

NAVAL SHIPBUILDING PLAN

132. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Defence Issues:

I refer to today's advertisement, both in *The West Australian* newspaper and on its website, from the Liberal Party that suggested Western Australia is getting 50 per cent of the work on the federal government's naval shipbuilding program. Is this true; and, if not, what is the situation?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question and welcome him formally on the occasion of his first question. It is a wonderful and refreshing thing to see new representation in Jandakot and the elevation in the representation that the people of the electorate receive.

It has come to my attention that the federal Liberal Party here in Western Australia appears to be concerned that there may be some perception within the Western Australian electorate that perhaps Western Australia is not getting a good deal when it comes to shipbuilding and expenditure by the federal government on ship and submarine building. I am glad that that is the case, because I have been at pains in the lead-up to the election and subsequently, since I have been appointed as the first Minister for Defence Issues in this state, to educate people and try to convey the message that the Turnbull government, in the course of about a week, announced in the order of \$89.5 billion worth of ship and submarine construction and that \$86 billion of that money is going to South Australia. That is \$86 billion out of \$89.5 billion. I feel for the federal Liberal Party in Western Australia. I understand that it is feeling a bit sensitive at the moment, and a little bit vulnerable, and I can understand how it can see that that might not be a good message to come to Western Australians, noting how they are already feeling about the goods and services tax.

This sort of ad—I will seek to table these after I have used them, if you do not mind, Mr Speaker—that we saw firstly in the weekend newspaper as a double-page spread, I am reliably informed, costs in the order of \$83 000, to achieve a page 2 and 3 double-page spread.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Are you in opposition?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the member support this ad?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Okay, good.

What happened was that when the Western Australian Liberal Party realised that Western Australians are not quite as silly as the party was hoping and do not buy the idea that \$86 billion going to South Australia and \$3 billion to Western Australia is a good deal in the financial analysis, it chose to use a different analysis. What it has chosen is numerical analysis. It has gone down to the number of hulls. We beat South Australia in the number of hulls. We are building 54 hulls in Western Australia, and only 31 in South Australia, and therefore we win. There is a small problem with the numerical analysis. Welders and steel fabricators are interested in the size of the build; they are actually interested in the size of the hull. A Pacific patrol boat has a displacement of around 162 tonnes. The future frigates, all of which are being built in South Australia, are about 3 800 tonnes, which is about 32 times bigger than the ships being built in Western Australia. Just because we have more hulls does not mean we get a better deal. Can members imagine the Liberals on the bridge of a battleship at Jutland? "I say, sir, Jerry seems to have an awful lot of dreadnoughts out there today." "Never mind, we've got a whole lot of Pacific patrol boats. We've got hundreds of Pacific patrol boats. We outnumber them with Pacific patrol boats. It's all a good deal."

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I am sure you are getting to the end of this.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We shift from the number of hulls, which we win on, to being equal with South Australia, because if we do an analysis on the states that are building ships —

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: What are you doing about it?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Do you want me to tell you?

We are 50 per cent of the states that are building ships. That is a great deal—50 per cent of the states that are building ships. The member opposite asked what I am doing about, and I can tell him.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Minister, I am sure you are getting to the end of this.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can tell the member that last week I went to Canberra and met with the federal Minister for Defence Industries.

Mr S.K. L'Estrange interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member met with the minister in the car. When he was in the car, did he raise the share that Western Australia was getting of the ship build? Did he propose any alternatives? We proposed that they build frigates both in South Australia and Western Australia. We also proposed that they modular build the ships here and in South Australia. We also proposed that they build the superstructure here and the hulls in South Australia, all of which were rejected by the member's mates in Canberra. However, I was feeling generous towards Minister Pyne, because we had a very warm meeting in his office, so we offered some alternatives. We suggested that he look at creating a special operations hub here in Western Australia to exploit our leadership in cybersecurity and special forces, and mine countermeasures. We gave alternatives. The only question is: does the member for Churchlands support our proposals and Western Australian industry?