

Anchor breaks from HMAS Sydney and drops to bottom of River Derwent

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HMAS Sydney in Hobart as flagship for the Royal Hobart Regatta. Picture: RICHARD JUPE

NAVY divers will today try to retrieve a 2700kg anchor that broke from the HMAS Sydney and fell to bottom of the River Derwent at the weekend.

The incident happened when HMAS Sydney was weighing anchor on Saturday to move from its position in the river and dock alongside Macquarie Wharf.

Tasmanian Navy Reserve divers had already put on a dramatic display at the Royal Hobart Regatta — but yesterday put their skills to more practical use by finding the anchor on the bottom of the river midway between Rosny Point and Macquarie Wharf.

They attached buoys at the site, about 25m down, but windy weather and choppy water delayed the recovery operation.

They will make another attempt to retrieve the anchor today, weather permitting, by floating it to the surface then reattaching it.

The delay means HMAS Sydney, which is the Royal Hobart Regatta flagship, will not be able to act as a backdrop to the dramatic water events today.

“When we were recovering our anchor yesterday afternoon it didn’t come off the harbour floor,” the captain of the Sydney, Commander Karl Brinckmann, said.

“We safely got the ship back alongside and the local clearance diving team located the anchor.”





The anchor shaft of HMAS Sydney.
Picture: RICHARD JUPE

Captain Brinckmann said it was not certain how it happened, but the anchor had given way at the weakest point, close to where it joined the chain.

If all goes well, a replacement shackle will be used today to make the anchor fully operable.

The incident reunited two Navy colleagues, diving team commander Paul Gregg and Commander Brinckmann, who joined the naval college at the same time in 1988.

Meanwhile, the Sydney, which is taking part in Navy Week activities, attracted almost 2000 people to its open day yesterday at Macquarie Wharf.