

HERITAGE — HMAS OVENS

2918. Mr A. Krsticevic to the Minister for Heritage:

- (1) Why have the Museum volunteers (formerly known as Friends of the Submarine) been prevented from cleaning HMAS Ovens, the submarine on display at the WA Maritime Museum?
- (2) Is the Minister aware of the concerns that have been raised that the submarine is not being maintained to an appropriate standard:
 - (a) what is being done to address these concerns;
 - (b) what preservation/maintenance works have been completed on HMAS Ovens;
 - (c) are any future preservation/maintenance works planned to take place; and
 - (d) is the current state of the submarine indicative of its Oberon class?
- (3) Have you personally viewed the slipway since March 2017 and if so, are you satisfied with its condition?
- (4) Is the submarine currently open to the public and if not, when will it reopen for viewings?

Mr D.A. Templeman replied:

- (1) The Museum updated the program for cleaning HMAS Ovens in March 2017, including the purchase of new equipment. The updated program includes submarine volunteers playing a part in cleaning the submarine.

It is important to note that there are different cleaning regimes required in maintaining a museum object and artefact compared to that which would have been in place during operational life. The emphasis is on maintaining objects working condition, not necessarily in pristine condition.

- (2) Yes, I am aware of the concerns raised by a single volunteer at the Museum.
 - (a) A working group was formed in June 2017 to review and prioritise a program of maintenance for the submarine. This includes work currently being done to reinforce the supporting cradle, and an upcoming requirement to repaint the exterior.
 - (b) Over the past decade major maintenance works have included repainting; the installation of new lighting, air-conditioning, access stairs and emergency alarm systems; the upper deck and ballast tanks have been pigeon-proofed; and the deck access hatch has been replaced. The Museum is currently installing new steel supports to reinforce the cradle holding the submarine. Once this latest work is complete, the submarine will reopen to the public.
 - (c) The Museum is currently reviewing options for repainting the exterior of the submarine, and addressing corrosion in the inner surfaces of the vessel's fuel and ballast tanks. Other scheduled maintenance tasks, including cleaning of the submarine interior, conservation monitoring, density testing of the submarine cradle timbers and laser surveying of the hull, are regularly undertaken.
 - (d) Current Museum practice is to maintain the submarine as closely as possible to the condition it was in when it was an operating vessel. While some changes are inevitably required to maintain safe public access into the vessel and to allow for its long term preservation, these have been kept to a minimum.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) The work to re-open the submarine has been completed and the submarine re-opened for public on 23 April 2018.