



Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2024–25  
Wednesday, 6 November 2024  
Daily summary

The Committee met from 9:00am until 10.01pm.

The Committee called: Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian War Memorial, Defence Housing Australia Department of Defence, Australian Submarine Agency.

The Australian Submarine Agency, Australian Signals Directorate and Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force were released from the hearing.

Key topics discussed by the Committee included:

Department of Veterans' Affairs:

- Claims processing including recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans' Suicide, claims turnaround timeframes and bulk billing services;
- Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024;
- Mental health and wellbeing strategy;
- War graves: Private grants program;
- 80th anniversary of the end of WWII commemoration plans;
- Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program;
- Access to the Open Arms Program; and
- Damage to war graves in Gaza.

Australian War Memorial

- Pricing of contract at \$999,999 avoiding Ministerial approval;
- Declaration of conflicts of interest from Board members with involvement in arms manufacturing;
- 80th anniversary of the end of WWII commemoration plans; and
- Operationalisation of the new southern entrance of the Australian War Memorial.

Defence Housing Australia

- Housing for medically discharged veterans'; and
- Accommodation in Rockingham and on Garden Island to support US and UK personnel.

Department of Defence

- Curtailment of JP9102 geostationary satellite tender process with Lockheed Martin;
- Defence Workforce Plan;
- Defence force recruitment and retention initiatives and survey results;
- Collins class submarine life-of-type extension (LOTE);
- Valdez report on independent assurance activity regarding Collins class submarines;
- Consulting firms used by Australian Government Security Vetting Agency;
- Allegations of repercussions from security breaches;

- Acquisition of Standard Missile-6s (SM6), SMIIIC missiles including 155 ammunition and onshore missile manufacturing;
- Tarles contract which has been referred to the National Anti-Corruption Commission and subsequent investigation;
- Defence Member and Family Support and the Family Funding Support Program;
- Aid to Ukraine - M1A1 Abraham tanks;
- Status of Taipan disposal process;
- Performance of Tiger fleet;
- STEM workforce strategic vision 2019-2030;
- Breakdown of total number of psychologists across the ADF;
- Weapons export permits to Israel;
- *Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024* and changes made by the amendment;
- Breakdown of AUKUS budget between Pillar I and Pillar II and breakdowns between Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency;
- General purpose frigate program and the strategic shipbuilding agreement;
- Outcome of US election on the AUKUS partnership;
- Offshore patrol vessels;
- Airborne Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance Electronic Warfare Capability (AIR 555);
- Delivery of F-35 aircraft;
- Edge 130 Blue and DJI drones;
- Update on Psyquantum; and
- Special purpose aircraft.

The Committee will next meet at 9.00am on 7 November 2024 in the Main Committee Room (1R0), for examination of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and portfolio agencies.