

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY — SHIPBUILDING CONTRACTS —
DEFENCE INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD

725. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Premier:

I refer to the success of South Australia and Victoria in winning Royal Australian Navy shipbuilding contracts during the Premier's tenure in office.

- (1) Why did the government abolish the defence industry advisory board in 2009, noting that it was unpaid, had members from every major defence contractor in the state and had the role of advocating on behalf of local industry for a share of the defence dollar?
- (2) Which minister is currently responsible for representing Western Australia's defence industry?
- (3) What has this minister done to win a share of the future frigate continuous build contract?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

- (1)–(3) I remind the member that it was the Liberal–National government that created the Australian Marine Complex.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, can I explain —

Mr F.M. Logan: It was Hendy.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Hendy Cowan was the minister, but can I explain that when John Howard was Prime Minister there were Federation projects around Australia and Western Australia, and I was involved to some extent, selecting to develop the Australian Marine Complex at Cockburn; and, the Gallop government added to it with the floating dock facility. It has been good, very successful, and it will continue to be supported.

I remind people that the naval contract projects will be quite some time in the future—they go well into the 2020s. There is a fair way to go on those, and the suggestion or implication is that this government is not active in that area, but I assure members that we are. Indeed, the head of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has been meeting with defence chiefs in Canberra recently on a range of issues. I am also confident that Austal shipping will be a major contractor, certainly in the patrol boats and most likely also the frigate project. Also, because the Australian submarine fleet is located at Garden Island, we would expect contractors to be involved in the construction, or parts thereof, of the submarines, particularly the outer shell of the submarine, because the technology at the AMC is greater than anywhere else in Australia in that particular field. All that will happen, and we are actively involved. It is also the case that the Department of State Development will become increasingly involved in that work.