



Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Economics inquiry into Australia's sovereign naval shipbuilding capability

1. Introduction

This submission has been prepared by the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) inclusive of the Australian Border Force (ABF), to provide information to the Senate Standing Committees on Economics into Australia's sovereign naval shipbuilding capability.

Home Affairs operates significant maritime assets in support of Australia's civil-maritime surveillance and response arrangements. Home Affairs has a key stake in the development and delivery of Australia's sovereign naval shipbuilding capability, and welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Economics into Australia's sovereign naval shipbuilding capability.

This submission recognises the Government's Naval Shipbuilding Plan (the Plan) guides coordination and scheduling of minor vessel construction and sustainment across Home Affairs and Defence.

2. Background

The Plan, released on 16 May 2017, is the Government's largest single investment in sovereign shipbuilding and represents the largest modernisation of the Royal Australian Navy since the Second World War. Home Affairs recognises that the intention of the Plan is to create a long-term, sustainable naval shipbuilding and ship sustainment capability that will serve the nation's strategic and economic interests for many decades. Investment in workforce growth to enable the delivery of new naval ships and submarines, and modern shipyard infrastructure will also continue.

3. Home Affairs contribution

The Home Affairs Portfolio (the Portfolio) mission is to support a prosperous, secure and united Australia. The Portfolio brings together the Australian Government's functions and agencies relating to law enforcement, customs and immigration, multicultural affairs, emergency management, transport security, transnational serious and organised crime, criminal justice policy, national and transport security and counter-terrorism coordination, cyber policy and countering foreign interference.

Home Affairs in partnership with Defence shares responsibility for safeguarding the security and safety of Australia's maritime borders, with vessels from both departments used for civil maritime security.

To ensure a full complement of vessels remain available to support civil maritime operations, Home Affairs acknowledges the role the Plan plays in sequencing future shipbuilding activities, to ensure critical maintenance and transition and/or replacement of vessels can take place.

The ABF vessels perform strategic patrols and tactical surveillance and enforcement for government agencies, which address civil maritime security threats within and beyond Australia's 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone. At present, vessels within Home Affairs include:

- Two *Bay Class* vessels, two fast response boats, ABF Cutter *Thaiyak*, Eight *Cape Class* patrol boats, ABF Cutter *Ocean Shield* and 13 Port, Harbour and Coastal Class vessels.

Home Affairs acknowledges that within the Plan is the minor vessel continuous build program, which identifies the *Cape Class* Patrol Boat fleet replacement and that sustainment and deep level maintenance for ABF vessels will continue to their end of life.

4. Conclusion

Home Affairs supports development and delivery of a national naval shipbuilding enterprise that will support Australian's maritime capabilities, through the delivery of a robust and sustainable naval shipbuilding and sustainment industry, delivering economic growth.

Home Affairs acknowledges that the Plan enhances the naval shipbuilding and sustainment sector, and continues to build new skills and experience in advanced manufacturing and high technology systems integration.

Continuing to achieve the Plan will result in future Australian Governments being able to plan and execute the design construction and sustainment of future fleets of major surface combatants and minor naval vessels, including those vessels operated by Home Affairs.