

Media Release – 3 July 2020

SIA WELCOMES COLLINS SUBMARINES EXTENSION

The Defence Strategic Update and Force Structure Plan are welcome additions to the defence policy landscape which provide greater clarity about current and future submarine capability, according to the Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA).

In particular, the SIA supports the commitments in the policy documents relating to extending the life of the Collins class submarines and to investing in uncrewed under-water systems.

SIA Executive Director, David Nicholls said: “While there has been a lot of relatively informal public discussions about it, the 2020 Force Structure Plan is the first significant policy commitment to life-of-type extensions for the existing Collins class submarines.

“It is also the first time that the estimated funding commitments for life-of-type extensions for Collins has been documented and this \$3.5-\$6.0 billion allocation is welcome.

“Life-of-type extensions for the Collins class submarines are vital to ensuring there is no reduction in Australia’s sovereign submarine capability during the transition from the Collins class submarines to the 12 new Attack class submarines.

“The commitment gives weight to the Government’s contention that a continuous regionally superior submarine capability is paramount in underpinning Australia’s national security.”

Mr Nicholls said the pledge to upgrade facilities and infrastructure to support Australia’s expanding submarine fleet, which is also in the Force Structure Plan, is another positive proposal.

On other parts of the two documents which are directly relevant to submarines, Mr Nicholls said: “The uncrewed under-sea systems that the Government has committed to will, alongside Australia’s expanding submarine fleet, further enhance national security.

“Also, the SIA is pleased the Government has moved to quell the sometimes unhelpful debate about the costs of the new Attack class submarines by including designated funding estimates.

“All of this is of great importance given the deteriorating strategic environment and that Australia is still grappling with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.”

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