



**AUSTRALIA-UNITED STATES  
EXCHANGE OF LETTERS RELATING TO HAROLD E. HOLT NAVAL  
COMMUNICATIONS STATION**

**FACT SHEET**

At the 2010 Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations, held in Melbourne on 8 November, Minister for Defence Stephen Smith and Secretary of Defense Dr Robert Gates exchanged letters detailing the Full Knowledge and Concurrence arrangements relating to the Harold E. Holt facility.

*The Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America Relating to the Operation of and Access to an Australian Naval Communications Station at North West Cape in Western Australia (the Harold E. Holt Treaty)* was signed by then-Minister for Defence Joel Fitzgibbon and Secretary Gates in July 2008. The Treaty sets out the terms and conditions for the joint use of the Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station by Australia and the US for the next 25 years. It includes a requirement that US use of the Station be in accordance with the Australian Government's policy of full knowledge and concurrence. Completing the exchange of letters will enable the treaty to be ratified, bringing the treaty into effect.

Minister Smith and Secretary Gates have exchanged letters confirming the full knowledge and concurrence arrangements which will apply to Harold E. Holt. Full knowledge and concurrence is an expression of Australian sovereignty; of our fundamental right to know what activities foreign governments conduct in, through or from Australian territory or national assets. 'Full knowledge' equates to Australia having a 'full and detailed understanding' of any capability or activity with a presence on Australian territory or making use of Australian assets. 'Concurrence' does not mean Australia approves every activity or tasking; rather, we approve the presence of a capability or function in Australia in support of its mutually agreed goals, based on our full and detailed understanding of that capability and the uses to which it can be put.

Full knowledge and concurrence is a long-standing Australian Government policy and is the key underlying principle for all joint Australia-US facilities, including the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap and the Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station.

The Harold E. Holt station provides communications facilities for US and Australian submarines.