



**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE**

Ref No: MC26-001043

Senator Larissa Waters
Senator for Queensland
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator ~~Waters~~ *Larissa*

I write in response to your correspondence of 27 March 2026 to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, along with myself as the Minister for Defence, regarding the *'Memorandum on Government Conventions Relating to Overseas Armed Conflict Decision Making'*.

At the outset, let me be clear that the Albanese Government is committed to parliamentary transparency, accountability and oversight of the Defence portfolio, and has delivered more to promote these outcomes than any previous government. We pushed to establish the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence to greatly enhance parliamentarians' effective scrutiny of Defence and its portfolio agencies, and to strengthen oversight and accountability of government decision-making on Defence-related matters.

The Greens Political Party has put its position on the record and strongly opposed the establishment of this committee and, in doing so, voted against increased scrutiny and transparency with respect to Defence. Regrettably, you chose to try to obstruct enhanced parliamentary oversight for your own political purposes.

The *'Memorandum on Government Conventions Relating to Overseas Armed Conflict Decision Making'* acknowledges the importance of informing the Parliament and providing the opportunity for considered debate on a decision by the Executive to deploy the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in a major military operation.

Consistent with the principles outlined in the Memorandum, the provision of a Wedgetail E-7A aircraft to the Middle East is not a major military operation. That is the basis upon which this capability is being deployed. The Albanese Government has been clear that this is in support of the collective self-defence of nations of the region, that we are not taking offensive action against Iran, and that we are not deploying Australian troops on the ground in Iran.

As you would be aware, this is not the first time Australia has deployed a Wedgetail E-7A aircraft in support of defensive operations. Under Operation Kudu, a Wedgetail E-7A operated twice from Europe to support Ukraine to defend itself against Russia's illegal and immoral invasion and protect a vital international gateway for assistance into Ukraine.

The Albanese Government is focussed on helping countries in the Middle East protect Australians and other civilians, whereas the Greens Political Party is more interested in scoring political points.

Fundamentally, the Greens Political Party and the Albanese Government differ strongly on the role and value of the ADF in defending Australia and in keeping Australians safe.

The Greens' stated defence policies include slashing the defence budget, promoting incoherent capability proposals, cancelling AUKUS and shrinking the size of the ADF. These policy positions demonstrate a failure to grasp the complexity and seriousness of the threats Australia faces, and represent an incoherent and irresponsible approach to national security.

Yours sincerely

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RICHARD MARLES

30/3/26