



PRIME MINISTER

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NAVAL SUPPORT FACILITY - COCKBURN SOUND, W.A.

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. William McMahon, C.H., M.P.

The Government considered today revised estimates of cost for the construction of the Naval Support Facility at Cockburn Sound, Western Australia. When the announcement was made in October 1970 of the decision to proceed with the second stage of the project - the actual facilities on Garden Island - the total estimated cost was \$38 million. The first stage, construction of the causeway linking Garden Island with the mainland, is well in hand.

The latest estimate is \$48.5 million. The increase is attributable mainly to escalation in construction costs, design changes found necessary as a result of more detailed site investigations and some variations in actual requirements.

The Government decided, subject to examination of the second stage of the project by the Parliamentary Public Works Committee, that the proposal should proceed and to the previously planned completion date of the end of 1975.

The facility, when completed, will provide support for up to four escort vessels and three submarines for periods up to a year without drydocking. The proposed works include wharves, workshops, stores, administrative offices, barracks for personnel, an armament depot and armament jetty, training facilities and an operational headquarters.

In confirming the decision to proceed with the second stage of the Naval facility at Cockburn Sound, the Government took into consideration the strategic changes occurring in the Indian Ocean area, including the increasing Soviet Naval activity.

The Naval Support Facility at Cockburn Sound will provide a base for our ships to operate in the Indian Ocean for extensive periods and may be seen as a demonstration of our interest in contributing to the security of ocean areas adjacent to Australia.

The facility would be available to the United States and Britain and will thus assist their operations in the Indian Ocean.

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These two countries have expressed interest in the Cockburn Sound facilities in connection with the deployment of their ships in this area.

Further details are available from the Minister for Defence.

CANBERRA,
21 February, 1972.