



Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2020-21
Tuesday, 27 October 2020
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee estimates hearing.

The committee met from 9.00am until 10.58pm.

The committee called the Department of Defence.

Topics discussed included:

- Army's MRH-90 helicopter procurement and adaptation process (including the M134 and Taipan gun-mount procurement);
- Navy's helicopter capacity and use of the fleet;
- Project LAND4503 Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) Replacement;
- Eurocopter Tiger armed reconnaissance helicopter;
- LAND 2097 Phase 4 (an overhaul of the helicopter fleet relied on by ADF Special Operations);
- 2020 Defence Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan;
- South China Sea;
- digital capability;
- US-China relationship;
- Port of Darwin (including Landbridge);
- Navy helicopter procurement;
- Defence estate works program budget funding and expenditure;
- HMAS Perth, including dry docking and crew shortages;
- Air Warfare Destroyer program—upgrade;
- acquisition of sea boats for the Offshore Patrol Vessels from Boomeranger;
- document freeze in relation to records regarding ADF operations in Afghanistan;
- Future Submarine Program budgeted cost estimates;
- Inspector-General of the ADF, including previous service of the Inspector-General, secondment of Major General Paul Brereton to conduct the Afghanistan inquiry, performance reporting;
- National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, including appointment of Dr Bernadette Boss as interim Commissioner, Defence involvement in policy options for development of the office;
- J40 Medical classification;
- review of the C-27J Spartan aircraft;
- replacement of the Growler aircraft following the destruction of one by fire in the US in 2018;
- Hawkei military vehicle production;
- sovereign munitions manufacturing capability;
- Naval Exercise Malabar;
- production of military uniforms;
- bushfire assistance and the Defence COVID-19 Taskforce;
- acquisition of Triton Aircraft;
- Joint Strike Fighter program;
- Medcon and the production of face masks;
- JORN replacement program;

- CASG;
- HMAS Perth Dry Dock;
- Defence recruitment;
- future submarine project;
- Attack class submarine fleet;
- Hunter Class Frigate Program;
- full cycle docking;
- life of type extension;
- submarine capability transition plan;
- Defence staffing caps—contractors; and
- Tiger ARH fleet.

Australian Signals Directorate

Topics discussed included:

- ANU contract—cancellation;
- watering hole attacks;
- MP’s websites/activities—security risks, support of ASD to MPs/Senators, cyber awareness;
- threat intelligence—Australian healthcare providers;
- Tik Tok;
- ANAO budget cut; and
- foreign interference through social media—public awareness.

The committee completed examination of the Defence Portfolio.

The committee will next meet at 9.00am Wednesday 28 October in the Senate Main Committee Room, examining the Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio.