

From: [Walter, Andrew](#)
To: [Kennedy, Steven](#)
Cc: [Rayner, Karla](#); [Hehir, Martin](#); [Belgrove, David](#); [Walter, Andrew](#)
Subject: Meeting with Minister for Defence [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Friday, 30 January 2026 1:06:02 PM

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Secretary

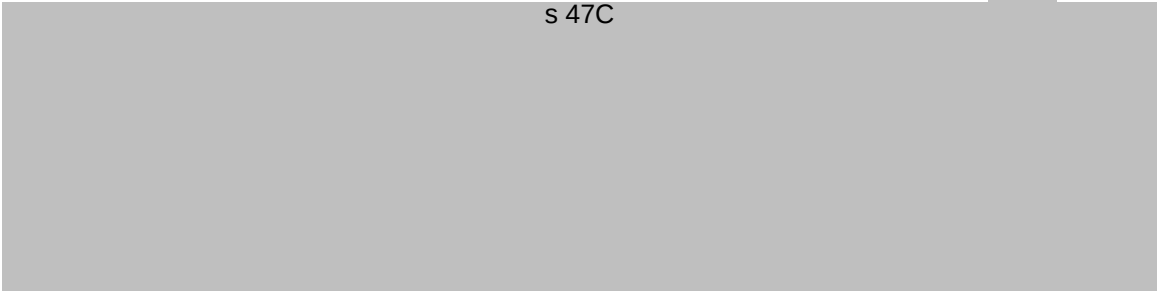
Ahead of your meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence next week:

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



- You may wish to seek the views of the Minister on conducting a closed competitive process for appointing a new Secretary of Defence noting this is ultimately a matter for the Prime Minister.
- You may wish to clarify the key skills and attributes the Minister is looking for in a new Secretary.
- You may wish to seek the Minister's views on any candidates he thinks would be suitable for appointment to the role of Secretary.
- You may wish to discuss the composition of the selection panel. s 47C

s 47C



I hope this is of assistance.

Andrew

Andrew Walter
First Assistant Secretary
Government Division
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

| andrew.walter@pmc.gov.au

Executive Assistant:

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

@pmc.gov.au

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Timeline and Responsibilities - Secretary of Defence [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Tuesday, 17 February 2026 1:55:32 PM
Attachments: [Timeline and Responsibilities - Secretary of Defence.docx](#)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

As discussed, please see attached a draft timeline on the appointment process for the incoming Secretary for Defence. I have also included who is responsible for each step, for your information.

s 47C

Subject to your views, I'm happy to create a brief in PDMS which outlines the recruitment options for the PM's formal approval.

Happy to chat!

Thanks

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

| Adviser

Government Section | Parliament, Government and Honours Branch

p. s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@pmc.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pmc.gov.au)

Timeline, Roles and Responsibilities

Secretary, Department of Defence

	Timing	Activity	Responsibility
Planning	s 47C	PM&C to brief the Prime Minister on Recruitment Options (Open Competitive, Closed Competitive or Direct Approach)	PM&C
		Subject to PM decision on recruitment process, APSC will undertake a sperate process which includes establishing a panel, arranging interviews and providing draft/final selection reports.	PM&C
		Panel Confirmation	APSC
		Consultation on Job Information - DEFENCE	
		Consultation with PMC re appointment	
Procurement of interview support services (TBC)			
Selection & Consultation		Interviews	Recruitment Firm (once Confirmed) & Panel
		Reference checks	
		Candidates Private Interests Declaration	
		Draft Selection Report to Panel	
		Final Selection Report	
Appointment		Commissioner consultation with Secretary PMC	APSC
		Consultation with Shortlisted Candidate(s) and Minister(s)	PMC
		Brief to Prime Minister on outcomes and selection report of proposed appointee	
		Brief PM with proposed documents	
		Cut-off for ExCo Papers	
		ExCo Meeting	
		Instrument of Appointment; Start date confirmed	
		Draft Secretary brief to outgoing and incoming Secretary	PM&C

	s 47C	Announcements (media)	PM&C
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DRAFT

From: [Belgrove, David](#)
To: [Rayner, Karla](#)
Cc: [Crosthwaite, Kerren](#); [Walter, Andrew](#); [REDACTED] s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Secretary of Defence - possible recruitment timeline [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Wednesday, 18 February 2026 6:26:20 PM
Attachments: [Possible timeline.docx](#)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Karla

Sorry for the delay in providing the attached indicative timing for the recruitment of the next Secretary of Defence. We have consulted the APSC on the attached.

The attached is based on a closed competitive process – should a different process be preferred, this would change the timing. We will need to progress our brief to the Prime Minister to seek his agreement to a recruitment pathway. I hope that we'll have this to the Secretary tomorrow afternoon or Friday morning.

Happy to discuss.

David

David Belgrove | Assistant Secretary
Parliament, Government and Honours Branch
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
p. [REDACTED] s 22(1)(a)(ii)
EA: [REDACTED] s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@pmc.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au)

Timeline, Roles and Responsibilities

Secretary, Department of Defence

	Timing s 47C	Activity	Responsibility
Planning		Brief to Prime Minister on recruitment pathway options	PM&C
		Confirm the panel (PM&C Secretary office may confirm availability instead of APSC)	APSC
		Consultation on Job Information	
		Commence procurement of recruitment support provider	
		Prime Minister decision on recruitment pathway	PM&C
Competitive Selection Process		Applications requested	APSC
		Applications due	
		Shortlisting by panel	Exec Agency & Panel
		Interviews (depending on panel availability)	
		Reference checks	
		Draft Selection Report to panel	
		Final Selection Report signed	
Appointment		Ministerial Consultation and any Candidate Meetings	PM&C
		Brief to Prime Minister on suitable candidates	
		Prime Minister decision on preferred candidate	
		Brief to Prime Minister with ExCo documents	
		ExCo Meeting	
		Instrument of Appointment; Start date confirmed	
		Candidate outcomes and debriefs	APSC (TBC)
Supporting Announcements		PM&C	
Onboarding		Onboarding	Defence
		Induction coordination across relevant agencies	Multiple agencies

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To:
Subject: FW: PM SIGNED - MS26-000100 - Recruitment Options for the Secretary of the Department of Defence [SEC=PROTECTED]
Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2026 12:36:58 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[SIGNED - MS26-000100 - Recruitment Options for the Secretary of the Department of Defence.pdf](#)

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FYI also!

From: DLO s 47E(d)@pm.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 24 February 2026 5:21 PM
To: Office of the Secretary s 47E(d) pmc.gov.au>; Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Cc: Belgrove, David <David.Belgrove@pmc.gov.au>; Crosthwaite, Kerren <Kerren.Crosthwaite@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pmc.gov.au>; Gartrell, Tim <Tim.Gartrell@pm.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pm.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pm.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pm.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pm.gov.au>
Subject: PM SIGNED - MS26-000100 - Recruitment Options for the Secretary of the Department of Defence [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

Good afternoon,

Please see attached *SIGNED - MS26-000100 - Recruitment Options for the Secretary of the Department of Defence* for your records.

Hard copy will be returned to the Department.

Kind regards,
s 22(1)(a)
s 22(1)(a)(ii) Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Office of the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Ministerial and Parliamentary Support | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
p. s 22(1)(a)(ii)
e s 47E(d)@pm.gov.au | s 22(1)(a) pmc.gov.au
For out-of-hours assistance please contact the DLO duty phone on s 22(1)(a)(ii)
I work on Ngunnawal Country at MG 8, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

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MS26-000100

RECRUITMENT OPTIONS FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE**Prime Minister, we recommend you:**

1. Agree to one of the options below to fill the substantive vacancy of the Secretary of the Department of Defence:

- a. Option 1: an open competitive selection process where the position is publicly advertised and candidates are assessed against set criteria.

Agreed / Not Agreed

- b. Option 2: a closed competitive selection process where several candidates are identified, approached and assessed against set criteria.

Agreed / Not Agreed

- c. Option 3: a direct approach to a single preferred candidate.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Agreed / Not Agreed

ANTHONY ALBANESE

Date: 24/2/26

Comments:**KEY POINTS**

1. On 5 February 2026, the Governor-General, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, appointed Mr Greg Moriarty AO as Australia's next Ambassador to the United States of America.
 - a. The Hon Dr Kevin Rudd AC will conclude his posting as Australia's Ambassador to the United States on 31 March 2026.
 - b. Mr Moriarty's appointment as Ambassador will create a substantive vacancy in the office of the Secretary of the Department of Defence.

Options to fill the vacancy of Defence Secretary

2. On 2 February 2026, the Australian Government Appointments Framework (Appointments Framework) commenced. The Appointments Framework sets out principles and guidance to strengthen and support the merit-based selection and appointment of individuals to public offices across the Commonwealth Government, including departmental secretaries.
3. The Appointments Framework provides three pathways for appointments:
 - a. Option 1: An open competitive process with the position publicly advertised. The process would follow the expected process for general Australian Public Service positions, including written applications, interviews and reference checks.
 - b. Option 2: A closed competitive process, where a range of candidates are identified, approached and assessed against set criteria. This may include written applications, interviews and reference checks.
 - c. Option 3: Direct approach, where a preferred candidate may be identified as having the appropriate skills, capabilities and experience for the role. This has historically been the

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recruitment process for most Secretaries, noting that positions filled since January 2023 (other than the Secretary of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Secretary of Home Affairs and movement of current secretaries across portfolios) have been subject to competitive selection processes.

4. The Appointments Framework notes that, in considering making or recommending appointments to Commonwealth public offices, Ministers are required to consider the appointment pathway that will identify the best possible candidate for the position in a timely and cost-effective way.
 - a. Noting these principles, and given the unique characteristics of this role, I consider a closed competitive process as the most appropriate approach on this occasion (option 2 above).
5. Regardless of the option pursued, under subsection 58(7) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, I, as Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), must provide a report to you, as Prime Minister, regarding the appointment of a person as Secretary. This must occur prior to you recommending the appointment of a person as Secretary to the Governor-General.
 - a. The report must be prepared following consultation with the Australian Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner), and relevant agency ministers. It is not uncommon for portfolio Ministers to meet with recommended candidates before finalisation of my report.
6. In the case of a competitive process, I propose to chair a selection panel, which would include Mr Peter Varghese AO, former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Ms Rosemary Huxtable AO PSM, former Secretary of the Department of Finance. I will consult Dr Subho Banerjee, Acting Commissioner, during the selection process. The panel would interview candidates and prepare a selection report which would form part of the report I will provide you.
 - a. Arrangements for a competitive process, whether open or closed, could commence immediately.

s 47C

8. Once a preferred candidate is agreed, the appointment must be approved by the Governor-General at a meeting of the Federal Executive Council.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

9. A table summarising the recruitment processes used for secretaries under the current Government is provided at Attachment A.

Open competitive process

10. An open competitive process advertises the vacancy to the public (through the Australian Public Service (APS) Jobs website and other media) with applicants responding to published criteria. Suitable candidates may also be directly encouraged to apply. An assessment panel would review the applications and shortlist candidates for interview. Candidates would be assessed against set criteria developed by PM&C in consultation with the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) and the Department of Defence.
11. The selection panel would be Chaired by myself and include former Commonwealth secretaries as listed above. A selection report would be prepared by the panel, which will be provided to you.
12. An open competitive process permits the broadest variety of candidates to be canvassed but requires a longer period of time to complete – likely up to 12 weeks.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

PROTECTED*Closed competitive process*

13. A closed competitive process invites potentially suitable candidates to participate in an assessment process. The assessments may involve a written application and participation in an interview with an selection panel (as outlined above). Candidates could be identified through PM&C and the APSC. Following initial candidate identification, the process is the same as an open competitive process.
14. A closed competitive process permits a variety of candidates to be canvassed. The process generally takes three to six weeks from candidate identification.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Direct approach

15. Where the Government has an individual in mind, a single preferred candidate could be approached to fill the vacancy. Until January 2023, this was the usual process for filling Secretary vacancies.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

16. The nature of the process enables it to be conducted quickly, potentially within days.
17. A direct approach may be appropriate where, for example, a vacancy occurs with limited notice, suitable acting arrangements are not available and a more immediate appointment would restore or maintain public trust in the position and provide stability and confidence in the operations of the relevant department, including government programs.

Risks and Sensitivities

18. Unless there is a clear and robust argument that acceptable acting arrangements are not possible, using a direct recruitment process may elicit criticism, particularly given the Government's focus on merit and transparency in appointments.

s 47C

Financial Implications – Nil**Consultation – Acting APSC Commissioner, Dr Subho Banerjee****Dr Steven Kennedy PSM**

Secretary

20 February 2026

Policy Officer: Andrew Walter

Phone no: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Circulation

PM&C Secretary; A/g DS, Governance and Corporate Group, *K Crosthwaite*; FAS, Government Division, *A Walter*; AS, Parliament, Government and Honours Branch, *D Belgrove*; SA, Government Section, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

PMO Chief of Staff; s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Advisers: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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From: [Belgrove, David](#)
To: [Walter, Andrew](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: Secretary of Defence [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]
Date: Thursday, 12 March 2026 5:47:07 PM
Attachments: [image001.gif](#)
[image002.gif](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

PROTECTED//CABINET

Thanks, Andrew. We'll start preparing the brief.

From: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 12 March 2026 4:45 PM
To: Belgrove, David <David.Belgrove@pmc.gov.au> s 22(1)(a)(ii)
s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au
Cc: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Secretary of Defence [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]

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David and s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Can we please begin preparing a section 58 brief for the Prime Minister for the Secretary of Defence position. Three candidates have been found suitable for appointment – their CVs and pitch are attached. s 47E(c)
s 47E(c)

The brief to the PM should note that the role of the Secretary of Defence is changing with the establishment of the Defence Delivery Agency and the evolving international context. The panel is of the view that the next secretary will need courage, open-mindedness, be a credible leader in the APS, be able to provide clear, well thought through policy advice and be able to operate in a fiscally restrained environment. Critical skills for the new secretary will be policy nous and capacity to manage a complex department. It will also be critical that the Secretary is able to manage a smooth transition to the new delivery arrangements.

Happy to discuss if that would be of assistance.

Andrew

From: Rayner, Karla <Karla.Rayner@pmc.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 12 March 2026 2:26 PM
To: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Subject: Secretary of Defence [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]

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Hi Andrew

Attached are the CV's and pitches for the three candidates who have expressed an EOI for the Secretary of Defence position.

s 47E(c)

Will let you know when Steven has a chat with the DPM re next steps.

Thanks so much.

Karla

Karla Rayner | Chief of Staff to Dr Steven Kennedy PSM
Office of the Secretary
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
m. s 22(1)(a)(ii)

I work on Ngunnawal Country.

One National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 | PO Box 6500 CANBERRA ACT 2600
e. karla.rayner@pmc.gov.au w. pmc.gov.au

-



The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing spiritual, social and cultural relationship with the land, waters, skies and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and to their community leaders, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



From: [Walter, Andrew](#)
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: [Walter, Andrew](#)
Subject: RE: Defence Appointment Brief [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Monday, 30 March 2026 11:23:59 AM

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

I have spoken to Karla. A couple of key points.

DPM Marles had to postpone meeting with one of the candidates but will meet with them this week. Once we have feedback from the DPM, the Secretary will speak with Minister Conroy and give him the option to meet with any of the candidates. So, in short, looking to get more information towards the end of the week.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Andrew

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Sent: Sunday, 29 March 2026 1:00 PM
To s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>
Cc: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Subject: Defence Appointment Brief [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

The Defence brief looks excellent. Thank you! s 47E(c)
s 47E(c) I think you've framed it nicely. I will speak to Karla on Monday about getting the extra detail. I have flagged with s 22(1)(a) that she may need to facilitate a discussion between DPM Marles and Minister Conroy and she was fine with that.

Andrew

Andrew Walter
First Assistant Secretary
Government Division
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | andrew.walter@pmc.gov.au

Executive Assistant: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[REDACTED]@pmc.gov.au>

From: [Walter, Andrew](#)
To: [Banerjee, Subho](#)
Cc: [Belgrove, David](#); s 22(1)(a) [Walter, Andrew](#)
Subject: RE: FOR THE COMMISSIONER'S EYES ONLY: Brief [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET, ACCESS=Personal-Privacy]
Date: Thursday, 23 April 2026 4:54:51 PM

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Personal Privacy

Thanks Subho, much appreciated. We will make that change and finalise clearance. Apologies again for the tight turnaround.

Andrew

From: Banerjee, Subho <Subho.Banerjee@apsc.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2026 4:45 PM
To: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Cc: Belgrove, David <David.Belgrove@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au
Subject: RE: FOR THE COMMISSIONER'S EYES ONLY: Brief [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET, ACCESS=Personal-Privacy]

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Personal Privacy

Andrew,

Thank you for your email.

As discussed, I am comfortable with the report, subject to the minor wording change below to reflect the PS Act.

Thanks, Subho

Para 15: Replace 'in consultation with' with 'after consultation with'

From: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2026 1:54 PM
To: Banerjee, Subho <Subho.Banerjee@apsc.gov.au>
Cc: Belgrove, David <David.Belgrove@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>
Subject: FOR THE COMMISSIONER'S EYES ONLY: Brief [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET, ACCESS=Personal-Privacy]

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Personal Privacy

Subho

As foreshadowed, the Secretary has asked me to consult on the attached brief. It does not include Minister's views which we are still waiting for. Consistent with the new Appointments Framework we are putting forward all three suitable candidates without ranking them. We have highlighted some draft text for your consideration.

Can I ask that you keep this brief entirely confidential please.

I appreciate this is the first one of these that you will have seen so please let me know if I can explain anything.

Kind regards,

Andrew

Andrew Walter
First Assistant Secretary
Government Division
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

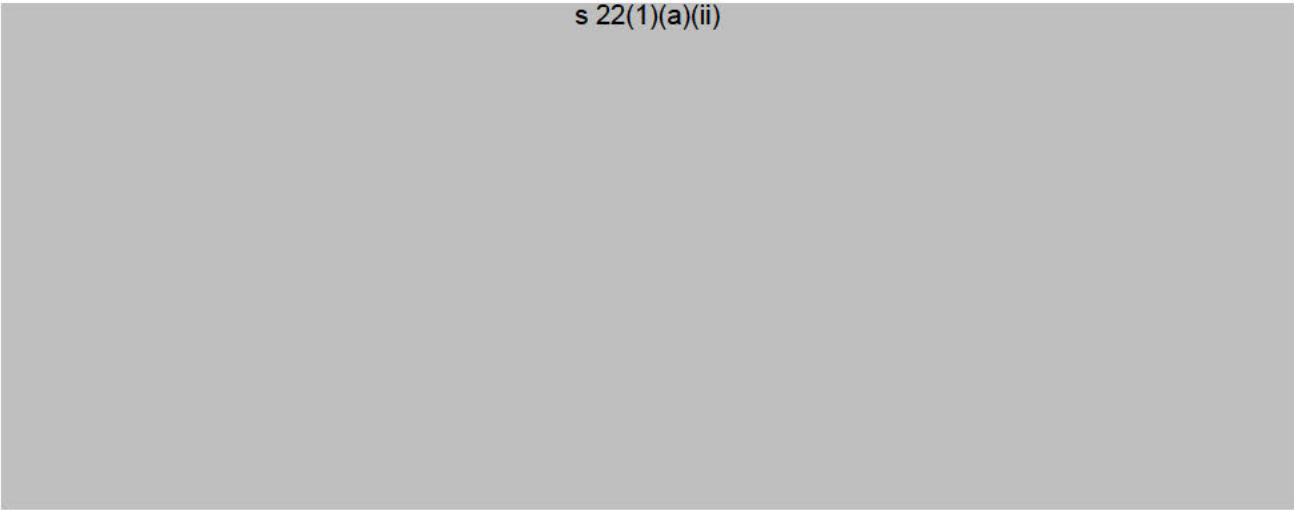
| andrew.walter@pmc.gov.au

Executive Assistant

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

2pmc.gov.au

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



From: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2026 4:20 PM

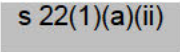
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au>

Cc: Belgrove, David <David.Belgrove@pmc.gov.au> s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au>; Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Views of the Minister for Defence [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive, ACCESS=Personal-Privacy]

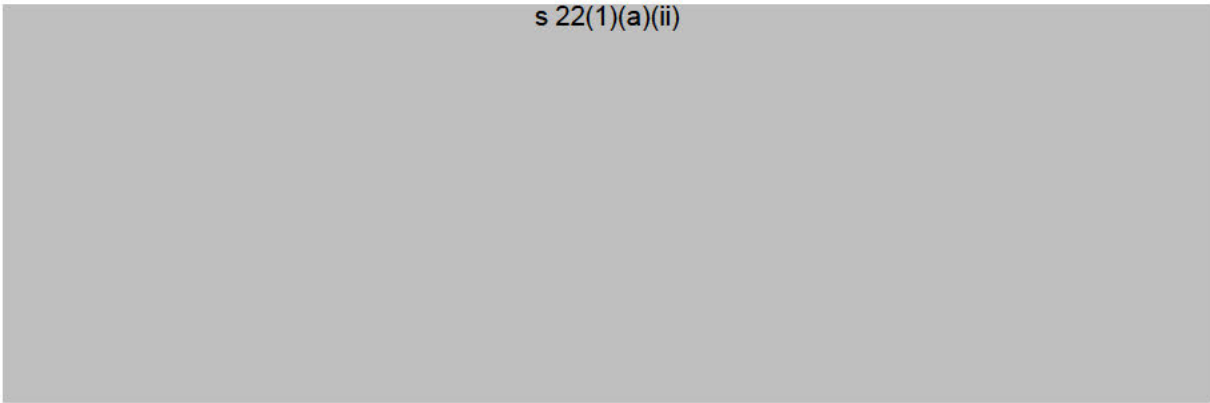
**OFFICIAL: Sensitive
Personal Privacy**

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



I have spoken again to the Secretary who has spoken again to the DPM. The DPM has confirmed that Minister Conroy is happy with the DPM's preferred candidate and has also spoken with Minister Keogh who is also supportive. The Prime Minister would like the brief today if possible. I will reach out to Subho to confirm his comfort.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



Kind regards,

Andrew

From: Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2026 8:40 AM

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@pmc.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@pmc.gov.au)>

Cc: Belgrove, David <David.Belgrove@pmc.gov.au>; Walter, Andrew <Andrew.Walter@pmc.gov.au>

Subject: Views of the Minister for Defence [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive, ACCESS=Personal-Privacy]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive
Personal Privacy**

Good morning s 22(1)(a)(ii)

As discussed, I spoke with the Secretary yesterday afternoon who advised me that he had spoken with the Deputy Prime Minister about the Secretary of Defence appointment. The DPM advised that having spoken with the three proposed candidates, he had formed a positive view of all of them. On balance, given her experience as a Secretary, he expressed a preference for the appointment of Meghan Quinn.

The Secretary's Office advised me last night that the DPM will speak with Minister Conroy today to ascertain any views he may have. The DPM has spoken with the PMO and I understand will speak with the PM as well.

I am updating the brief now. Once we have advice from the DPM or his office I will share with the Public Service Commissioner to obtain his views.

Andrew

Andrew Walter
First Assistant Secretary
Government Division
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii) <andrew.walter@pmc.gov.au>

Executive Assistant: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@pmc.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@pmc.gov.au)>

From: [Belgrove, David](#)
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: [Walter, Andrew](#); s 22(1)(a)
Subject: Secretary Quinn - Appointment to Defence [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]
Date: Friday, 24 April 2026 4:10:39 PM

PROTECTED//CABINET

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

I've spoken to Karla Rayner and she has advised that the DPM has spoken to Secretary Quinn about her appointment to Defence and has confirmed her willingness to take on the role.

Secretary Kennedy will call Secretary Quinn this afternoon to discuss. Karla will then talk to Secretary Quinn to determine a start date. s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

David

David Belgrove | Assistant Secretary
Parliament, Government and Honours Branch
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
p. s 22(1)(a)(ii) | m. s 22(1)(a)(ii)
EA: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@pmc.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@pmc.gov.au)

From: s 47E(d)
To: Kennedy, Steven; Walter, Andrew
Cc: DLO.Albanese; Crosthwaite, Kerren; Belgrove, David; s 22(1)(a)(ii) Gartrell, Tim; s 22(1)(a)(ii) s 22(1)(a)(ii) Office of the Secretary
Subject: SIGNED - MS26-000162 - Secretary of the Department of Defence [SEC=PROTECTED]
Date: Friday, 24 April 2026 10:08:13 AM
Attachments: image001.png
image002.png
SIGNED - MS26-000162 - Secretary of the Department of Defence.pdf

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Good morning,

Please see attached *SIGNED - MS26-000162 - Secretary of the Department of Defence* for your records.

Hard copy will be returned to the Department.

Kind regards,
Sarah
s 22(1)(a)(ii) Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Office of the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Ministerial and Parliamentary Support | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
p. s 22(1)(a) | m. s 22(1)(a)(ii)
e. s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au | s 22(1)(a) pmc.gov.au
For out-of-hours assistance please contact the DLO duty phone on s 22(1)(a)(ii)
I work on Ngunnawal Country at MG 8, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600



The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing spiritual, social and cultural relationship with the land, waters, skies and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and to their community leaders, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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MS26-000162

APPOINTMENT: SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE**Prime Minister, we recommend you:**

1. Agree to recommend to the Governor-General, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, the appointment of one of the following individuals to the office of Secretary of the Department of Defence (listed in alphabetical order):

s 47E(c) , s 47F

b. Ms Meghan Quinn PSM

Agreed / Not Agreed

s 47E(c) , s 47F

23/4/26

ANTHONY ALBANESE

Date:

Comments:

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

KEY POINTS

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

2. On 24 February 2026, you agreed to a closed competitive selection process to fill the Secretary of Defence vacancy (MS26-000100 refers). The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) has conducted this process.

- a. A Selection Panel (the Panel) was established to assess candidates. I chaired the Panel together with other members which included Mr Peter Varghese AO, former Secretary of DFAT, and Ms Rosemary Huxtable AO PSM, former Secretary of the Department of Finance.
- b. The Panel identified a range of candidates who were invited to submit expressions of interest for the role, with the following three individuals accepting the invitation:

s 47F

ii. Ms Meghan Quinn PSM

s 47F

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- c. Based on their expressions of interest, the Panel assessed the suitability of the candidates' abilities to perform the duties of the role, taking into account the current work, opportunities and challenges in the Defence portfolio, including matters outlined at paragraph 3 below.
 - d. Given the candidates' distinguished careers and extensive public sector experience, the Panel determined that interviews were not required.
3. The role of the Secretary of Defence is changing with the establishment of the Defence Delivery Agency and the evolving international context. The Panel is of the view that the next Secretary of Defence will need courage, open-mindedness, be a credible leader in the Australian Public Service (APS), be able to provide clear, well thought through policy advice and be able to operate in a fiscally restrained environment. Critical skills for the new secretary will be policy nous and capacity to manage a complex department. It will also be critical that the Secretary is able to manage a smooth transition to the new delivery arrangements.
4. The Panel assessed all three candidates as suitable for appointment to the role. A summary of each of the candidates is outlined below.
- a. The expressions of interest for the role from s 47F Ms Quinn and s 47F including their curriculum vitae, are provided at Attachments A-C, respectively.

s 47F

Ms Meghan Quinn PSM

8. Ms Quinn has extensive public sector experience in leadership roles relating to a broad range of Australian and international policy matters. Ms Quinn is currently the Secretary of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, having held this role since August 2022. Prior to this, Ms Quinn held a range of senior roles in the Treasury portfolio, including Deputy Secretary positions (Markets Group between 2020 and 2022, Macroeconomic Group between 2019 and 2020, and Structural Reform Group between 2017 and 2019), and Division Head, Financial System Division between 2012 and 2017. Ms Quinn was also Head of Secretariat, *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, at PM&C between 2011 and 2012.
9. Ms Quinn holds a Bachelor of Economics (First Class Honours) from the University of Western Australia, a Master of Economics from the London School of Economics, and was awarded a Public Service Medal in 2009 for outstanding public service in the development of climate change policy.

s 47F

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Consultation

13. In accordance with requirements under subsection 58(8) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act), I have consulted the Hon Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, as the Agency Minister for the Department of Defence. Mr Marles spoke with all three candidates identified above. He advised me that he held all three in high regard but expressed a preference for the appointment of Ms Quinn. Mr Marles consulted with the Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP, who is also supportive of Ms Quinn being appointed.
14. As required under subsection 58(8) of the PS Act, this report was developed after consultation with the Acting Australian Public Service Commissioner, Dr Subho Banerjee. Dr Banerjee supports the appointment of any of the three candidates to the role.

Next Steps

15. Subject to your agreement to a preferred candidate, PM&C will prepare, and submit for your signature, the necessary papers for consideration by the Governor-General at a Federal Executive Council (ExCo) meeting. s 47C
- s 47C
16. PM&C will also obtain a Private Interests Declarations (PID) from the preferred candidate. Your office will be advised of any actual or perceived issues, or other concerns, prior to a briefing with papers for ExCo. PM&C will also confirm a commencement date with an expectation that the preferred candidate will commence as soon as possible.
17. Should you not agree to recommend to the Governor-General the appointment of any of the abovementioned candidates, PM&C will liaise with your office on this matter, including next steps.
18. This brief constitutes a report under subsection 58(7) of the PS Act.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- Subsection 58(1) of the PS Act provides that the appointment of Secretaries is made by the Governor-General on your recommendation.
- Subsection 58(3) of the PS Act provides that the period of a person's appointment as the Secretary of a Department must be 5 years or, if the person has requested a shorter period, that shorter period.
- Subsection 58(7) of the PS Act requires that, before recommending to the Governor-General that a person be appointed as the Secretary of a Department other than the Prime Minister's Department, you must have received a report about the appointment from me as the Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department.

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4. Subsection 58(8) of the PS Act requires me to consult the Australian Public Service Commissioner and the relevant Agency Minister in the preparation of a report regarding the appointment of a Secretary.

Risks and Sensitivities

Any person appointed to the role would be required to provide the Minister for Defence with a completed registration of interests form at the earliest opportunity. In addition, the person would be expected to submit to the Minister for Defence, at least annually, a written declaration of their own and their immediate family's financial and other material personal interests, and to notify the Minister for Defence of any change in circumstances that could involve a new real or perceived conflict.

Financial Implications – Nil**Record Timeline**

Date of Correspondence	Date Created	Date Delivered to MO	Signature Due Date
N/A	12 March 2026	23 April 2026	

Consultation

The Hon Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence

The Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry

Dr Subho Banerjee, Acting Australian Public Service Commissioner

Dr Steven Kennedy PSM

Secretary

23 April 2026

Contact Officer: Andrew Walter

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Circulation

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PMO Chief of Staff; s 22(1)(a)(ii) Advisers: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

ATTACHMENTS:

s 47F

ATTACHMENT B MEGHAN QUINN PSM– EOI AND CV

s 47F