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Dear SAA Members,

I write to provide clear guidance regarding approaches you may receive from authors, researchers, or others seeking information about the Royal Australian Navy's Submarine service. In recent months, individuals have approached the Navy requesting that former submariners be released from their secrecy obligations, to enable them to discuss historical Australian submarine operations, including during the Cold War.

Such requests cannot be supported. They are not in the national interest, and, critically, the law does not permit the disclosure of this information. As Chief of Navy, I do not have the authority to approve any request that would release former submariners from their legal obligations. All personnel who served on operations in RAN or Royal Navy submarines remain bound by their security commitments and may be subject to prosecution under the *Criminal Code Act of 1995 (Part 5.6)* for unauthorised disclosure.

While the United States Navy and Royal Navy have published accounts of Cold War submarine operations, this is not a precedent for Australian submariners to breach their oaths or legal obligations. The service of RAN submariners is well recognised, and the nature of our work means operational details must remain confidential.

As a fellow submariner, I know the pride we share in our service and the unique bonds formed through our profession. Upholding our obligations, particularly our commitment to secrecy and the protection of operational information, is a responsibility we carry together - for the Navy, the nation, each other, and the legacy we pass to future submariners.

I thank you for your enduring commitment, loyalty, and quiet excellence that remains essential to safeguarding Australia's national interests.

Yours sincerely,

Mark D. Hammond, AO
Vice Admiral, Royal Australian Navy
Chief of Navy

20 June 2026

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