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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

Gumley, Dr Stephen

SPEECH

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Questioner
Speaker Mr ROBERT

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(Fadden) (NaN.NaN pm)

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (09:48): On indulgence: I would like to provide a few comments in response to the minister's tabling of the second report, the Giles report into HMAS *Success*, and I would also like to provide a few comments to farewell Dr Stephen Gumley from DMO.

With respect to the Giles report, the second report into *Success*, I will leave it to Senator David Johnston in the Senate to provide any comment as to the style and substance of the document. I will certainly point out the coalition's strong, enduring and ongoing support for the Navy and its personnel and its people who work in trying and difficult circumstances in all four corners of the globe in the area in which they serve. Notwithstanding, all organisations have their challenges and Navy is not immune to that. Sailors and officers of the Royal Australian Navy need to know that the coalition offers complete support for their continued work. Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, who has taken over as Chief of Navy, has a challenging and difficult time ahead of him as the Navy transitions in some significant areas. The new HMS *Largs Bay* comes into service with amphibious vessels working with *Kanimbla* and *Tobruk* and they will transition through to two landing helicopter dock, LHD, ships and of course the AWDs, which will significantly transform Navy as we know it. That of course will include the transformation of Army with an amphibious force that will work lock, stock and barrel with a substantially improved combat capability on the surface of the ocean. The force structure review may well throw up a range of options and indeed surprises for the military as to where some of this naval force structure will be deployed, and Vice Admiral Griggs will need to deal with these enduring challenges.

I know Navy is up to the task as these platforms come into service. As the minister moves forward with the submarine program, Vice Admiral Griggs will have to come to deal not only with the current sustainment issues with the current fleet of Collins but with the new submarine development program. Rarely has a service seen such change as the Royal Australian Navy will endure in the coming years. I am confident that Vice Admiral Griggs is up to the challenge. He knows he enjoys the support of the coalition for all of our sailors and officers within the Royal Australian Navy and he

knows he will enjoy our support and encouragement as he tackles the difficult challenges ahead with the transformation of the Navy based on its surface and subsurface combatant fleet changes.

As Dr Gumley prepares to leave, the coalition wishes him all the very best. As CEO of the Defence Materiel Organisation from 2004 to now he has seen enormous changes. He has seen first and second pass approvals from 2005 to 2007 numbering something like 25 to 30 each year—a significant transformation of defence and its equipment that has come through from the DMO. As the minister said, he has seen the transition of DMO through to a prescribed agency and he has led the changes admirably. I have had the pleasure of speaking with Dr Gumley many times not only within industry visits but also within committee. His advice has always been frank, fearless, direct and honest. Looking across at Minister Clare, I think it would have been a pleasure to work with someone of such calibre who gives such open and direct advice. DMO still has its challenges; there is no question about that and the minister would be the first one to acknowledge those challenges. As DMO seeks to move forward with probably the greatest volume of military equipment our nation has seen, DMO will need to rise to that challenge. It will need to engage with industry in a very meaningful way. It will need to engage with Capability Development Group in an incredibly meaningful way to ensure that we can get the equipment and the capabilities that our fighting men and women so desperately need. I am looking forward to the minister driving DMO forward. I am looking forward to the announcement of a replacement for Dr Stephen Gumley and to meeting that person, sitting down and giving them the coalition's view on DMO and its challenges.

I acknowledge the hard work that Dr Gumley has done. Many people here may not know that every single one of the projects provides a weekly brief to Dr Gumley that outlines the state of the project and where it is up to. Every Saturday Dr Gumley will go through those written briefs for up to six or seven hours to check off every single project that he is looking at. That is not how you and I like to spend our Saturdays. I take the kids to the beach and the park and have fun. Dr Gumley spends it reviewing projects and making sure that, to the best of his ability, his organisation is doing what it can to deliver.

DMO has its challenges. We will continue to hold the minister accountable for those challenges. We will scrutinise his activities. I note that the commentariat have said that, with only 10 first and second pass approvals last year, for Force 2030 to be on track something like 58 first and second pass approvals will be required from the government this year. As I said to the minister yesterday, I have the DCP hanging on my wall and I shall be ticking off every first and second pass approval as it comes through. I will be holding you, Minister, absolutely accountable as the weeks and months tick by as to how the national security committee of cabinet is going with those first and second pass approvals and I will continue to give you a running update, Minister, as to how many have passed and how many you have to go.

To Dr Gumley I offer my sincere thanks and the thanks of the coalition for his hard work and work well done.