

Department of Defence

Senate Economics References Committee - Inquiry into the future of Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Industry - 30 September 2014

Question on Notice No. 7 - Submarine depth and base suitability

Senator Conroy asked on 30 September 2014, Hansard page 58:

Senator CONROY: Is it fair to say that because of the 20-kilometre channel that is not very deep it would not be the optimum positioning of a submarine base?

Rear Adm. Sammut: That would present challenges to the employment of submarines, yes.

Senator CONROY: Not being able to have them below the surface would present a challenge to keeping a submarine off—

Rear Adm. Sammut: Yes, it is quite a valid consideration. The amount of time that a submarine would spend on the surface once departing its berth would be considered as to the suitability of a base.

Senator CONROY: I do not know a lot about these issues but my experience of Perth is that there is this sort of ridge. You go a little way offshore and suddenly it gets pretty deep, pretty quickly. That is sort of ideal, for submarines to disappear.

Rear Adm. Sammut: You are closer to deeper water in Perth from the port. Yes.

Senator CONROY: Much closer. You do not go 20 kilometres through a channel off Perth, do you?

Rear Adm. Sammut: Twenty kilometres? I would have to check the distances. It is a bit of a distance before you dive, but I will have to get the right distances for you.

Senator CONROY: Okay.

Response:

The distance from Fleet Base West to the channel exit near the Fairway/Landfall Buoy, Gage Roads, Fremantle is approximately 17 Nautical Miles.

Department of Defence

Senate Economics References Committee – Inquiry into the future of Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Industry - 30 September 2014

Question on Notice No. 8 - Details of Prime Minister and Cabinet officer on visit

Senator Xenophon asked on 30 September 2014, Hansard page 62:

CHAIR: Because we are about to go through an estimates process, I just wanted to get my head around who does what so we know who to ask what series of questions. When you travel to Japan and do the exploratory process—they are my words, not yours; let us not have that debate—you do that separate from the politicians and the political trips and the staffers and the advisers et cetera, don't you? There is a different stream of process that are questions for them about when the PM visits and what he does and this and that. So when you just recently visited, you were not with anyone from the minister's office or from the Prime Minister's office?

Mr King: In the last visit there was a member of the Prime Minister and Cabinet office.

Senator XENOPHON: Who was that, can you tell us? If not the name, then their level.

Mr King: Can we—

Senator XENOPHON: Yes, take that on notice.

Mr King: An adviser on security matters.

CHAIR: I do not think that is that unreasonable, but there is a big difference—you are saying someone from PM&C was there, not from PMO.

Mr King: No, PMC.

Response:

A Senior Advisor (Executive Level 2) from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet participated in the most recent visit to Japan over the period 24-25 September 2014. No representatives from the offices of the Prime Minister or Minister for Defence attended.