



**NAVY INFLATABLE NOT UP TO STANDARD**

The rigid-hulled inflatable boat on the Royal New Zealand Navy’s \$177 million multi-role ship *HMNZS Canterbury* did not meet safety standards, says a court of inquiry into the death of a crewmember.

Able seaman Byron Solomon, aged 22, drowned when the RHIB capsized while being launched from the *Canterbury* off the North Island coast on October 5.

The inquiry’s report said it was highly unlikely the ship’s boats met minimum safety requirements and best practice standards. “Configuration management of the RHIB arrangement in *Canterbury* is poor.” It also found that the boat’s self-righting mechanism failed.

The Minister of Defence, Phil Goff, said the former head of Britain’s Royal Corps of Naval Constructors, John Coles,

would complete a review of the safety and functionality of the *Canterbury* by July 31.

The review will look at the acquisition process for the *Canterbury*, concerns about her operation, design and performance, whether she is capable of doing what she was bought for, and what remedies were required.

Goff said he had been assured that the *Canterbury* was a good ship that would be “a huge asset for the Navy”, but he was unable to say how long she would take to be fully operational.

**FRIGATE ON PATROL**

*HMNZS Te Mana* arrived in her area of operations in the Southern Arabian Gulf and began patrolling on May 11.

The frigate and her company of 173 are operating within a 20,000sq mile area, conducting maritime support and



HMNZS Te Mana

*Pukaki* alongside the Tenix wharf before the naming ceremony at the Tenix shipyard in Whangarei



The naming ceremony for *HMNZS Pukaki*, Commander Cathy Knight and Alison Roxburgh at the Tenix shipyard in Whangarei



**THIRD INSHORE PATROL VESSEL LAUNCHED**

*Pukaki*, the third of the four inshore patrol vessels being built in New Zealand by Tenix in Whangarei, was launched in Whangarei Harbour on May 6.

She was formally named on May 10 by Alison Roxburgh, who cut the ribbon releasing the champagne bottle on to the *Pukaki*’s bow. *Pukaki* is the third of four inshore patrol vessels to be launched and the third of her name to serve in the Navy. The IPV’s will conduct maritime surveillance in support of other agencies such as Customs and Fisheries. They will patrol the New Zealand coastline out to approximately 24 miles. *Pukaki* is affiliated to the Nelson/Tasman/Marlborough region.

The commanding officer (design) of *Pukaki*, Lieutenant

John McQueen, of Auckland’s North Shore, is the *Pukaki*’s first commanding officer. My expectations are very high,” he said. “I’m under no illusion that the crew and I have a huge challenge ahead in delivering her into service and I am very much looking forward to the opportunity.” Her executive officer is Sub-Lieutenant Grant Bicknell of Napier.

This is another significant step in the introduction into the Royal New Zealand Navy of seven new ships under the Project Protector programme.

By the end of 2008, the Protector fleet will comprise seven ships of three different classes; the multi-role vessel *HMNZS Canterbury*, two offshore patrol vessels and four inshore patrol vessels.