

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 13)

Senator the Hon Kim Carr asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator the Hon Kim Carr: That's right. That goes to my next question and thank you for pre-empting it. But the question of the legislation, I indicated this morning in discussion that there's a substantive number of pieces of legislation both at a national and a state level that require amendment to be able to meet the policy objectives that the government's outlined. Have you got even a preliminary list at this stage?

Vice Admiral Mead: We've got an initial scoping list, Senator, which we are developing and working on. Obviously, as you can imagine, it will take some time for us to fully --

Senator the Hon Kim Carr: Yeah.

Vice Admiral Mead: -- flesh that out.

Senator the Hon Kim Carr: I accept that. Are you able to provide the committee with your initial understanding of that legislative program that will require amendment?

Vice Admiral Mead: I'll take that on notice, Senator.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Honourable Senator's question:

As part of the 18-month consultation process with the United Kingdom and United States to determine the optimal pathway to acquire nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy, Defence is consulting closely with all related Australian Government Agencies and Departments to determine what further legislative changes are required.

Given this consultation process is underway, it would be premature for Defence to advise on what further legislative amendments are required.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 14)

Senator the Hon. Kim Carr asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kim Carr: In regard to the treaty arrangements that will need to be undertaken, do you have a list of those that will require further attention? Can you provide the Committee with those please?

Mead: I do, Senator. I'll take it on notice.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Honourable Senator's question:

As part of the 18-month consultation process with the United Kingdom and United States to determine the optimal pathway to acquire nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy, Defence is consulting closely with all related Australian Government Agencies and Departments to determine what further international agreements and arrangements are required to be developed and/or amended. This consultation includes close engagement with the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Given this consultation process is underway, it would be premature for Defence to advise on what further international agreements and arrangements need to be developed or amended.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.15)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kimberley Kitching: Malcolm Turnbull told the National Press Club that he instigated a 2018 review to and I quote, “formally reconsider the potential for nuclear-powered submarines in Australia”, is the Submarine Advisory Committee which was created in 2017, is this the Committee as to which Mr Turnbull is referring? Can you take it on notice?

Mead: I can take that on notice.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator’s question:

No.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 16)

Senator Rex Patrick asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Rex Patrick: Was rough order magnitude cost given to, in relation to a Government program of 8 Submarines. Did you give advice to the Prime Minister? Did you provide Government, either the Minister for Defence or the Prime Minister with a rough order cost? It's a really simple question, the Australian public have a right to know.

Mead: I'll take that on notice. The cost of our projected forecast will be more than Attack.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

Defence provided advice to Government in relation to the options available to enhance Defence capability. This advice formed the basis of Cabinet deliberations. Cost was one of the considerations included in the advice. Defence can confirm that the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program is expected to be more expensive than the Attack Class Program.

A key element of the work of the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Task Force (in conjunction with our international partners and industry) over the next 18 months is to develop a robust cost model to inform Government's consideration of the optimal pathway to acquire nuclear powered submarines.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.17)

Senator Rex Patrick asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Rex Patrick: I'm not asking you to speculate, I'm asking you what they said. They'll either have said to you we're not prepared to give you a Virginia class submarine, I'm asking what has been said to you, what advice has been said to you in regards to acquiring a Virginia class submarine? I'm just trying to understand what's been ruled out. I'm guessing you're saying the same thing for an Astute, Senator?

Vice Admiral Mead: Those discussions we've had with US and UK officials are sensitive, let me take it on notice.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

The Nuclear-Powered Submarine Task Force is at the start of an 18-month trilateral consultation period to seek an optimal pathway to deliver this capability. Our trilateral consultations will examine all options to identify a pathway that will meet Australia's strategic requirements and meet the Australian Government's expectations regarding cost, scale, complexity and delivery timelines.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 18)

Senator Rex Patrick asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Rex Patrick: In your consideration, have you talked about the fact that there are replacement programs for both of those programs, Virginia and Astute, are they potential solutions, have they been ruled out?

Vice Admiral Mead: Same thing Senator, let me work with the US and UK, let me take that question on notice.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

No decision has been made with respect to which nuclear-powered submarine Australia will acquire. The Task Force is working closely with the UK and US and over the next 18 months to identify the optimal pathway to deliver at least eight nuclear-powered submarines for Australia.

The trilateral effort will also intensively examining the full suite of requirements that underpin nuclear stewardship: safety, design, construction, operation, maintenance, disposal, regulation, training, environmental protection, installations and infrastructure, and workforce.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 20)

Senator Rex Patrick asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Rex Patrick: Are we likely to get, I presume, a standard reactor out of the US or the UK, we're not trying to create a new reactor for use by Australia?

Mead: Let me take that on notice as well.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

The trilateral effort between Australia, the UK and US on nuclear powered submarines will examine the full suite of requirements that underpin nuclear stewardship, with a specific focus on: safety, design, construction, operation, maintenance, disposal, regulation, training, environmental protection, installations and infrastructure, industrial base capacity, workforce, and force structure. Through this process, Australia will leverage technologies employed by our US and UK partners in order to develop an optimal pathway to acquire a nuclear-powered submarine capability.

Defence Portfolio

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.21)

Senator Rex Patrick asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Rex Patrick: In your instructions has there been give any advice as to design work being done here in Australia? So the design of a submarine versus being perhaps done overseas?

Vice Admiral Mead: I'll take that on notice, Senator.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

Subject to the outcomes of the 18 month consultation period, it is expected that the opportunities for Australian industry participation in the acquisition of nuclear powered submarines may include elements of capability design, complex project management, construction and sustainment activities.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 22)

Senator Rex Patrick asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Rex Patrick: When you provide the answer to Senator Carr's Question on Notice about the organisation and the people involved I appreciate you want to use positions, but for SES filled positions can you please identify who the SES personnel are?

Mead: I'll take it on notice, Senator.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

Please refer to Question No.37.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 23)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 15 October 2021:

Senator Kimberley Kitching: Is the Naval Shipbuilding Advisory Committee still in existence? Can you take on notice all members and their capacities and table their remuneration?

Vice Admiral Mead: Yes it is, Senator. I'll take that on notice, Senator.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

Yes. The members of the Naval Shipbuilding Expert Advisory Panel (NSEAP) are:

- VADM William Hilarides USN (ret.) as the Panel Chair;
- Mr Ron Finlay;
- RADM Thomas Eccles USN (ret.);
- Mr Howard Fireman;
- Ms Gloria Valdez; and
- Mr Murray Easton.

The NSEAP were appointed by Prime Minister Morrison on 16 February 2021, for a three year term. They provide expert advice on the Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise directly to the Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise Governance Committee of Cabinet.

The total contract provision for the Panel members' collective engagement is up to a maximum of \$5,450,747.21 (inclusive of GST) over the three years in the Australian dollar equivalent. This amount includes a combined contract value for remuneration to a maximum of \$4,747,624.92 (inclusive of GST) in the Australian dollar equivalent. The total contract provision also includes reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses over the life of the contract.

Defence Portfolio

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.33)

Senator Anthony Chisholm asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 18 October 2021:

When were its interim and final reports given to the Government?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

The Department of Defence provided submissions to Government for consideration through existing Cabinet mechanisms from July to September 2021.

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No. 35)

Senator Anthony Chisholm asked Department of Defence, upon notice, on 18 October 2021:

Vice Admiral Mead is now leading the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Taskforce. Is this taskforce located in CASG? If not, where?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator's question:

The Nuclear-Powered Submarine Task Force led by Vice Admiral Mead reports directly to the Secretary of the Department of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force. The Taskforce is not part of the Defence Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group.