

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2017-18

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian National Audit Office

Outcome/Program:

Topic: Future Submarine Project

Senator: Senator Xenophon

Question reference number: 21

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 July 2017

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator XENOPHON: When you do an audit, you look to the confidentiality provisions and make an assessment as to whether the confidentiality claims are in order—I think that is the case. I will not go into details of Senate standing order 9, but an order for production was made with respect to the submarine design and mobilisation contract. In response, the minister tabled a heavily redacted contract. Can you please, on notice, check the tabled document to see if the redactions made by the minister are wholly and exclusively consistent with the agreed confidentiality clauses and provide your determination to the committee, or has that already been done?

Ms Mellor: I am going to take that on notice, if you do not mind, because we will be planning another confidentiality audit. We have one left in the current standing. We have not done it in relation to that contract, but it may be something that we do.

Senator XENOPHON: Obviously, your work program is your work program but, given this is \$50 billion, that the minister has made a number of assertions and this is something that I jointly co-sponsored with Senator Carr, the opposition shadow industry minister, it concerns me that it was heavily redacted. I wonder whether you had a role in determining whether those redactions were in accordance with the Senate procedural order for entity contracts. Could you take that on notice, please.

Dr Ioannou: Yes

Written Clarification from Senator Xenophon (correspondence of 27 May 2017):

‘Examine the confidentiality provisions of this contract and advise whether the confidentiality is in order’

‘Examine the tabled contract and advise whether the redactions are in accordance with the agreed confidentiality clauses in the contract.’

Answer:

The ANAO is currently undertaking an audit of Naval Construction Programs—Mobilisation Planning scheduled to table in March 2018. This objective of the audit is to assess the effectiveness to date of the Department of Defence's planning for the mobilisation of its

continuous shipbuilding programs in Australia. In the context of this audit the Auditor-General will consider examining the matters raised in your letter.