

# **Additional Comments by Senator Scott Ludlam**

## **Australian Greens Senator for Western Australia**

Defence procurement has been the subject of numerous inquiries, reviews and reform efforts over decades. This inquiry and report have usefully reflected on recent developments and their adequacy in improving the complex defence procurement process.

Parliamentarians bear ultimate responsibility for waste, shortfalls and systemic failures in the defence procurement process, given that the Parliament approves the spending of over \$66 million a day on defence.

The potential for Parliamentarians to practically shoulder that responsibility and scrutinise decisions on behalf of the people they represent is inhibited when information is not publicly disclosed.

While some details and planning are confidential for legitimate security reasons, those reasons are frequently overstated, which has resulted in an entrenched democracy deficit in decision making about security expenditure.

The ultimate 'source code' for all downstream procurement decisions are Defence White Papers, which set the strategic template within which more fine-grained capability decisions are made. It is therefore profoundly concerning to discover that

White Papers can be deliberately misleading. In December 2010, leaked US State Department cables revealed the disconnect between our government's actual defence purpose and the stated defence posture outlined in the 2009 White Paper.

The Committee's report goes some way to making the process of procurement more transparent. It does not, however, examine the crucial step upstream of the procurement machinery in which the strategic environment is assessed in order to guide decisions on what equipment will be required to meet security threats.

As we approach the 2013 Defence White Paper process, we have an opportunity to increase transparency and accountability, and introduce a degree of contestability. We also have an opportunity to take a serious second look at the existing and potential security implications of a changing global climate, a massive security issue that was unforgivably viewed as irrelevant until 2030 in the last White Paper.

The Australian Greens thank the many experts who gave generously of their time and the Committee secretariat whose tireless efforts have compressed the expertise, examples and lessons learned into proposals for improvement.

**Senator Scott Ludlam**

**AG, Western Australia**