



There is too much at stake to move jobs

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COMMENT

ON the surface, a decision over where future full-cycle docking should take place should be simple.

West Australian Premier Mark McGowan and his Defence Issues Minister Paul Palalia have led a spirited campaign to wrest the lucrative contract from South Australia.

But they have not done enough to prove the contract should be shifted west.

The pair have raised concerns SA will not be able to deliver the workforce required for the ongoing contract and future submarine and frigate work in the pipeline.

But serious question marks hang over whether WA can provide the workforce itself.

One mining boom this century has been and gone, but another is on the horizon.

Australian Mines and Metals Association recently announced the state was on the cusp of another mining boom with 30 projects, requiring 10,679 operational employees by 2024.

Mr McGowan's "national security" concerns, meaning the maintenance should take place in the same state the submarines are based, does not stack up either. At a time of conflict would the nation really want all submarines – operational and otherwise – based at the same location?

Local political and business leaders have made a compelling argument why the contract should stay in SA, centred around the current, highly-

skilled and reliable workforce and supply chain that support the work at Osborne.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has promised any decision will be made in the national interests. If that is correct, the answer is simple.

The risk to national security is too great doing anything but maintain status quo. Put simply – if it ain't broke, why fix it?