

Senate Economic References Committee
Future of Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Industry

Parliamentary inquiry

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: SERC - Future of Australia's naval shipbuilding industry - 7 June 2018 - Q2 -
Industry reference bodies - Carr

Question reference number: 2

Senator: Kim Carr

Type of question: Spoken

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 15 June 2018

Question: Senator KIM CARR: I'll come to this question, then, if you're not surprised. There are currently four Commonwealth funded industry reference committee bodies active in the skills development area. Can you tell me this: what are the specialist skills or specialist requirements of shipbuilding that are not covered by any one of those four existing industry reference bodies?

Ms Paul: No, I can't, but it would be a question worth asking the college.

Senator KIM CARR: I understand that, but you're the expert in this field. The government's moved to establish another industry skills body, which just so happens to reduce the number of unions that can be involved, I might point out. I'm just wondering, as the expert in this field, how do you reach the conclusion that there are specialist skills in shipbuilding that are not covered by the four existing reference bodies that cover the rest of manufacturing in these fields?

Ms Paul: I think it's a question worth asking the college. We haven't actually met with the new Industry and Skills Council; I don't think it had been stood up. It's an interesting question. Don't forget, though, Senator, that the naval shipbuilding enterprise work will cover both higher education and vocational education and training. Here, you and I are talking about vocational education and training, for the benefit of others. I actually think the setting up of a new skills committee—I didn't know about the composition of it—is a good thing because the evidence from our shipbuilding colleagues on the board would be that there may be gaps in some areas, both in vocational education and in higher education.

Senator KIM CARR: Can you tell me which ones? Which ones? Just name one of them. One would do.

Ms Paul: Some specialty fabrication, I understand. I'll get back to you.

Senator KIM CARR: Not covered by an existing—

Ms Paul: I'll take it on notice, Senator.

Senator KIM CARR: training body that operates already within manufacturing.

Ms Paul: I can't answer the question. I'm happy to look at it. We met with the college in April, and it had just been stood up, as you are probably aware. One of the things that actually impressed me a lot about the set-up of the college is the way that they are going

about doing their gap analysis. I have not so much been concerned that the existing governance in vocational education and training can cope with it; I've been concerned that someone do a gap analysis to make sure that all the trades and all the higher education areas will be covered. I'm not so interested, as long as someone's doing it. The thing that I've been concerned about with the college is whether there is going to be a good gap analysis done of what exists. And yes, there is.

Senator KIM CARR: Were you consulted about the establishment of this new body when there are already four existing bodies covering these fields?

Ms Paul: Not that I'm aware of.

Senator KIM CARR: You should know whether you were.

Ms Paul: I would need to check, but I don't think so.

Senator KIM CARR: You were not consulted? That's the question: were you consulted?

Answer:

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) was established by the COAG Industry and Skills Committee to approve nationally recognised training packages for implementation in the vocational education and training system. The AISC has established over 60 Industry Reference Committees (IRC) which operate on a voluntary basis to provide advice on skills needs across the breadth of Australian industry.

The AISC opened a public consultation process on 20 April 2018 on the proposed structure for a specific-purpose Naval Shipbuilding IRC to provide an explicit focus on understanding the skilling requirements for the naval shipbuilding and sustainment industries, which draw from a range of skills that cut across multiple industry sectors. The Naval Shipbuilding IRC will also consider skilling requirements across both the vocational and higher education sectors. The consultation process closed on 4 May 2018, and feedback was considered by the AISC, who reached a decision at their meeting on 5 June 2018 to establish the committee, including on structure and membership.