



**SENATOR THE HON LINDA REYNOLDS CSC
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

20 OCT 2020

Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Wong

I write in response to your letter of 14 October 2020 regarding your intent to seek further advice from me and my Department on the forecast acquisition cost of Australia's Future Submarine Program.

From the outset, I would state that Defence officers do not need to be reminded of their obligations to the Senate or under the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct. Defence officers, at all times, have demonstrated the highest levels of integrity when engaging with the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on its examination of the Future Submarine Program.

Defence respects the importance of Senators scrutinising executive government's expenditure of taxpayers' money through the Senate Estimates process. This is why, since the announcement of DCNS (now Naval Group) as the preferred international partner to construct Australia's next generation of submarines in April 2016, Defence officials have dedicated significant resources responding to questions relating to the Future Submarine Program in as timely and informative manner as practicable.

I have provided a copy of your letter to the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Mr Greg Moriarty, and Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell AO, DSC, to ensure relevant Defence officers are apprised of the issues you intend to raise. I can assure you that, as always, relevant officers will be available and stand ready to assist Senators in the examination of expenditure in the Defence portfolio, including in relation to the Future Submarine Program.

I trust this addresses the issues raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely

Linda Reynolds