

Item 3.1**Vale Commander Marcia Chalmers RN (Retd)****File No: S051491****Minute by the Lord Mayor**

To Council:

I inform Council of the passing of Commander Marcia Chalmers RN Retd, former secretary of Millers Point Resident Action Group, on Thursday 6 November 2025.

Marcia was born on 25 June 1939 in Bangalow to Maisie and Victor Chalmers.

After leaving Hornsby High School with an Intermediate Certificate, Marcia began what she would later call her “tour of duty through dullness.” Her early jobs included being a trainee teller at the Commonwealth Bank, a clerk at the T&G Insurance Company and as a dental nurse. She worked at a little company called Myart, which sold embroidery materials - their products now treasured as “vintage.” Apart from keeping the office running, Marcia stitched her own pieces at home, which gave a glimpse into her creativity and care.

In 1958, Marcia joined the Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) as a telegraphist, inspired by her grandfather, Captain James Henderson Chalmers, and encouraged by her growing interest in communications.

This marked the beginning of a distinguished career spanning more than three decades. Her postings included HMAS Harman, Lonsdale, Melville, Cerberus, and Kuttabul, among others. In 1962 she was selected for Officer Training, and in April 1963 she was commissioned as a Probationary Third Officer WRANS.

Marcia served in numerous capacities, including Communications Officer, Senior Training Officer, and Director of Individual Training in Defence. Her roles encompassed training, communications, personnel management, and family welfare programs. As Senior Training Officer at HMAS Cerberus, work involved developing support systems for Defence families - initiatives which continue to this day. She also completed the Joint Services Staff Course in 1983 and attained the rank of Commander in 1983.

After 32 years of service, Marcia retired from the Navy in July 1989 leaving the Service with enormous pride in all that she had achieved, and a deep gratitude for the opportunities and friendships it had given her.

Following her retirement, Marcia joined St John Ambulance (NSW), where she managed the office supporting First Aid volunteers. Later, as Manager of Community Care, she oversaw programs in literacy and public health, including the School Immunisation Program. These roles reflected her lifelong commitment to service and the welfare of others.

Marcia and her sister, Millicent later shared a heritage-listed terrace in Millers Point, in the shadow of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Their home became a place of friendship, community, and conversation filled with books, lively debate, and the occasional rearrangement of furniture. Both sisters were active in the Millers Point Residents’ Action Group, with Marcia serving as its secretary from 2005 to 2016, assisting Millicent who was chair from 2013.

Marcia and Millicent were heavily involved in the original Save the Rocks campaign and the first “whole suburb” heritage listing of Millers Point in 2003. Marcia was also a leader in the acquisition, restoration and management of Darling House, Trinity Avenue, originally for aged local residents but now privatised. They were also actively involved in the Darling House Aged care board, and the Sydney Mechanics’ School of Arts.

After the former State Government sold the social housing in Millers Point, Marcia and Millicent moved to another terrace in Glebe. After Millicent’s passing, Marcia continued to fill that home with life, tending her garden, reading, studying Italian and Latin, and maintaining close connections with family and friends.

Marcia is well remembered by family, friends and colleagues, with one former colleague observing: “I remember her well – she was a formidable role model in the mid-80s and has always been something of a legend for those of us who were junior female officers at the time.”

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute's silence to commemorate the life of Commander Marcia Chalmers RN and her significant contribution to the Royal Australian Navy, St John Ambulance and the communities of Millers Point and The Rocks;
- (B) Council express its condolences to Marcia's family, friends and colleagues; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to Marcia's family to convey Council's condolences.

THE RT HON CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor of Sydney