



FROM THE COAST

Freedom of Entry

Next month the Esperance community will witness a ceremony that dates back to medieval times. In Continental Europe and the British Isles citizens protected their cities with fortress walls against outlaw bands and attacks by feudal lords. Experience taught them to be extremely wary and as a result troops were at great risk of being denied entry to cities, which would mean an inability to replenish food and arms. They soon realised the importance of building positive relations with the cities and their citizens and their good behaviour earned them the privilege of entry and passage which became known as Freedom of Entry.

The Royal Australian Navy's Collins Class submarine HMAS Farncomb was commissioned on 31 January 1998 for defence and two-ocean surveillance. It was designed to be as quiet as advanced technology would allow. On commissioning the Farncomb, Executive Officer Lieutenant Commander Douglas Theobald, who is now Commander of the HMAS Rankin, designated his home town of Esperance as the Farncomb's affiliated town. The Shire of Esperance will finally welcome the HMAS Farncomb and her crew to our port by officially granting the Freedom of Entry on the 10 November.

The Shire of Esperance will host the traditional Freedom of Entry parade on the 10th November in the town centre. The parade will start at the Whale Tail, with the Farncomb crew marching through town and will be a spectacle for all to see, with the unit exercising its right of Freedom of Entry armed, with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, colours flying, drums beating and band playing. At some point in the parade the unit will be halted and challenged, by members of the Esperance by a senior member of the local constabulary. The Commander, Ian Bray will then show Police Sergeant Richard Moore the scroll permitting the unit's entry to Esperance, to allow the unit to complete the procession finishing in front of the RSL Memorial. We are pleased to have Esperance Tjaltjraak representatives involved by performing a welcome to country, smoking ceremony and a challenge. Food stalls will be held in the evening for everyone to continue the festivities.

The crew will arrive in Esperance on the 8 November and will take the opportunity to share stories of life in the Navy and on a submarine with local schools. Some will attend the Remembrance Day service, an Entrenchment Fundraising dinner and participate in a local volleyball competition with representatives from our schools and community youth groups. Additionally there will be markets on Saturday 12 November at Adventure Land Park in the morning with the Yacht Club involved in a sail out in the afternoon as the Farncomb leaves the Esperance Bay.

The granting of Freedom of Entry is the highest accolade a town or city can bestow upon a group or individual and will be such an exciting event for everyone in town to come and see. It will be an event like no other, with lots of pomp and ceremony and I hope to see everyone welcome the HMAS Farncomb to its affiliated town.