



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**BILLS**

**Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2017-2018**

**Consideration in Detail**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 13 June 2017**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<p><b>Date</b> Tuesday, 13 June 2017  <b>Page</b> 104  <b>Questioner</b>  <b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted, MP</p>	<p><b>Source</b> House  <b>Proof</b> Yes  <b>Responder</b>  <b>Question No.</b></p>
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**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (18:35): Three weeks ago, we were in this very chamber making speeches about a terror attack in Manchester. Two weeks ago, it was London. Last week, if parliament sat, we would have been talking about Melbourne. Indeed, we are living in a global political environment which is amidst heightened volatility. Major conflicts are causing upheaval the world over. As I speak today, there are approximately 28 wars raging across the world—and if you include smaller conflicts in African nations, that number jumps to 58. In 2017 thus far, these wars have recorded 47,000 deaths.

As we have seen in the last three weeks, whether it is Manchester, London or Melbourne, there is another war going on, waged by Islamist terrorists, often targeting the most innocent of lives. It is a war waged against a way of life—our way of life. It is a war waged against a set of values, the very values that define who we are as a country and as a people.

Here in Australia, despite our rich diversity, we are united because we are bound by a common set of values. We have no more important value than that of freedom: freedom realised through independence, self-reliance and dignity of the individual—the individual who is equal, no better, no worse than other individuals. They are ideals that, in turn, promote the protection of free speech and property rights and encourage human endeavour and free enterprise. These are the very things that have created the Australia of today: an open, liberal, free-market economy. We are the envy of much of the world and yet the target of those who are repulsed by these ideals, who believe that freedom and our way of life should be detested and ruined.

All of this is a sombre reminder that, as we debate many a worthy cause in this chamber, there is no greater cause and there is no higher duty than protecting our nation and keeping our fellow Australians safe. Indeed, the Prime Minister addressed the House today, saying:

My No. 1 priority, my government's No. 1 priority, is to keep Australians safe.

The Australian government cannot discharge its duty in this regard on a wish and a prayer. We must ensure that our defence forces and our law enforcement, security and border protection agencies have the resources and capabilities needed to protect Australia and the values for which we stand.

We need to be on the front foot in this regard. Again, let me quote from the Prime Minister's speech today where he said:

Our national attributes, our pride in our security, our diversity, our freedom and the prosperity which they enable, mean that we are well-placed to confront these challenges.

But we can never be complacent or avoid hard truths.

The PM is right, and that is why I am here in the chamber today in support of that sentiment for the consideration in detail with the Minister for Defence Industry. If we are to build and sustain our nation's defence capabilities to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, major investments are needed, and, under the leadership of this minister, those investments are indeed being made.

The Defence Integrated Investment Program allocates capital investment of more than \$50 billion over the forward estimates and \$200 billion up to 2027-28. And it is my understanding that about 10 per cent of that \$200 billion budget has been earmarked for the Land 400 program, which is the Army's largest program ever, valued up to \$20 billion in acquisition costs alone. It includes 225 combat renaissance, I mean reconnaissance, vehicles—it is almost renaissance in our spend, can I say—in phase 2, and 450 infantry fighting vehicles along with 17 manoeuvre support vehicles in phase 3.

As a proud member of the LNP's team Queensland my colleagues and I are convinced that the Land 400 project could be delivered almost anywhere in Australia but nowhere better than in Queensland. Therefore, my question to the minister is: why is the Land 400 project so important and what is the current status of its tender?