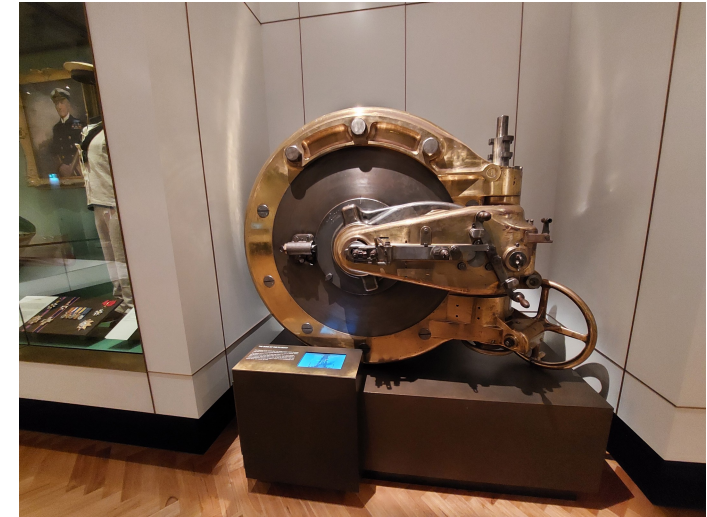


The Royal Australian Navy in 15 Objects

Object 5

HMAS *Australia* 12-inch gun breach and trigger.



The battle cruiser HMAS *Australia*'s eight Breech Loading 12-inch Mark X guns and associated ammunition were some of the most powerful weapons afloat at time of commissioning. Each turret could fire three 850 pound (385 kg) shells some 12.5 nautical miles (approx 23 km) every minute. Along with technologically advanced armaments *Australia* was also protected on the waterline by a 4–6-inch (102–152 mm) armoured belt while the armoured deck ranged in thickness between 1.5 and 2.5 inches (38 and 64 mm) and the main turret faces were 7 inches (178 mm) thick. At the outbreak of the First World War HMAS *Australia*'s mere presence, with a combination of 12 inch guns and armour, required potential aggressors to reconsider their options as *Australia* was considered the most formidable warship in the southern hemisphere. Admiral von Spee commanding the German East Asia squadron considered HMAS *Australia* to have greater firepower than his entire squadron, combined, while Erich Raeder in his 1927 history of the German Navy in the First World War stated that HMAS *Australia* could at any time establish an unconditional superiority over German naval forces.

Breech Description: 1420 mm height x 1800 mm width x 1620 mm depth Weight: 915 Kg (Estimated). Brass and steel breech mechanism from a 12 inch main armament gun. The mechanism consists of the breech, and an interrupted screw breech block on a hinged mounting. The hinge side of the carrier is impressed 'N / B. L. 12. A. X & X.*' Impressed on the following line is 'NO 313 III'. The number 364 has been marked out. The final line is impressed 'R. G. F. [broad arrow symbol] 1910'. These are the description, calibre, register number and mark, the manufacturer's initials and the year of service. Manufacturer's details are also impressed on the cocking lever and on a round plate on the carrier.

Location: The Australian War Memorial.