In an earlier talk I listed the wide range of new Defence equipment to be purchased for the Australian armed services. These included the purchase of large numbers of helicopters, improved Naval communications at Darwin, additional submarines, construction of a logistic support ship, more Skyhawk aircraft for HMAS Melbourne, low-cover radars, and more support and training aircraft for the Navy. These orders will cost just under $166 million over a period of years. I had referred to Australia's needs for a greater maritime capability, more strategic and tactical mobility, the capacity to move forces quickly and the need for adequate logistic support, the capability to bring to bear maximum firepower, and the capacity to deploy quickly and maintain our forces abroad.

I want now to describe how the capacity to our forces will be increased by these purchases, and I want to give a brief account of the improvement of our forces over the last decade.

Our maritime capability will be improved by the two additional Oberon class submarines and the new Naval radio station at Darwin. We are also pressing forward with the design studies for a new class of light destroyers. Since 1960 our maritime forces have been built up by the addition of three guided missile destroyers, all of which have performed intensive service in Vietnam. We founded our own submarine fleet with the initial four Oberons. A major modernisation was carried out on HMAS Melbourne, and the flagship was re-equipped with Tracker, Skyhawk and Wessex aircraft. Other items acquired included the 20 patrol boats, the Orion reconnaissance aircraft and six River class destroyer escorts.

Our strategic mobility will be improved by construction of the logistic cargo ship. This versatile craft will be capable of carrying the Army's landing craft, vehicles, equipment and stores to areas of operation, and of unloading them without need of developed ports. The ship is designed primarily to serve the needs of the Army. But it will, when not required for Defence purposes, be available for commercial operation by the Australian National Line. The decision to build a fast combat support ship in Australia is also related to this area. Over the last decade our strategic mobility has been significantly improved. The former carrier HMAS Sydney was converted to a fast troop transport, and a second squadron of Hercules planes was acquired for the transport fleet. It has been enhanced by the addition of a fast fleet tanker, HMAS Supply, and the Australian-built destroyer maintenance ship HMAS Stalwart.
How has our tactical mobility been affected by the new program and earlier decisions? It will certainly be boosted by the 11 helicopter gunships, as well as the large number of other helicopters we are buying. The final choice of gunship and light observation machines will be made on the basis of the best prospects for local manufacture, including commercial sales. Over the decade, considerable progress has been made in the tactical mobility of our forces. Ten years ago the Army was still operating much as it had in World War II, but today it is aided by two squadrons of Caribou short take-off and landing aircraft, utility and light helicopters, a whole new range of vehicles and the Army Aviation Corps.

Our Defence forces' offensive capability has been given a significant lift. The doubling of the Navy's Skyhawk numbers to 20 is a decision important to this area, and we are seeking early delivery so that we can achieve maximum use of them during the remaining life of the carrier HMAS Melbourne. In the offensive role, too, new equipment in service or on order includes four squadrons of Mirage jets, which are also effective in the ground support role, the submarines and the guided missile destroyers.

The Government has also authorised the Army to order up to $60 million worth of capital equipment to improve the equipment in the Regular Army and the Citizen Military Forces, including additional armoured personnel carriers.

I would now like to give a broad picture of how our forces have been built up over the last ten years. During the decade our general Army capability has been vastly improved. This has come about by the introduction of National Service and the procurement of large quantities of modern and effective equipment. Ten years ago the Army comprised only three battalions, with a total Regular force of some 21,900. Today there are nine battle-proved battalions and in addition three squadrons of highly trained Special Air Service forces. Over this period, also, the Army has been in large measure re-equipped with a wide range of equipment, including more modern howitzers, trucks and extra landing craft.

Ten years ago the main operational elements of the RAAF comprised 10 squadrons, including the Canberra bombers and Sabre fighters. Today there are 14 operational squadrons, including the Mirage fighters and helicopters and in addition the RAAF has received 69 of its Australian-built Macchi trainers. In 1960 RAAF strength was about 15,500 and today it is 22,800.

The Navy has grown in the decade from 21 units in commission in 1960 to more than 45 today, with more under construction. Naval strength has grown from just over 10,600 fulltime Naval personnel then to 17,400 today.

The last decade has seen the greatest building program for the services in Australian history. Extensive Army establishments have been built at Swanbourne (W.A.), Puckapunyal (Vic), Holsworthy, Kapooka and Singleton in
N.S.W., Enogerra and Townsville (Qld) while barracks for the Pacific Islands Regiment were completed at Port Moresby, Lae, Wewak and Goldie River.

For the Navy, major refitting facilities for submarines and for other facilities have been built in the Sydney area. There have been large improvements at the training centres at HMAS Leeuwin (Freemantle), HMAS Cerebus at Flinders and HMAS Nirimba at Schofields. Improvements have also been carried out to the dock yards at Garden Island, Cockatoo Island and Williamstown.

Millions of dollars have been devoted to re-building and development of RAAF bases. New works under construction or approved include the development of the RAAF airfield at Learmonth and construction of the access causeway at Cockburn Sound in W.A. The Army Aviation Centre has been established at Oakey in Queensland.

A new clothing factory has been erected at Coburg in Victoria, and storage facilities for the Supply Department at St Mary's (NSW) have been built. In hand is the provision of personnel accommodation for the RAN at Nowra. New CMF depots are programmed for Blacktown and Armidale in NSW and at Sunshine, Clayton and Oakleigh in Victoria. Other major works proposals are under consideration.

Over the past ten years the Government has spent $413 million on capital works and real estate procurement programs for the Services and the Department of Supply. A further $56 million has been provided for houses for servicemen under the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement. In the current financial year additional amounts of $49 million and $10 million will be spent.