

REAR ADMIRAL GATES — DEFENCE ADVOCATE

285. Mr T.J. HEALY to the Minister for Defence Issues:

I refer to the appointment of Rear Admiral Raydon Gates as Western Australia's defence advocate.

- (1) What will be the role of the defence advocate?
- (2) How will the defence advocate help WA to secure more defence work and more defence jobs—work and jobs that the federal Liberal government is currently handing to South Australia?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his interest in Western Australia's defence industry. As the member is fully aware, prior to the election, the current government made the observation that Western Australia's defence sector had been neglected for a great many years. Sadly, as a consequence of this neglect, we observed that Western Australia received a tiny proportion of billions and billions of dollars. The federal government, under previous Prime Minister Tony Abbott and subsequently Prime Minister Turnbull, announced \$89.5 billion worth of ship and submarine construction.

The SPEAKER: Member for South Perth.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am sorry; I missed the member for Bateman's observations.

Mr D.C. Nalder: Stop admiring the problem. What are you doing?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have no idea what the member is asking, but \$89.5 billion worth of ship and submarine construction was announced by the federal coalition government and \$86 billion is going to South Australia. It is undeniable that we were voiceless under the previous government. Western Australia, as a state, had no voice on the east coast, or in Canberra where decisions are made. The federal government ignored the previous government and took it for granted!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr P. PAPALIA: It took members opposite for granted. Inasmuch as it ever thought of them, it was only as an automatic teller machine for its political donations. That is the only thing the federal government thought of the former government. It came here and obliquely collided with the former government on the way through to Cottesloe for a fundraiser. That was it. It had no interest in the Western Australian Liberal Party beyond trying to get money out of its donors. As a consequence, the Western Australian defence sector was ignored. Like so many other sectors, no effort was made to diversify the economy. In opposition, we committed to creating a portfolio; we have done that. We committed to creating a Defence West office; we have done that. We committed to appointing a defence advocate—a renowned, esteemed, respected, defence player on the national and international stages; we did it today.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: What target have you set?

Mr P. PAPALIA: A target for Western Australia is not very difficult! If we get any more than we get now, we will have had a huge win—if we get any more than the pittance that the opposition managed to achieve! The opposition was so convinced of the importance of defence, it appointed the former Attorney General to represent the interests of Western Australia on the national stage. That former minister was renowned for having the deepest and highest in-tray in government. It was extraordinary that the former government allowed him to be its advocate. Today, we followed through with our commitment to appoint a defence advocate by choosing Rear Admiral Raydon Gates. We are very —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is a serious matter. If you really want a better share for Western Australia, you should join us in advocating for a better share.

The SPEAKER: Minister, will you talk through the Chair.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Rear Admiral Raydon Gates served in the Royal Australian Navy for 37 years, retiring in 2008. He headed Lockheed Martin for Australia and New Zealand, which is the world's biggest defence contractor.

He has deep connections—I beg your pardon?

Mr S.K. L'Estrange: What KPIs have you set him?

The SPEAKER: I am setting the manager of opposition business a key performance indicator. He is interjecting. I call the manager of opposition business to order. Minister, through the Chair, and wind it up, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Admiral Gates has deep connections around the world in the defence sector in the military, in the civilian defence sector, in particular, in the United States from his time as the Australian Defence Attaché in Washington. He is capable. I can tell members—I know this—he is well respected across the chamber in federal politics. He is well known and respected in military circles and in civilian Department of Defence circles. He will give us a presence in Canberra which we never had under the previous government. He will be our eyes, ears and voice, finally, in Canberra. We will get a better return from him in about a day than we ever got from the previous minister that was responsible in his entire eight and a half years.