

mea culpa - VMT to the guide-in-training for COURAGEOUS for QA slideshow 7043 - I tapped in CONQUEROR simply because I was silly.

Hopefully this link will get you to all the presentations at the First Sea Lord's Seapower Conference last week.

<https://mailchi.mp/244a27703df8/what's-new-to-britains-world-15606170?e=65d71ba849>

In German but you should get the point

In December 2011, the WTD-71 (*Bundeswehr Technical Centre for Ships and Naval Weapons*) conducted a series of stress tests to study the effect of a close underwater explosion on the hull of a submarine. During the final test in January 2012, U-25 (S-174) sunk. She was later recovered and sold for scrap in 2019.

Video from the trials, part I: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ma_5qpnG6QA&ab_channel=Bundeswehr

Part II: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M85gtTR43OY&ab_channel=Bundeswehr

Overuse of consultants is really a problem in one department: Audit

Tom Burton Government editor

May 18, 2023 – 4.47pm

Source: <https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/overuse-of-consultants-is-really-a-problem-in-one-department-audit-20230515-p5d8jn>

The federal government's overuse of consulting and contractors is highly concentrated with more than 75 per cent of its \$21 billion annual external labour workforce centred on the Defence portfolio, an outsourcing audit shows.

The [Department of Finance audit of financial year 2021](#) activities found 75 per cent of Defence's outsourced spending – the equivalent of 26,199 workers – was not on consulting and contractors, but rather on third party service providers such as garrison security, cooking and base cleaning.

More broadly the audit found the external labour workforce was the equivalent of 53,911 public servants, but that only 954 workers, or 1.7 per cent, of the shadow work force was a ributable to consultants.

Finance Minister Katy Gallagher said the external labour audit revealed a shadow workforce equal to over 50,000 public servants. *Alex Ellinghausen*

Across the Commonwealth government the audit found almost 90 per cent of the total external labour use was concentrated in five agencies, Defence, Social Services, the Australian Taxation Office, Agriculture, Water and the Environment and Home Affairs.

The same audit also showed that among civilian agencies 70 per cent of their consulting and contractor spending was on three areas: technology and digital development, service delivery and project and program management. There was no data showing the break-up in Defence, suggesting there remains large information gaps in the government's understanding of its consulting and contractor "problem."

Amid concerns that consultants were eroding public service skills, Finance Minister Katy Gallagher has pledged to reduce reliance on consultants and contractors by \$3 billion. The budget revealed an in-house consulting hub has been funded to rebuild core policy and analysis skills.

Dunno where the paste went on the import but the graph is in the enclosures

Four federal agencies accounted for nearly 90 per cent of all outsourced activities. *AFR*

Of the \$295 million spent by the top 10 agencies using consultants, \$270 million, or 90 per cent, was attributable to just four departments, Defence, Industry and Energy, Foreign Affairs, and Veterans affairs.

“It makes me wonder if the in-house consulting initiative has really missed the point,” said one leading government consultant.

Of the almost 54,000 so-called shadow work force the audit identified that about 25,000 were contractors and labour hire, suggesting many agencies were using outsourcing to get around staffing caps that had been imposed as a budgetary control by the previous government.

ICT and digital solution spending was the most common use of combined consultant and contractor expenditure in financial 2022, with a total of \$1.3 billion spent on technology management, equal to almost a quarter of all consulting and contractor spend.

Direct employment of public servants in the 112 agencies surveyed in the same time period was 144,300.

Senator Gallagher said this implied that in financial year 2022, the government workforce (public servants plus external labour) was around 37 per cent larger than the workforce measured by public servant numbers alone. Around \$1 in every \$4 spent by agencies for departmental purposes was on external labour services.

“What we have uncovered is the extent of the former Coalition government’s shadow workforce that was plugging gaps in the APS created by their arbitrary cap on the number of government employees,” Senator Gallagher said.

“The Morrison government maintained its artificial cap on public servant numbers, promoting a mirage of efficiency, but were at the same time spending almost \$21 billion of public money on a shadow workforce that was deliberately kept secret.

The budget showed the head count for the federal public service is growing sharply, projected to be up by about 10,800 over the next fiscal year to an average staffing level of 191,861. That will be 15 per cent higher than pre-pandemic levels.

The increase in the civilian headcount has been fuelled by 3314 contract positions being converted to employee roles, saving \$811 million over the forward estimates.

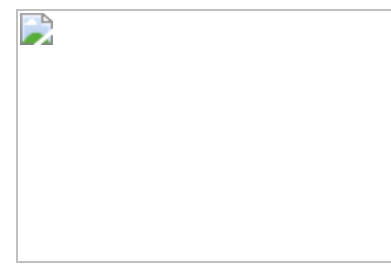
When I was inside I had a theory that if Navy had a close look at what it asked its Reservists to do it would have restructured seriously to probably do what the late CDRE Cummins (as tasked) proposed to CNS back in the day - who was in hospital after falling off a ladder and reading the Tornado's proposal probably almost led to a second fall out of his bed. It was buried deeper than the Attack Class Unsuccessful Contractor Debriefs. I had three problems with bringing in Rocky Officers into the Sponge and HQs in particular (an opinion coloured by the re-baseline DFRDB pensions ambitions of way too many). The First was that they were NOT there to play a game longer than their CFTS contract end date - which meant those around them in Tinsel Town not only got handed dead cats but a bag of mangey kittens as well when they did a runner. The second was the sole trader professional reservists who would come into the reserve as often as they could to any job on offer and as sole traders get recompensed for losing an employee. And the third were 'thank god it's gone' who turned up as a Rocky the following week in jobs that could make you cry. I had a Communicator as my UW sponsor for years - that worked....NOT.

So we and the taxpayer got double whammied: ineffective Rockies who would then hire consultants and PSPs to do their work for them with procurement professional approved 52 card pickup standards of SOWs. And you now don't have to wonder why the only thing Defence can do fast is circle the wagons at a pace that would threaten current estimates of the speed of light.

Also explains why I used to repeat a joke I read in Reader's Digest that to improve efficiency Defence should bank the curves on all its exits - if you want to retain people you have to give them meaningful work at all levels not subjugate them to the three year transient climbers' career oriented antics, the CFTS tourists in policy jobs and the army of consultants/PSPs providing information with substance enough to satisfy the 52 card pickup SOW but, even then, delivered in carefully measured doses to be almost imperceptibly less than effective to ensure they are still required next week. Suck eggs stuff and you'd think Defence would be good at sucking given its track record.

Austal USA Wins Detail Design Contract for Navy T-AGOS(X) Ocean Surveillance Ship

By: [Mallory Shelbourne](#)
May 18, 2023 6:18 PM



TAGOS-25 Rendering. Austal USA Image

Austal USA has won a \$114 million contract for the Navy's new T-AGOS(X) ocean surveillance ship, according to a Thursday announcement from the Defense Department.

The award is for the detailed design of the first surveillance ship, which the Navy bought in Fiscal Year 2022.

"The contract includes options for detail design and construction of up to seven T-AGOS 25 class ships, special studies, engineering and industrial, provisional items orders, post-delivery mission system installation period, and data rights buy-out," the announcement reads.

The contract is worth up to \$3.2 billion. Two shipyards bid for the work.

"Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance (T-AGOS) ships gather underwater acoustical data to support the mission of the Integrated Undersea Surveillance System (IUSS) by providing a ship platform capable of theater anti-submarine acoustic passive and active surveillance," reads the Fiscal Year 2024 budget documents. "T-AGOS ships are operated by Military Sealift Command to support the anti-submarine warfare mission of the commanders of the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets."

Meanwhile, the Navy issued a \$526 million contract modification to Fincantieri Marinette Marine for the fourth Constellation-class frigate, FFG-65, according to the Thursday contract announcements.

The award for the detail design and construction of the fourth guided-missile frigate comes 11 months after the Navy issued Fincantieri a modification for the third frigate, *Chesapeake* (FFG-64). The service has not yet announced a name for the fourth frigate.

Fincantieri builds the Connie frigates, which are based on the FREMM multi-mission design first used by the Italian and French navies, at its shipyard in Marinette, Wis.

Marinette began fabrication on the lead ship in the class, the future USS *Constellation* (FFG-62), at the end of August 2022.

Call for a Parliamentary Inquiry into the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine deal

By The Australia Institute
May 19, 2023

The Australian Government has announced a four-decades long deal to acquire American and British nuclear-powered submarines, at an indicative cost of \$268 billion to \$368 billion.

'Deal'?

This is an extraordinary time frame and an extraordinary cost. The assumptions on which the deal has been constructed are ill-defined, and many of the assertions made to justify the deal are unsupported by argument or evidence.

What can go wrong? Everything.

Australia does not currently have the design, construction or complex management skills to produce nuclear-powered submarines. The Royal Australian Navy does not have the technical skills to operate nuclear-powered boats.

Indeed, the Navy's operational submarine skills appear to be in decline. Australia lacks the heavy industry to support such an ambitious deal. Nor does Australia have the range of tertiary educational or technology training institutions to support the deal.

While the Government claims that sovereignty over the ownership and operation of the nuclear-powered submarines will remain always in Australian hands, there are many questions relating to the limits on Australian sovereignty that must be addressed.

American and British submarines are powered by reactors that are fuelled by highly enriched uranium (HEU), that is, weapons grade uranium. Even when the reactors reach the end of their operational life, they retain HEU and other high-level radioactive waste which will become Australia's responsibility. There is no plan for the safe disposal of this waste. The implications for Australia's NPT obligations are unclear.

This acquisition deal has serious deficiencies.

These deficiencies need to be addressed by a properly constituted Parliamentary Inquiry to reassure the Australian community that this is a reasonable deal with a reasonable chance of success at reasonable cost.

The Inquiry's Terms of Reference should at a minimum address the following key issues:

1. Are the strategic policy grounds for the deal well-founded? Do the changes in Australia's strategic environment warrant such a significant investment in a single defence capability?
2. What are the implications of the apparent re-orientation of Australia's defence policy from a focus on the enduring features of the direct defence of Australia against any possible adversary to a concentration on the forward defence of Australia against a specific adversary where the grounds for identifying a specific adversary are unclear and unsupported?
3. Does Australia have the industrial, technological and educational capacities to support such a deal?
4. What are the consequences for Australia's standing in the Indo-Pacific region? How is Australia's diplomatic capacity to be built up to manage the geo-political consequences of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine deal for South East Asia and the Pacific?
5. What are the consequences for Australia's Defence force structure and strategic posture? How is Australia's political and operational sovereignty to be defended and maintained?
6. What are the implications for diversity within Australian industry, especially with respect to the development and maintenance of expertise and skills in a broad range of advanced technologies?
7. How is the deal to be paid for? What opportunity costs arise, both within the Defence budget where inevitably there will need to be trade-offs and in the national budget where other important social policy priorities may need to be postponed or made subject to reduced funding?
8. How are accountability and transparency surrounding the deal to acquire nuclear-powered submarines to be ensured, and how is value for money to be determined?
9. What are the nuclear non-proliferation implications of this deal?

For these reasons, we, the undersigned, call for a Parliamentary Inquiry into the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine deal as a matter of urgency.

THE HON. CARMEN LAWRENCE AO – Former Premier of WA and MP for Fremantle

SENATOR DAVID SHOEBRIDGE – Greens Senator for New South Wales

DOUG CAMERON – Former Senator for NSW

JANET HOLMES À COURT AC

PROFESSOR JAMES LAURENCESON – Director, Australia-China Relations Institute, UTS

DR EMMA SHORTIS – RMIT University

DR RICHARD DENNISS – Executive Director, The Australia Institute

THE HON. PETER GARRETT AM – Former MP for Kingsford Smith

SENATOR JORDAN STEELE-JOHN – Greens Senator for Western Australia

DR ROB OAKESHOTT – Former MP for Lyne

AIR MARSHAL RAY FUNNELL AC (Ret'd) – Former Chief of the Air Force

ARTHUR RORRIS – Secretary, South Coast Labour Council

ALLAN BEHM – Director, International & Security Affairs Program, The Australia Institute

THE HON. MELISSA PARKE – Former MP for Fremantle

SENATOR PENNY ALLMAN-PAYNE – Greens Senator for Queensland

TONY WINDSOR AM – Former MP for New England

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL SMITH AO (Ret'd) – Former Deputy Commander of the UN Peacekeeping Operation in East Timor

ALLAN GYNGELL AO – also intended to sign this letter.

His death has silenced a calm and gentle voice that contributed so much to Australia's foreign and security policy and our ability to help shape the world in which we live.

Republished from the [Australia Institute](https://www.australiainstitute.org/), 18 May 2023.



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