



Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee  
Additional Estimates 2023–24  
Wednesday, 14 February 2024  
Daily summary

The Committee met from 9:02am until 10.41pm

The committee called: Department of Defence, Australian Submarine Agency, Australian Signals Directorate and Department of Veterans' Affairs (Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force, Defence Housing Australia and Australian War Memorial released from hearing.)

Topics discussed by the committee included:

Department of Defence

- Appointments to Deputy Commander of the Army Seventh Brigade and allegations of abuse;
- Approval for acquisition of Taipan Helicopters, known mechanical issues and decommissioning of Taipans;
- Aid to Ukraine and mine removal;
- Payments by the Defence Force to Colonel Naliva;
- Disposal of Defence aircraft;
- Helmet mounted sight and display software versions and the continued operation of helmet mounted displays;
- MHR90 Taipan crash in the Whitsundays;
- ADF workforce retention and recruitment;
- Procurement of the One Defence Data project;
- ADF's involvement in the Middle East conflict and strikes on Houthi rebels;
- Defence Strategic Review;
- Availability of Defence's frigates and the replacement of the Anzac-class frigates;
- The decision not to deploy a warship into Red Sea;
- Defence export permits;
- HMAS Supply repairs;
- New periscope for the Collins-class submarine;
- Privatisation of Defence land;
- Procurement of the BAE Systems Type 26 frigate design and timeline for construction;
- Upgrades to 73 ADF Reserve and Cadet facilities across Australia;
- The Ghost Bat uncrewed aircraft program;
- Australia's acquisition of conventionally armed nuclear powered submarines;
- HMAS Toowoomba and interactions with Chinese warships;
- Funding to Professor Edmund Holmes for research to MRNA viruses and his involvement with Chinese Centre for Disease Control; and
- Government's acquisition of Triton vehicles and Ghost Bat aircraft and costs associated.

Australian Submarine Agency

- Workforce recruitment, relevant qualifications and experience;
- Submarine capability and maintenance work at Stirling;
- Environmental approvals and efforts to achieve a nuclear license;
- Funding allocated to the US industrial uplift to expedite delivery of nuclear submarines; and
- Storage of intermediate level nuclear waste.

#### Australian Signals Directorate

- Pine Gap's involvement in the Israel/Hamas conflict.

#### DVA

- Suspension of MATES program;
- Claims backlog and processing;
- Response to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee's Adaptive Sport Programs for Australian Defence Force Veterans report;
- Medical conditions listed on White Card statements; and
- Veterans' accessing mental health units across Australia.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Thursday, 15 February in the Main Committee Room, for examination of the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio.