



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

A MORE POTENT AND CAPABLE SUBMARINE FLEET

The 2009 Defence White Paper sets out a new capability direction with a significant focus on enhancing our maritime capabilities for the 21st century, the Minister for Defence, the Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP announced today.

In recognition of the importance of Australia's maritime approaches and trade routes to the security and prosperity of the nation, the Government has decided to make a substantial investment to double the Navy's current submarine fleet.

"This investment will provide Australia with a much greater ability to adequately defend our maritime region, protect and support other Australian Defence Force assets, and undertake strategic missions where the stealth and other operating characteristics of highly-capable advanced submarines is crucial," Mr Joel Fitzgibbon said.

The 12 new submarines will replace the current fleet of six *Collins* class. "We will carefully apply the lessons learned from the *Collins* class by appropriately engaging overseas Governments and both Australian and overseas industries in order to significantly reduce the risks," Mr Fitzgibbon said

"This project will show the world what Australia can do if we set our minds to a task. The technological and industry spin offs from a project such as this will reach across the entire nation."

The distances involved in Australia's maritime geography means that to defend Australia and our interests we must produce a conventional submarine with significantly higher levels of endurance and capability than exists anywhere else in the world. So while we may use sub-systems from other successful submarine designs, the overall design will be unique.

"We also need to increase the number of submarines to sustain a force at sea large enough to defend our approaches in a crisis or conflict, to protect and support other ADF assets, and undertake certain strategic missions," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Additionally, the Government has announced it will ensure the capability offered by the *Collins* class remains high with further investment to the current

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fleet including replacement sonars and improved communications. Additional funding will also be invested in sustainment of the submarines in order to increase their operational availability.

Providing trained personnel to crew this increased submarine force requires a new approach. Navy has adopted a number of innovative initiatives under the New Generation Navy Strategy to ensure that the current shortfalls are addressed, and that a robust submarine workforce is built to meet this important challenge. These initiatives, combined with a range of recruitment and retention strategies also in train, will provide the basis for a sustainable submarine force into the future.

The 2009 Defence White Paper represents the most comprehensive statement on Defence ever produced. It affirms the Government's commitment to the defence of Australia, the protection of our sovereign interests and the security and stability of our region.

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