



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles Project

SPEECH

Monday, 2 March 2020

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Monday, 2 March 2020 Page 13 Questioner Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (11:15): What absolute rot and untruth from the Labor Party. Time and time again they come into this chamber and they do the same. Firstly, I acknowledge the 20 years of service from the member for Braddon, who has put forward this motion on defence procurement. I thank him and other men and women who have given themselves in service to our military and to the people of Australia. It is a pleasure to support a motion put forward by him.

It is not at all surprising that Labor again drivell untruths to try to tell a story. We know that Labor's spend on defence when they were in office—1.5 per cent of GDP—was actually lower than before World War 2. That is an absolute and utter disgrace. It takes a coalition government, the only side of politics that happens to know how to run an economy, to be able to ensure that defence spending is lifted. Defence spending has been lifted to be on track to two per cent of GDP. Part of that is the largest recapitalisation program that this country has seen in a long, long time, and part of that recapitalisation program is for the Army. Within the Army is the Land program, and within Land of course is Land 400 phase 2, which is the building of 211 combat reconnaissance vehicles. It is the largest contract in the history of the Australian Army. It was won by Rheinmetall and is to be delivered through Queensland.

Clearly, Labor have a problem with Queensland because of what happened in last year's federal election. If you don't get support from Queensland at the election you have no right to stand in this chamber and try to suggest that something be taken away from Queensland. It is a cheap trick to try to penalise the very state that didn't give you support. It is absolutely no coincidence that they stand up, opposing companies in Queensland that will benefit from this job.

One of the wonderful things about the way that this government has run procurement has been to make sure that small and medium businesses reap rewards, and that is precisely what is going to be happen with a particularly high Australian industry content out of this program. We're talking about a \$5 billion procurement project that will probably have at least that amount of spending on its sustainment and through-life support. We know that through the Rheinmetall job about 330 Queenslanders will be directly employed to deliver on these reconnaissance vehicles. We also know that it will be up to 450 when you account for people based at Rheinmetall headquarters.

Is this the largest contribution of jobs through that contract throughout the country? Yes, it is. Queensland does win big time out of Rheinmetall. Indeed, Land 400 phase 2 establishes not only a large contract for our Army but the capability of our local industry, through which we can not only ensure the transfer of intellectual property from Germany but also build deep expertise that will go into new products that we can export. Those opposite don't like that idea. They don't like that idea, because Queensland, which obviously did not support them in last year's federal election, is the big winner of Land 400 phase 2 jobs. They like to tell mistruths. They like to misuse numbers. They misused numbers again with the 'over 1,400 jobs at the peak of manufacturing and sustainment' comment. They know that the jobs which can be divvied up and specified by state, with Queensland getting 330, are for the procurement piece, but the big, high-level number of over 1,400 at the peak includes sustainment, for which there has not been a breakdown. Again, this is Labor mistruths.

Here's the rub. With support of the Queensland LNP team, colleagues on this side of the House—with not a word from those on the other side—helped advocate to ensure that the single-largest contract in the history of the Australian Army came to Queensland. It is our state that is building that expertise. It is our state that will win. It is our state that will get the jobs. If Labor have a problem with it then they should tell us exactly where they want those jobs to go, if not Queensland.