Milestone for Submarine Training

A new submarine training trial which aims to significantly reduce training chokepoints and increase graduate numbers has passed out its first round of trainees this month.

Ten sailors from five different categories were awarded their ‘Dolphins’ on August 9, in front of a large congregation of Submariners, support staff, families and friends at the Submarine Training and Systems Centre, HMAS Stirling. Their graduation marked a significant milestone in the evolution of submarine training.



Newly qualified Submariners stand out the front as Director Training Authority - Submarines, Commander Matthew Hoffman, RAN, addresses fellow Submariners during a Submarine Qualification Ceremony at the Submarine Training and System Centre, HMAS Stirling.

In what could be described as a ‘Public Table’, the ceremony placed the ten ‘request-men’ individually in front of Director Training Authority – Submarines, CMDR Matthew Hoffman, requesting to be awarded the submarine qualification.

Upon completion of the formal table, a senior member of each sailor’s category was invited to the stage to present the graduates with new submariner name patches and to offer a piece of personal advice to help them achieve success in their careers.

CMDR Hoffman said the revised Submarine Sea Qualification (SMSQ) process, introduced on 1

July, standardised submarine training and the benefits were beginning to take effect.

“The revised process has been developed to ensure standardisation which can stand up to scrutiny by external agencies, while also aiming to increase the efficiency and throughput of submarine training,” CMDR Hoffman said.

“A ‘non-negotiable’ when we were developing this new process was that the high standards and level of knowledge demanded of submarine trainees would not be compromised. This was evident in the week long board process that was conducted as part of the sailor’s final qualification assessment.”

The Board Chair, LCDR Chris Unwin said each board ran for between two and three hours and the sailors were all assessed against the same criteria, irrespective of category.

“The assessment was an intense interrogation of the prospective submariners knowledge of systems, roles, routines, escape and critically, Emergency Operating Procedures,” LCDR Unwin said.

“I chaired a lot of qualification Boards when I was at sea as an XO, and this was as robust as any of those.”

Qualifying Submariners remains a whole of force obligation, which to be successful requires teamwork and investment from all of the stakeholders, including Submarine Force (SUBFOR), Training Authority - Submarines and individual submarine crews.

The revised process provides trainees and trainers with very clear goals and timelines to be achieved while removing a significant training burden from the platforms.

WOMTSM Mark Dixon said the support shown by those attending the ceremony highlighted the effort, dedication and resolve the sailors displayed to reach this significant milestone in their careers.

"It was a privilege to welcome these guys into the team and for us to demonstrate the Esprit de Corps the Submarine Force is renowned for,” WOMTSM Dixon said.