

OFFSHORE PATROL VESSELS CONTRACT

739. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Defence Issues:

I refer to the federal government's announcement that after strong lobbying by the McGowan Labor government, 10 of the 12 offshore patrol vessels will be built in Henderson.

- (1) What does this mean for Western Australian jobs?
- (2) How is the government ensuring that local businesses are in the best position to take advantage of this work?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question and for his deep interest in growing Western Australian jobs, particularly in manufacturing. It was fantastic news on Friday when the federal government announced publicly that it had selected the shipbuilders for the offshore patrol vessels contract. It was going to be Forgas, partnering with the German company Lürssen, and interestingly it added Austal as part of that collaboration. That was a tremendous outcome for Western Australia.

In reference to the lobbying by the state government, thankfully, as a result of that lobbying—it is undeniable that we engaged in some significant lobbying, particularly early in the year, on this matter—the federal government categorically confirmed that 10 hulls will be constructed in Western Australia and only two in South Australia. That is a step-up in commitment. There has been a significant suggestion that the federal government might backtrack and cave in to South Australia to build more hulls than the two that have been committed. That is on the record now. We will watch, member, and ensure that those two hulls are the only two hulls that are constructed over there. It is a tremendous outcome.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr P. PAPALIA: In addition, it is projected to create 400 jobs directly and another 600 indirectly.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What is even better than the fact that we have got confirmation from the federal government that 10 hulls will be constructed in WA is that Lürssen was the selected design. Peter Lürssen, head of Lürssen, has committed to creating in Western Australia a shipbuilding hub beyond the offshore patrol vessels to build their other designs for sale in Asia. That is potentially many hundreds, if not thousands, more jobs. That is a wonderful outcome for Western Australia. I can tell members the state government has a wonderful relationship with Peter Lürssen and the Lürssen company, and we are looking forward to working further with them to grow that opportunity to sell our Western Australian-built ships into Asia. We will also watch the federal government. Defence West is compiling a registry of all defence industries in Western Australia to ensure they are able to access the opportunities from this contract, and others. We will be asking the federal government yet again to come out and confirm now when it is going to shift the Collins full cycle docking from South Australia to WA and create 500 additional jobs, because that should happen in the near term now that this decision has been made.