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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TREATIES

Report tabled

Issue date: 13 April 2017

Implementation is critical: Committee supports Future Submarine Treaties with caveats

Today, the [Joint Standing Committee on Treaties](#) tabled its report on two treaties with France that will work to support the Future Submarine Program.

[Framework Agreement concerning Cooperation on the Future Submarine Program](#)

The [Agreement](#) provides the international legal framework for the Government's Future Submarine Program. The Agreement provides for the transfer of French Government-owned information relating to the design, build, operation and sustainment of the Future Submarine to the Australian Government.

It also notes the importance of Australia's efforts to maximise Australian industry involvement in the design, build and maintenance of the Future Submarine and provides opportunities for Australian and French industry cooperation in the project.

[Committee Chair, the Hon Mr Stuart Robert MP](#) said the Future Submarine Program is a \$50 billion investment in Australia's submarine capability and represents the largest defence acquisition in Australia's history.

"The Committee strongly supports the proposed Agreement however, it is merely the first step in ensuring Australia's national interests in the FSP are protected and maximised. The proposed Agreement provides a solid starting point to overcome some of the critical and costly issues that have been experienced in other defence acquisition projects.

"The Committee, as a result, recommends that the Parliament proceed with binding treaty action. However, the Committee makes recommendations to Government that will ensure the implementation of the Agreement maximises Australian interests in this important program", Mr Robert said.

[Agreement regarding the Exchange and Protection of Classified Information](#)

The Report also presents the Committee's review of an agreement with France for the exchange and protection of classified information.

"As with previous classified information exchange agreements, the Committee's review seeks to ensure that Australian classified information provided to France, or a French contractor, is handled appropriately, is sufficiently protected and is accessed only by those duly authorised,"



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“The Committee expresses its concern that Australia’s chosen contractor for the Future Submarine Program, DCNS, did not have sufficient processes to prevent the unauthorised access of classified information on another project, the submarine fleet for the Indian Government. The Committee understands DCNS has rectified this. Further, the Committee recommends the Government bring forward as a matter of urgency its work program to enable continuous vetting, namely connecting state and federal law enforcement with the vetting agency”. Mr Robert said.

The Committee’s report is available from [its website](#).

The Chair and Deputy Chair will speak to the Report in the House of Representatives when the Parliament resumes in May.

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