots.

Armament:

In most cases, only main armament is detailed. Given in inches or shell weight in most cases, metric for later vessels.

Complement:

The number of men serving aboard the ship.

Sources: John Bastock, *Australia's ships of war* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1975); Ross Gillett and Colin Graham, *Warships of Australia* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1977); J. H. Straczek, *Royal Australian Navy A-Z: ships, aircraft and shore establishments* (Sydney: Navy Public Affairs, 1996).

Survey vessels



From the earliest days of European settlement the Royal Navy conducted extensive hydrographic surveys of Australian waters. This task passed to the RAN after the First World War. During the Second World War, Australian vessels undertook surveys in waters around New Guinea and the Philippines as well as around Australia. After the war the RAN was given sole responsibility for surveying Australian waters.

Survey vessels (continued)



Arabis-class survey vessel (former minesweeping sloop)



1,250 tons 81.61 x 10.21 x 3.58 16 knots 1 x 4.7-inch gun complement 79

Geranium 1919–1932

24-class survey vessel (former convoy sloop)



1,320 tons 84.27 x 10.6 x 3.65 17 knots 1 x 3-pounder gun complement 82

Moresby 1925–1946

Grimsby-class survey vessel (former sloop)



1,080 tons 81.14 x 10.97 x 3.07 16.5 knots 1 x 40 mm gun complement 135

Warrego 1944–1963

Bathurst-class survey vessels (former corvettes)



735 tons 56.69 x 9.44 x 2.59 15.5 knots 1 x 4-inch gun complement 78

Benalla 1943–1958

Shepparton 1953–1958

River-class survey vessels (former frigates)



1,370 tons 91.74 x 11.12 x 3.65 20 knots 1 x 40 mm gun complement 140

Barcoo 1946–1971

Diamantina 1959–1980

Gascoyne 1959–1971

Lachlan 1945–1949

Survey vessel (former motor stores lighter)



340 tons 36.57 x 7.31 x 1.9 9.5 knots no armament complement 28

Paluma 1957–1975

Survey vessel



2,000 tons 95.7 x 12.8 x 3.81 18 knots 2 x 40 mm guns complement 146

Moresby 1964–1997

Survey vessel



800 tons 49.07 x 10.05 x 3.7 13.5 knots no armament complement 38

Flinders 1973–1998

Survey vessels (continued)



Survey vessel



1,910 tons 96.6 x 13.41 x 4.6 17 knots no armament complement 120

Cook 1980–1990

Mermaid-class survey motor launches

320 tons 36.6 x 7.31 x 1.9 9.5 knots no armament complement 12

Mermaid 1989–

Benalla 1990–

Shepparton 1990–

Paluma 1989–

Pacific-class survey vessel

2,550 tons 71.2 x 15.2 x 4.4 15 knots no armament complement 42

Leeuwin 1998–

Melville 1998–

Amphibious warfare vessels



The development of specialised vessels to land troops over a beach commenced in the First World War but accelerated rapidly in the Second World War. These vessels come in many different guises, including converted passenger liners carrying small landing craft to take the troops to the beach, as well as vessels such as the landing ship tank and the landing ship heavy which can beach themselves to land men and vehicles directly. The training and helicopter-support ships have a vertical lift capability.



Landing ship infantry (former armed merchant cruiser)

11,000 tons gross 150.57 x 20.17 x 7.39 17 knots 1 x 4-inch gun complement 580 capacity 1,280 troops

Kanimbla 1943–1949

Landing ship infantry (former armed merchant cruiser)



10,900 tons gross 146.9 x 20.17 x 7.31 16.5 knots 1 x 12-pounder gun complement 550 capacity 1,250 troops

Manoora 1943–1947

Landing ship infantry (former armed merchant cruiser)



8,100 tons gross 136.55 x 18.36 x 7.62 15.5 knots 1 x 6-inch gun complement c. 550 capacity 1,250 troops

Westralia 1943–1947

Amphibious warfare vessels (continued)



Landing ship tank Mark III



2,256 tons	105.3 x 16.45 x 3.5	13 knots	4 x 40 mm guns	complement 104
<i>Lae</i> 1946–1955	<i>Labuan</i> 1946–1955		<i>Tarakan</i> 1946–1955	
<i>LST 3008</i> 1946–1950	<i>LST 3014</i> 1946–1950		<i>LST 3022</i> 1946–1950	

Balikpapan-class landing craft heavy



310 tons	44.5 x 10.05 x 1.9	10 knots	2 x 0.5-inch machine-guns	complement 14
<i>Balikpapan</i> 1974–1999	<i>Brunei</i> 1973–1997		<i>Tarakan</i> 1973–1998	
<i>Betano</i> 1974–1997	<i>Labuan</i> 1973–2000		<i>Wewak</i> 1973–1997	

Papua New Guinea Squadron

<i>Buna</i> 1973–1974	<i>Salamaua</i> 1973–1974
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Landing ship heavy



6,000 tons	129.5 x 19.6 x 4.3	17 knots	2 x 40 mm guns	complement 130
<i>Tobruk</i> 1981–				

Training and helicopter support ship (converted from *Newport*-class tank landing ship)



8,450 tons	159.2 x 21.18 x 5.3	17 knots	1 x 20 mm Phalanx close-in weapons system	complement 180
<i>Kanimbla</i> 1994–	<i>Manoora</i> 1994–			

Transports



The transportation of troops and equipment has largely been carried out by merchant vessels. However, the RAN has commissioned some ships as troop transports, especially during the Vietnam War when trade unions refused to support the war.

Requisitioned merchant vessel



11,118 tons gross	159.2 x 21.18 x 5.3	14 knots	4 x 4-inch guns	complement unknown
<i>Berrima</i> 1914				

Transports (continued)



Converted aircraft carrier

17,233 tons 212.75 x 24.38 x 7.62 24 knots 4 x 40 mm guns complement 607

Sydney 1962–1973



Requisitioned merchant vessel

3,904 tons gross 123.44 x 16.15 x 6.85 11.7 knots no armament complement 91

Boonaroo 1967



Requisitioned merchant vessel

6,350 tons gross 132.58 x 17.06 x 6.7 13.5 knots no armament complement unknown

Jeparit 1969–1972



Wavepiercing catamaran

1,250 tons 86.6 x 26.0 x 3.5 40 knots no armament complement 20

Jervis Bay 1999–



Replenishment vessels



Initially oilers and colliers were mainly employed to transport fuel to storage facilities where ships could refuel; in early times, fuelling at sea was rare though not unknown. Replenishment at sea was brought to a high stage of development during the Second World War and includes the ability to replenish not only fuel but stores and ammunition as well.

Fleet oiler

7,930 tons 115.21 x 13.86 x 7.08 10 knots 1 x 4-inch gun complement 65

Kurumba 1920–1948



Fleet collier

9,700 tons 116.43 x 16.45 x 8.53 11 knots no armament complement 70

Biloela 1920–1931

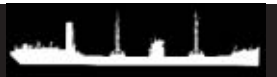


Tide-class fleet replenishment tanker

15,000 tons 177.69 x 21.64 x 9.75 17 knots 6 x 40 mm guns complement 205

Supply 1962–1985

Replenishment vessels (continued)



Durance-class fleet replenishment ship

17,880 tons 157.3 x 21.2 x 8.65 20 knots 3 x 40 mm guns complement 205

Success 1986–



Underway replenishment ship

40,870 tons 170.69 x 25.94 x 11.56 17 knots no armament complement 60

Westralia 1989–



Training ships



With the exception of *Tingira*, which remained moored in Rose Bay, training ships provide sea-going experience for RAN personnel. The vessels listed below were converted from other roles for their task. The RAN has also used vessels such as the *Bathurst*-class corvettes and general purpose vessels.

Boys' training ship (former clipper)

2,131 tons 96.62 x 12.19 x 4.87 permanently moored no armament complement c. 65

Tingira 1912–1927



Cadets' training ship (converted frigate)

1,060 tons 81.14 x 10.97 x 3.04 16.5 knots 2 x 4-inch guns complement 135

Swan 1956–1962



Cadets' training ship (converted destroyer)

2,400 tons 115.51 x 12.49 x 4.8 32 knots 2 x 4.5-inch guns complement 290

Anzac 1962–1974



Fleet training ship (converted destroyer)

2,800 tons 118.4 x 13.1 x 3.9 30.5 knots 4 x 4.5-inch guns complement 260

Duchess 1974–1977



Fleet training ship (converted merchant vessel)

8,915 tons 135.7 x 21.5 x 6.1 17 knots no armament complement 111

Jervis Bay 1977–1994



Depot ships



Fitted out with stores, repair and recreation facilities, depot ships are effectively mobile bases allowing flotilla craft to operate away from fixed bases.

Submarine depot ship and repair ship



3,455 tons 99.06 x 13.41 x 4.77 15.5 knots 1 x 4.7-inch gun complement 360

Platypus 1919–1956

Destroyer tender



10,500 tons 156.97 x 9.75 x 3.65 20 knots 4 x 40 mm guns complement 397

Stalwart 1968–1990

Boom defence vessels



Boom defence vessels are distinctive in appearance, with long horns projecting beyond the bows and rounded sterns to facilitate the handling of nets, booms, buoys, cable and other impedimenta necessary to provide a barrier to protect harbours from raiding craft and submarines. Darwin had the longest boom defence in the world; the Sydney defences were instrumental in foiling the attack by Japanese midget submarines in 1942.

Net-class boom defence vessel



533 tons 41.14 x 7.77 x 3.81 9.5 knots 1 x 3-inch gun complement 30

Kookaburra 1939–1965

Bar-class boom defence vessels



768 tons 54.4 x 9.82 x 4.26 11.5 knots 1 x 3-inch gun complement 32

Kangaroo 1940–1967

Koala 1940–1969

Karang 1941–1965

Boom defence vessel



760 tons 50.2 x 9.75 x 3.65 10 knots 1 x 40 mm gun complement 35

Kimbla 1956–1959