

**HMAS SYDNEY — COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

*Statement by Member for Jandakot*

**MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot)** [12.54 pm]: Yesterday, the Department of Defence publicly released the findings of the commission of inquiry into the loss of HMAS *Sydney*. The commission was established in May 2008 following the discovery of the wreck on 16 March last year. The commission was presided over by the eminent Justice Terence Cole, QC, and aided by the inquiry's counsel assisting, Commander Jack Rush, QC. Justice Cole was appointed by the Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, to inquire into and report upon the circumstances associated with the loss of HMAS *Sydney*. Spanning 12 months, with an exhaustive report of more than 1 000 pages, the inquiry took evidence and received submissions and information from naval experts, historians and families of the HMAS *Sydney* crew, as well as German survivors. I acknowledge the excellent work done by the commission and congratulate and thank Justice Cole, Commander Rush and their staff for their time, energy and diligence in approaching this task.

With the discovery of HMAS *Sydney*, and now the delivery of this report, they have answered many questions that have haunted the families of the brave sailors who never came home. Moreover, the many persistent theories and speculation involving the fate of HMAS *Sydney*'s crew were found to hold no substance. The loss of HMAS *Sydney* represented one of the darkest chapters in this nation's history. There is now hope that the families of the sailors of HMAS *Sydney* will find closure and peace. Although war graves remain the jurisdiction of the commonwealth, we should note that the final resting place of these 645 men remains forever close to the hearts and homes of Western Australians.