

AUSTRALIAN MARINE COMPLEX STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAND USE MASTER PLAN

613. Mr W.R. MARMION to the Minister for Defence Issues:

My question is also to the Minister for Defence Issues, so wake up! Can the minister table the Australian Marine Complex strategic infrastructure and land use master plan or —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Can we just have a straight question without any interjection.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Can I start again?

The SPEAKER: Start again.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr W.R. MARMION: Can the minister table the AMC strategic infrastructure and land use master plan or can he confirm that he has only just let the contract after two and a half years of government?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Thank you for the question, member. That is extraordinary! I could add to the answer to the question from the member for Baldvis. The reason we forwarded to the Minister for Defence the report commissioned from PricewaterhouseCoopers on strategic reasons for shifting full-cycle docking and the ACIL Allen report on the economic benefits of shifting full-cycle docking was that I talked to her about it and I undertook to do that shortly after her election. I was working very closely with the office of the former Minister for Defence, that magnificent contributor and one of the best ministers the former Morrison government had, Christopher Pyne. His office collaborated on the “Western Australian Defence and Defence Industries Strategic Plan”, which the Premier launched at the Indo–Pacific Defence Conference only in October last year. Part of the agreement we had with Minister Pyne was that we would work on that strategy, it would be done in conjunction with defence and our strategy would reflect defence interests and requirements in Western Australia. The other part of the agreement with Minister Pyne was that we would work together on preparing an infrastructure plan for the AMC that meshed well with Western Australia’s requirements and plans but also met the requirements of defence. Before that part of the agreement could be undertaken, the federal government went into election mode. The requirement of the agreement was that we would take the lead on our strategic plan, in collaboration with the federal government, and it would take the lead on the infrastructure requirement plan, and we would support the federal government. That did not happen before the election because it went into election mode and everything slowed down. After the election, I met with Minister Reynolds and appraised her of the agreement. She knew of it anyway because she had been privy to the entire discussion. She was very supportive of continuing the plan. The intention was to reflect defence requirements with our infrastructure plan for the Australian Marine Complex. It would be pointless for Western Australia to pursue a plan for infrastructure in Henderson without accommodating all the requirements of defence, so we are working with it. The only hold-up with that plan has been on the federal defence side providing the information necessary for us to pursue compiling our plan. It is true that we have commissioned a plan. We have commissioned Advisian and other consultants that have been commissioned with the support of Oropesa, which is a specialist in the maritime environment—infrastructure requirements and ports. It is doing that work. It is now getting consultation and support from federal agencies by the federal minister’s office. Not surprisingly, there was a little bit of a hiatus after the election whilst new ministers got their feet under the desk and agencies began to respond to or confirm federal government policy in this regard—but the work has been done. It is hilarious that the opposition should even suggest that somehow I should be embarrassed about the fact that we have commissioned an infrastructure plan. I can confirm that a week and a half ago I was in Canberra meeting the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Defence Industry, and we undertook to provide that plan by about November or December. That is what they wanted. That is when they asked for it. There is no delay; there is no expectation that we should have done it already. The first undertaking I had with the minister was to provide strategic reasons in the national interest that full-cycle docking should come to Western Australia. We have done that. We have very publicly launched that. The Premier launched that campaign yesterday, but, in advance of that, the minister was given those reports and she is fully appraised of our argument. We are now working on the infrastructure plan. It will accommodate full-cycle docking requirements as well.