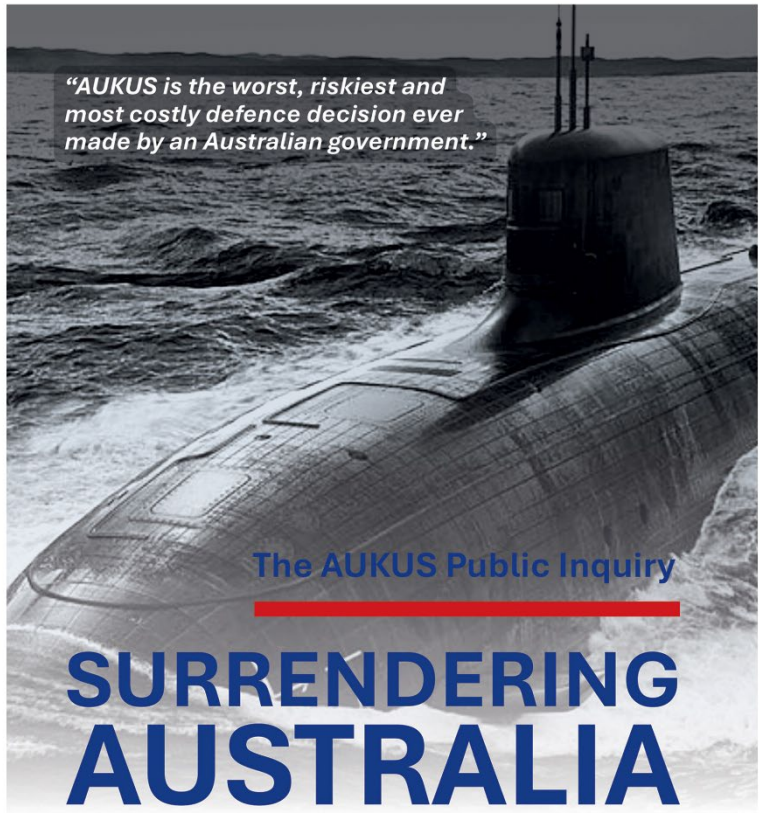


The AUKUS Public Inquiry

SURRENDERING AUSTRALIA

The AUKUS Deception

Commissioners' Report
November, 2026

Australian Peace and Security Forum

SURRENDERING AUSTRALIA

"It is the worst deal in all history and the most poorly conceived defence procurement program ever adopted by an Australian government."

The Hon Paul Keating, 24th Prime Minister of Australia

"HMAS Stirling gives Washington and London a forward base in the Indian Ocean, funded substantially by Australian taxpayers, crewed and commanded by personnel under foreign chains of command."

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull AC, 29th Prime Minister of Australia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The AUKUS Public Inquiry acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters across Australia on which this inquiry has been held — including the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Whadjuk Noongar people, the Kaurna people, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Awabakal and Worimi peoples, the Dharawal people, the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples, and the Ngunnawal people.

We extend that acknowledgement to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of all the lands and waters this inquiry has touched through the submissions received, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise that sovereignty over this land was never ceded, and that First Nations peoples continue to hold deep and ongoing custodianship of their Countries. We further acknowledge that decisions of the kind examined by this inquiry including questions of nuclear waste storage, submarine basing, and military infrastructure carry particular weight and consequence for First Nations communities and Countries, and we thank those who shared that perspective in their submissions.

SURRENDERING AUSTRALIA

THE AUKUS DECEPTION

Public Inquiry into AUKUS
Commissioners' Report

The Hon Peter Garrett AM FTSE
The Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence AO
Admiral Chris Barrie AC RAN (ret'd)
Ms Karina Lester
Ms Leanne Minshull

Australian Peace and Security Forum

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austpeaceandsecurityforum.org.au

ISBN: 978-1-7639571-0-7 (paperback)

Published by Australian Peace and Security Forum

AUKUS Inquiry website: aukuspublicinquiry.com

Thanks to Cailey Thurlow and Dr Matilda Byrne for contributions to design and layout.

Cover image: Artist rendering of possible design for SSN-AUKUS submarines / BAE Systems
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ABBREVIATIONS

ADF – Australian Defence Force

AFP – Australian Federal Police

ANAO – Australian National Audit Office

ANNPSR – Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator

ARPANSA – Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency

FPIC – Free, Prior and Informed Consent (for First Nations people)

HEU – Highly Enriched Uranium

LEU – Low Enriched Uranium

LOTE – Life-of-Type Extension

RAN – Royal Australian Navy

SRFW – Submarine Rotational Force West



Five Commissioners led the Inquiry. All gave their time *pro bono*. Full biographies, Annex H.

Lead Commissioner: **The Hon Peter Garrett AM FTSE**. Former federal Minister for the Environment and for School Education; Board Chair Landcare Australia; member of Midnight Oil.

The Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence AO. Former Premier of Western Australia and former federal Minister for Health.

Admiral Chris Barrie AC RAN (ret'd). Chief of the Australian Defence Force, 1998–2002.

Ms Karina Lester. Yankunytjatjara leader from South Australia and lifelong advocate for First Nations communities affected by nuclear testing.

Ms Leanne Minshull. Co-CEO of The Australia Institute; Board member of the Graeme Wood Foundation.

PREFACE

The Hon Andrew Wilkie MP, Independent Member for Clark



I sincerely thank the Commissioners for conducting this important Public Inquiry into AUKUS, and I congratulate them on a very thorough Report. They have done what the Morrison and Albanese governments, and the Australian Parliament, should have done – consulted widely with and canvassed the views of the Australian people before embarking on the most expensive, risky and strategically dangerous defence acquisition in Australia's history.

Since co-hosting the launch of this Public Inquiry at Parliament House in June I have monitored the conduct of the Inquiry, impressed by the large number of submissions and the serious concerns raised by experts and everyday Australians.

In my own submission to the Inquiry I raised three points based on my experience as a parliamentarian, as a former strategic analyst at the Office of National Assessments, and as a former Army Officer. I believe these points are even more valid after reading this Report. First, that the derivation and announcement of AUKUS showed the total abandonment of proper parliamentary and defence acquisition processes. Second, that the strategic assumptions that underlie the reliance on the US as a security partner are at worst deeply flawed and at best completely uncertain. And third, that AUKUS distorts the Australian Defence Force's force structure and deprives us of maintaining an independent submarine capability designed primarily for operations in our littoral waters.

The Inquiry also raised a host of other concerns with AUKUS, not least the essential need to assure and cost the safe storage, management and protection of high-level weapons-grade radioactive nuclear waste before proceeding with AUKUS. I encourage the community to continue to engage with government and compel them to answer their many concerns, as yet unanswered.

Andrew Wilkie

October 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUKUS should be scrapped

In September 2021, then Prime Minister Scott Morrison unveiled a major shift in Australia's defence and security policy: the AUKUS agreement. Negotiated with the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) in secrecy, and without any scrutiny by the Parliament or discussion with the Australian people, AUKUS was presented as a masterstroke to an unsuspecting public. In the heated campaign environment of a looming national election – one the government looked likely to lose – Morrison demanded that the Labor opposition endorse the agreement immediately, which they duly did.

Over the five years since the agreement was struck, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his ministers have declined to thoroughly review the agreement, despite having several clear opportunities to do so. Nor have they explained in detail how it advances Australia's interests or better protects us. They have avoided answering fundamental questions about the costs and risks associated with AUKUS and have simply not answered the key question: why AUKUS?

Similarly, MPs from the major parties have brushed aside community concerns and avoided their responsibility to seriously debate in the Parliament Australia's largest ever defence acquisition program – estimated at over half a trillion dollars when the cost of nuclear waste disposal is included.

This refusal to consult prompted several trade unions and community groups to establish a Public Inquiry into AUKUS, convened by the Australian Peace and Security Forum. The Terms of Reference were crafted to examine whether AUKUS, as currently conceived, would really make Australians safer and whether its marketed public purpose under Pillar I, the delivery of nuclear-powered submarines, was likely to be achieved.

After carefully considering all the material presented to us - over 10 days of hearings around Australia and more than

1,000 submissions – we concluded that **AUKUS is the worst, riskiest and most costly defence decision ever made by an Australian government**.

In examining the views of expert witnesses and concerned citizens alike, we endorsed the views of two former Australian Prime Ministers, Paul Keating and Malcolm Turnbull, who have forcefully argued that AUKUS is an extremely dangerous decision which does not serve Australia well and should be scrapped. AUKUS jeopardizes our sovereignty, further entangles us with US war planning and actually endangers our security, making us more likely targets in the event of any regional conflict involving the US.

Neither the submissions we received nor the hearings we conducted uncovered any convincing foundations for AUKUS.

We also concluded that AUKUS Pillar I represents a massive investment in nuclear-powered submarines which appear unsuited to the defence of Australia's maritime approaches. The AUKUS submarines may never arrive and, if they do, will generate high-level nuclear weapons-grade waste that must be safely stored underground for tens of thousands of years, despite Australia not having any plans or facilities to manage this task.

Based on information from the US and UK, we concluded that the delivery schedules for three US second-hand Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarines, and the yet-to-be designed UK AUKUS-class nuclear-powered attack submarines, are at best problematic and most likely unachievable. What is more, successive governments have never adequately explained the need for nuclear-powered attack submarines in preference to submarine types with a more defensive capability and better suited to Australia's regional waters.

Even if the delivery schedule (known as the 'optimal pathway') were achieved, defence personnel would have to manage and crew three different types of submarines at the same time. This was described to us by defence experts as 'project management lunacy' which would stretch Defence capability beyond the limit. It became clear to us that the longer the 'optimal pathway' is delayed, the more likely it is

that Australia will be left without any capable submarine service at all.

Extraordinarily, the lopsided agreement means the UK and US could walk away without delivering any submarines while retaining the billions of dollars we are providing to support their submarine building industries. Australia would have no redress.

The AUKUS pact enables the US (and the UK, although more problematically) to 'rotate' their nuclear powered – and nuclear armed – submarines in Australian ports adjacent to people's homes and workplaces, posing a potentially lethal risk. In Western Australia, this 'rotation' of submarines in Cockburn Sound near Perth and Fremantle essentially creates another US base, where around 2,300 US naval personnel and families are to be accommodated, with housing to be built and paid for by Australia. The current Virginias can be nuclear-armed and the next generation under construction (Blocks V and VI) will be nuclear-armed, but Australian citizens are being kept in the dark about the presence of nuclear weapons. Australia's current policy of 'don't ask, don't tell' in response to the US practice of 'neither confirm nor deny' is unacceptable in an open democracy. It directly jeopardises the security and wellbeing of Australians.

In the event of US-China hostilities the Perth/Fremantle area, host to the Stirling Naval Base and Henderson naval precinct near Rockingham, would almost certainly be targeted by nuclear capable inter-continental ballistic missiles resulting in significant Australian civilian casualties. Based on the information presented to us, we concluded that the risks from the current Force Posture Agreement with the US were extremely high and not well understood by most Australians. The government and opposition prefer to keep these matters secret and to dismiss any questions about elevated risk.

The presence of US nuclear weapons on Australian territory also undermines our commitments to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Rarotonga Treaty for a nuclear-weapons-free zone of peace in the southwest Pacific. Australia's historic stance in opposition to nuclear weapons proliferation and our good standing with our regional neighbours is compromised by the AUKUS pact and is

causing disquiet amongst governments in the region. Such effects demonstrate that not only was AUKUS poorly conceived, but it was not embedded in a comprehensive national security strategy that reflects the character of our region and the priorities of the Australian people.

Consequently, we recommend the immediate cancellation of AUKUS Pillar I. To ensure the maintenance of a sovereign submarine capability we recommend that priority be given to extending the life of our six capable Collins-class submarines or, should cost and capability trade-offs suggest otherwise, acquiring a replacement capability. This would call for the proper consideration of the nuclear propulsion issue.

To ensure no submarine capability gap ensues, we also recommend an early decision on a replacement for Collins, suitable for Australia's defence of its northern approaches and trade choke points. We are strongly opposed to vessels which use highly enriched uranium (HEU), as currently planned under AUKUS, since HEU weapons-grade waste cannot be safely stored and protected, and the risks are potentially catastrophic for generations to come. Like many of those who made submissions to us, we also propose that HEU nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed submarines must not be based at HMAS Stirling or any Australian port.

AUKUS Pillar II sets out cooperation on advanced technology sharing between Australia, the US and the UK. This part of AUKUS is uncosted, and presents only a small shift from business as usual. However, the submissions emphasised that the arrangements under Pillar II erode controls related to indemnity and IP, resulting in a set-up that is less beneficial to Australia compared to pursuing cooperation with a variety of partners. Therefore, we recommend that Pillar II be reviewed and recast.

To assure our country's sovereignty and independent decision-making in a rapidly changing world, we concluded that the government needs urgently to develop a comprehensive national security strategy, to recalibrate our current alliance with the US and the dynamics of our relationship with China. Becoming automatically involved in supporting the US to contain or militarily engage China, our major trading partner, including in a dispute over Taiwan, is a

nightmare to be avoided at all costs. The great deception that is AUKUS locks us into this nightmare.

To erode Australia's sovereignty by transferring critical decision-making responsibilities to the US or any other foreign government is to surrender Australia to the interests of another power.

This means the Australian government should give immediate notice to cancel AUKUS now.

1. WHY A PUBLIC INQUIRY?

AUKUS was announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison on 15 September 2021 in a virtual meeting with US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The pact was conceived in secret without parliamentary consideration or any consultation with the Australian people; and without any prior warning to France, already contracted to Australia to deliver a new conventionally-powered submarine to replace the Collins-class submarines.

The then Labor opposition endorsed the agreement immediately after receiving the advice.

Once elected in May 2022, the new Labor Government led by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese did not conduct a review of AUKUS, and from that time undertook no serious examination of the complexities involved. The 2023 Defence Strategic Review did not evaluate the strategic and defence capability implications of AUKUS, and the Treaties Committee of Parliament spent only a single day on the matter. The establishment of a new Defence Committee in Parliament with selective representation to monitor AUKUS has not been tasked to review AUKUS.

Federal and State governments have refused to provide basic accountability and transparency about AUKUS to the Australian people, despite numerous requests by the public and community organisations, and from some parliamentarians. Government disdain for Australian public concern was clearly on display when both the Commonwealth and South Australian governments lodged submissions with the British parliamentary inquiry into AUKUS but failed to put these on the public record.

The Australian Peace and Security Forum, supported by several trade unions and community groups, combined to establish a Public Inquiry into AUKUS, relying on crowdfunding and grants. With Terms of Reference agreed, the Inquiry accessed information available on the public record from the three AUKUS partners and invited submissions and testimony from experts and citizens.

Despite written invitations to make submissions and appear, both the Government and the Coalition dismissed the Inquiry and did not take up the opportunity to address and explain AUKUS.

The South Australian and Commonwealth governments readily provided submissions to the British Parliamentary Inquiry into AUKUS, but refused any contact with or response to Australian community groups.

Drawn from all walks of life, and with substantial political, cultural and defence experience; mindful of First Nations continuing ownership, we uphold the notion of an independent, sovereign Australia, determining its own interests and advancing the security and wellbeing of its citizens above all else. It is crystal clear to us that the AUKUS pact does not fulfil these goals. It is deeply flawed and should be scrapped immediately.

Five Commissioners conducted the Inquiry providing their services *pro bono*: the Hon Peter Garrett AM FTSE, former federal Minister as lead Commissioner; the Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence AO, former Premier of Western Australia and former federal Minister for Health; Admiral Chris Barrie AC RAN (ret'd), former Chief of the Australian Defence Force; Ms Karina Lester, a Yankunytjatjara leader from South Australia and a lifelong advocate for Aboriginal communities affected by nuclear testing; and Ms Leanne Minshull, Co-CEO of The Australia Institute.

The Inquiry received more than 1,000 submissions covering a range of issues relevant to the AUKUS agreement. Public Hearings were held in Melbourne, Fremantle, Adelaide, Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Brisbane and Canberra.

Everyone who lodged submissions and participated in the Inquiry made clear that they cared deeply about Australia's future security: the safety of our citizens, our democratic way of life, our sovereignty and independence, and Australia's ability to contribute constructively to regional and global security.

Without statutory authority this Public Inquiry could only set-out the community's views about the choices and risks of the AUKUS pact and identify recommendations.



The AUKUS Public Inquiry Commissioners: (l–r) Karina Lester, Carmen Lawrence, Peter Garrett, Leanne Minshull, Chris Barrie.

Our focus was simple: would AUKUS keep Australians safe and at what cost, especially in a rapidly changing regional and global environment? Was AUKUS likely to succeed given the enormity of the project and the many evident risks? Would AUKUS protect our nation's sovereignty and ensure capacity to make our own decisions? And could AUKUS justify the huge expenditure and implementation responsibilities that would pass to our future generations?

If on balance the answer to these questions was 'NO', then what is the most prudent course for Australia, and, critically, should the program be cancelled now?

2. WHAT IS AUKUS?

AUKUS is a security and technology partnership between Australia, the UK and the US.

In Australia, it is understood to be a plan to acquire up to eight conventionally armed nuclear-powered attack submarines, but most people do not know exactly what is involved in the partnership.

US basing, AUKUS locations, and possible future locations

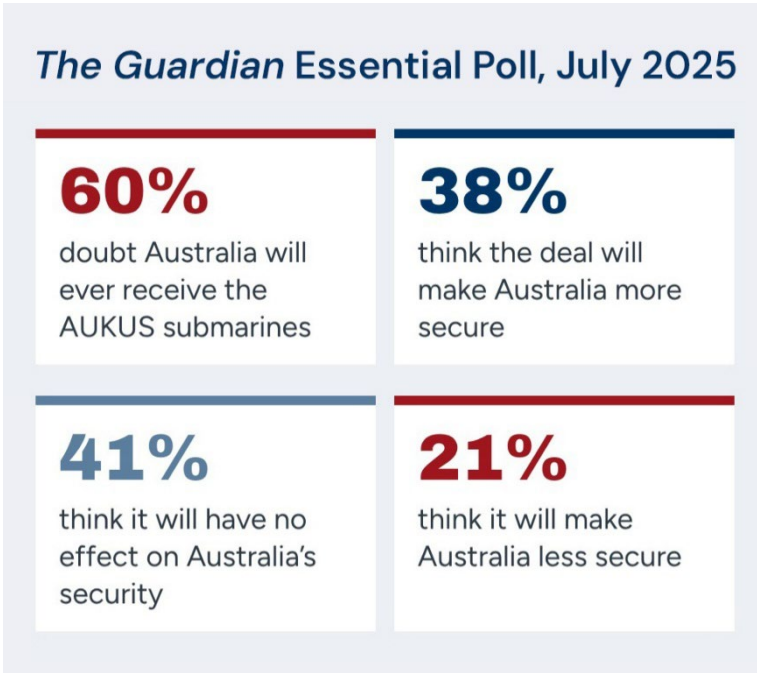


1. Darwin (NT) - *US Marine rotations, ~ 2000-2500 Marines*
2. RAAF Base Tindal (NT) - *Expanded to host nuclear-capable bombers*
3. Pine Gap (NT) – *Joint US-Australian intelligence facility*
4. Harold E. Holt (WA) – *Naval communication station at North West Cape, near Exmouth*
5. Submarine Rotational Force West, HMAS Stirling & Henderson (WA) – *US and UK submarine rotations from 2027; maintenance precinct*
6. Osborne, Adelaide (SA) – Planned SSN-AUKUS construction
7, 8, 9. Possible east coast submarine base, Port Kembla, Newcastle, or Brisbane.

Not shown: the nuclear waste storage site, which the government says will be on 'Defence land' but has not been identified.

Sources: Department of Defence; Lowy Institute; *The Guardian*.

The best available information is sourced from the US Congress and the UK Parliament, supplemented by media reporting and Ministerial statements. In Australia there has been no serious attempt by successive governments to inform the public as happened with inquiries in the US and UK.



AUKUS has two parts. The first part - Pillar I - is about submarines. The second part - Pillar II - is about advanced military technologies. Each pillar has different goals and timelines.

Pillar I: Nuclear-powered submarines

Under Pillar I Australia plans to acquire two different types of large submarines to progressively replace our six ageing Collins-class conventional submarines. The new submarines are powered by HEU nuclear reactors to give them extended endurance, range and high speeds underwater. A total of up to eight nuclear-powered submarines is currently planned, at an initial estimated cost of up to $368 billion over 40 years.

At present these submarines will not carry nuclear weapons. They can travel further and faster, stay underwater longer, and because of this are often harder to find than conventional submarines. But they are not quieter than the Collins-class.

STAGE ONE: From 2027

Training and Basing

Under Pillar I Australia plans to acquire two different types of large submarines to progressively replace our six ageing Collins-class conventional submarines. The new submarines are powered by HEU nuclear reactors to give them extended endurance, range and high speeds underwater. A total of up to eight nuclear-powered submarines is currently planned, at an initial estimated cost of up to $368 billion over 40 years. At present these submarines will not carry nuclear weapons. They can travel further and faster, stay underwater longer, and because of this are often harder to find than conventional submarines. But they are not quieter than the Collins-class.

STAGE TWO: Early 2030s

Buying US submarines

Australia plans to buy three second-hand Virginia-class submarines from the US from 2032 to 2038, with a possible option for two more. This purchase is subject to Presidential approval, and dependent on not degrading US national interests and priorities.

STAGE THREE: Early 2040s

Building a new submarine

Australia and the UK plan to build a new submarine class called SSN-AUKUS. The first AUKUS-class must fit-in to the UK's domestic shipbuilding priorities. Australia's first locally built submarine at the Osborne naval precinct at Adelaide is not expected until the early 2040s.

HIGH RISK

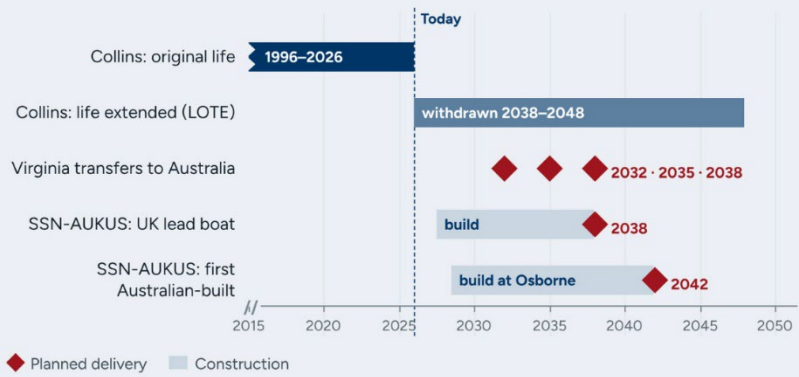
The 'Optimal Pathway' timeline for the acquisition program is high risk and ambitious. The US and UK shipyards are well behind schedule in their domestic building programs with significant problems to overcome. The current schedule will also require Australia to manage and crew three different types of submarines for a period of time, requiring significant personnel, maintenance and supply chain challenges to be overcome.

"The optimal pathway leaves Australia managing brief peaks, a complex and expensive mixed fleet with minimal resilience against schedule delays in return for a marginal improvement in the number of submarines available compared with today, albeit they are significantly more capable and versatile than Collins."

Rear Admiral Rowan Moffitt AO RAN (retd)

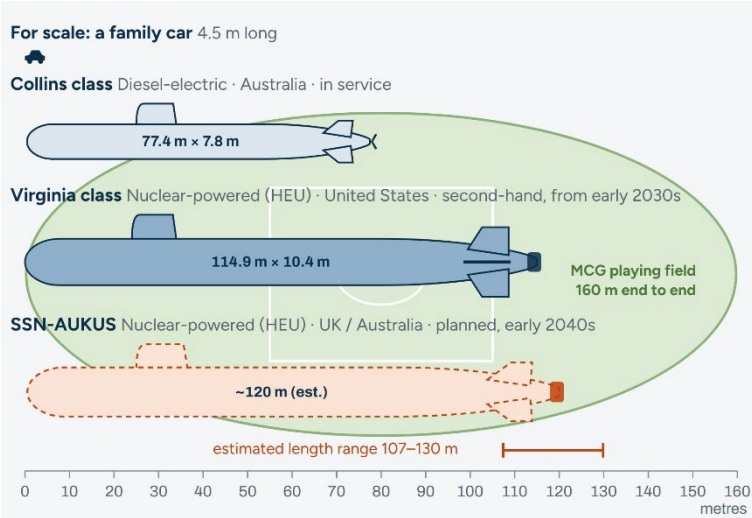
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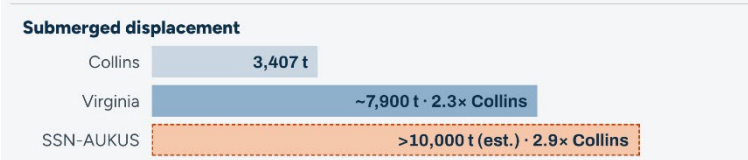
Submarine Timeline



For a period, the RAN will be required to crew and maintain three submarine types at once. Sources: AUKUS trilateral delivery timeline (Virginia transfers 2032, 2035, 2038; UK lead SSN-AUKUS 2038; Australian lead 2042); ANAO audit, May 2026 (Collins withdrawal 2038–2048).

Submarines – Comparative Specifications





	COLLINS	VIRGINIA	SSN-AUKUS
Power	Diesel-electric; must snorkel to recharge	Reactor, weapons-grade HEU	Reactor, weapons-grade HEU
Crew	58	135	Not yet specified
Built	Osborne, Adelaide	United States (transfer only)	UK, and Osborne, Adelaide
Stern	X-form planes, propeller	Cruciform planes, pump-jet	X-form planes, pump-jet (expected)
Nuclear waste left	None	Reactor and spent fuel	Reactor and spent fuel

Pillar II: Advanced military technologies

Pillar II is about developing new, more advanced defence technologies faster, across the full spectrum of defence capabilities. Currently, there is no declared budget for Pillar II. The advanced technologies include artificial intelligence, drones, underwater systems, cyber tools, electronic warfare, quantum technology and hypersonic weapons.

The aim is to turn new ideas into useful military tools and help the three countries work together more easily. The reasons why AUKUS is required as the vehicle to promote this research and development has not been adequately explained by government.

Some Pillar II projects may conclude sooner than some phases of the Pillar I submarine program. For example, work on uncrewed underwater vehicles and other technologies could produce results before Australia receives or builds nuclear-powered submarines. This shows why each part of AUKUS should be judged on its own merits.

> "The technology part of the arrangement that we have under AUKUS with the US really doesn't change much."
>
> The Hon Kim Beazley,
> Former Deputy Prime Minister and former Minister of Defence
>
> Live from Canberra Hearing, 3 September 2026

What Australia has already committed to AUKUS

Australia is not just buying nuclear-powered submarines. Australia is also helping to pay for submarine industry work in the US and the UK. To date, $9.2 billion has been budgeted for this work.

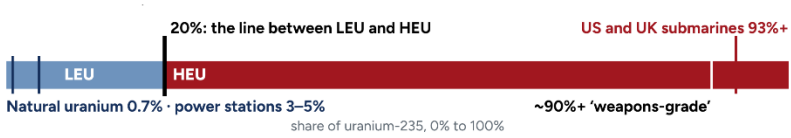


Without an established nuclear power industry to supply an experienced work force, we must also train technicians and sailors, build safe facilities, create rules for nuclear-powered submarines, and prepare to build SSN-AUKUS submarines at the Osborne naval precinct in South Australia.

Australia also has undertaken to store all the radioactive waste from all the Australian submarines (second-hand Virginias and SSN-AUKUS). Critically, this includes highly enriched radioactive nuclear weapons-grade waste that remains active for tens of thousands of years.

LEU or HEU: what is the difference?

A nuclear-powered submarine's reactor runs on uranium, graded by its share of uranium-235, the part that splits to release heat. The grade decides how often the reactor is refuelled, whether the fuel could be used for a weapon, and how the waste must be guarded.



	LEU Low-enriched uranium	HEU Highly enriched uranium
What it is	Uranium with **less than 20%** uranium-235.	Uranium with **20% or more** uranium-235. US and UK submarine fuel is **93% or more**.
Weapons use	Not considered usable for a nuclear weapon.	Around 90% and above is 'weapons-grade': the same grade used in nuclear weapons.
Refuelling	Refuelled roughly every 10 years, which means opening the reactor.	One load lasts ~33 years, so the reactor is sealed for the life of the submarine.
Spent fuel	Highly radioactive and needs safe long-term storage.	Highly radioactive, and still highly enriched: it must be guarded against theft or diversion for as long as it exists.
Used in submarines by	France (Rubis and Suffren classes); reportedly China; Brazil (in development).	United States (Virginia, Columbia); United Kingdom (Astute, Dreadnought); reportedly Russia and India; and, under AUKUS, Australia.

Sources: IAEA definitions; International Panel on Fissile Materials; Federation of American Scientists. Enrichment levels for China, Russia and India are not officially published.

> "The use of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) offers significant advantages in fuel management and long-term disposal compared to the sealed, High Enriched Uranium (HEU) reactors utilised in the Virginia and proposed for SSN-AUKUS."
>
> Rear Admiral Peter Briggs AO, RAN (ret'd)
>
> Submission No. 314

For advanced technologies, all three countries are meant to contribute ideas, research, industry and military knowledge. So, AUKUS is not simply one country selling equipment to another. It is a long-term partnership, but each country still has its own interests. For Australia, the AUKUS pact carries high risks if those interests diverge.

3. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Importantly, our report does not find against submarines. We are of the view that a submarine capability over which Australia has national control should remain a core element of Australia's defence capabilities and, therefore, critical to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The questions we asked are: why these submarines; why now; for what purpose; against which threat; and how is the cost derived and justified?

Our principal findings reflect the overwhelming majority view from over 1,000 public submissions received and evidence presented during 10 days of public hearings across much of Australia. Due to the diversity of views expressed, our findings do not and cannot represent the perspectives of all submissions and speakers, which are accessible on the AUKUS Public Inquiry website.

The government's failure to appear and present comprehensive information on, and the reasons for, the AUKUS pact, and to answer the many serious questions asked by constituents was telling, and represents a failure in public accountability.

After carefully considering all the material presented to us, we conclude that AUKUS is the worst, most costly and riskiest defence decision ever made by Australian governments, and without adequate public scrutiny.

AUKUS represents a massive cost for submarines that are of contested utility and may never arrive.

In essence, AUKUS undermines our sovereignty, risks our national prosperity, distorts our defence budget and fails to promote regional peace.

1. AUKUS is much more than the acquisition of nuclear-powered attack submarines

A consistent message throughout the Inquiry was that AUKUS raised concerns beyond the acquisition of nuclear-powered attack submarines. Four major concerns were:

- **Declining trust in government**. The manner in which AUKUS was conceived appears deceitful and since the announcement, federal and state governments' failure to inform and consult the public has eroded trust in government. First came the Coalition's sudden embrace of US nuclear-powered submarines, followed by Labor's immediate acquiescence to the AUKUS deal without any substantive review.
- **Over reliance on the US**. We are increasing our dependency on the US for our security at a time when America is constantly undermining and subverting the international rules-based order. AUKUS built on the Force Posture Agreement that provided the US with a growing number of military basing rights in Australia that would become targets in the event of war. The proposed US submarine base near Perth - Submarine Rotation Force West (SRFW) - raised the threat of a nuclear target to an unacceptable level.
- **Increased risk of war with China**. Premised as it is on assertions that China is a strategic threat to Australia, AUKUS increases the likelihood of Australia becoming involved in war with China – the worst possible outcome for our nation's future.
- **High-level nuclear waste storage problems**. AUKUS would change Australia from a nation that over generations had decided not to develop a nuclear industry, to one that would have to manage high-level weapons-grade radioactive waste for tens of thousands of years – a challenge that our AUKUS partners have failed to resolve.

"The weaknesses of the AUKUS agreements include asymmetric bargaining positions, sovereignty risks, risk that the submarines may not be delivered, extensive reliance on future implementing arrangements, the risks of US and UK supply chains and future political shifts over a fifty year period, HEU transfers to a state without nuclear fuel management infrastructure, and dispute resolution provisions inadequate to the scale and duration of the commitment."

Dr Yee-Fui Ng

Associate Professor in Law, Monash University

Submission No. 549

2. AUKUS jeopardises national security

The overwhelming opinion expressed by Australians was that AUKUS would not keep Australia safe:

- It makes us a nuclear target.
- It undermines Australia's security and jeopardises peace in our region.
- It has the potential to accelerate a regional arms race.
- Its high cost limits our capacity to respond to more urgent threats to Australia's security, notably catastrophic climate change and nuclear proliferation.
- It has an unacceptable level of risk and potential failure.

3. AUKUS highlights an urgent need for a comprehensive national security strategy

- Unlike our AUKUS partners (and many other countries) Australia does not have a comprehensive national security strategy against which AUKUS can be judged and justified.
- For instance, sound strategic analysis of defence for Australia would suggest the maintenance of a submarine capability tailored to Australia's strategic geography, especially focused on our littoral – the fluid coastal geographical, often shallow, and ecological sea-land

boundary. This analysis should also include sea denial (keeping the adversary at bay) in the maritime approaches and sea control (defeating the adversary) in the proximate maritime areas.

4. AUKUS undermines our sovereignty, independence and control

A major concern expressed consistently throughout the Inquiry was that AUKUS significantly diminishes Australia's sovereignty, independence of action and control in national decision-making.

> "The AUKUS deal makes Australia dependent on a foreign legislature for the delivery of our primary undersea deterrent until the 2040's, and possibly longer."
>
> The Hon Malcolm Turnbull AC 29th Prime Minister of Australia
>
> Submission No. 396

- AUKUS surrenders Australian sovereignty by allowing a new de-facto US naval base to be established near Perth (SRFW), where rapid expansion of the base to accommodate US submarines and US personnel is already underway. US nuclear submarines would be based in Australia as part of US war fighting plans.
- US submarines frequenting SRFW may or may not be nuclear-armed, but regardless the Perth region would be a likely nuclear target for China.

> "The HMAS Stirling pens will become a perfect open-air target for precision-guided munitions … We are building the most expensive, secondhand, provocative, open-air target in Australian history."
>
> Jonathan Huston MLA, Independent Member for Nedlands, former Army Officer
>
> Live from Fremantle Hearing 30 July 2026

- The Osborne naval precinct in Adelaide would also likely be targeted if nuclear-powered attack submarines designed to contain China were constructed there. The same would apply to any potential future AUKUS submarine base on the east coast at either Port Kembla, Newcastle or Brisbane (or elsewhere).
- Decisions made about the operational use of AUKUS submarines, and concerning Australia's security, would effectively be made in Washington and Hawaii (Headquarters of the US Indo-Pacific Command).

> "We'll have Submarine Rotational Force West, SRFW. So effectively, while it's not called a base, it will effectively be a USUK-Australia submarine base."
>
> The Hon Christopher Pyne,
>
> Former Australian Minister for Defence
>
> Live from Adelaide Hearing, 17 July 2026

- Whereas our current Collins-class submarine provides Australia independence of decision-making while contributing to the alliance in a complementary manner, the AUKUS submarines would be interchangeable with the US, to meet US priorities if so determined. The RAN could be forced to act primarily on the orders and in the interests of the US.
- AUKUS makes it more likely that Australia will be enmeshed into any possible future war between the US and China, including over Taiwan.

> "[AUKUS means] the loss of Australian sovereignty and the likelihood – no, the certainty – that Australia would be more likely dragged into war because of our US alliance than be protected from war by the alliance."
>
> The Hon Bob Carr, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs
>
> Live from Sydney Hearing, 11 August 2026

5. AUKUS lacks strategic justification

Successive governments have failed to adequately explain the need for nuclear-powered attack submarines.

- The principal role of the AUKUS attack submarines is to hunt and kill other submarines, as well as to engage targets at sea and on land at long distance. It is primarily an offensive platform as part of a US plan to contain China.
- Rather than defending Australia and its maritime approaches, the acquisition appears to have been justified on providing more offensive capabilities to support the US in containing and, if necessary, contesting China in armed conflict. Many Australians, including defence experts, consider it unlikely that the US would prevail in a war against China, now a bona fide superpower.

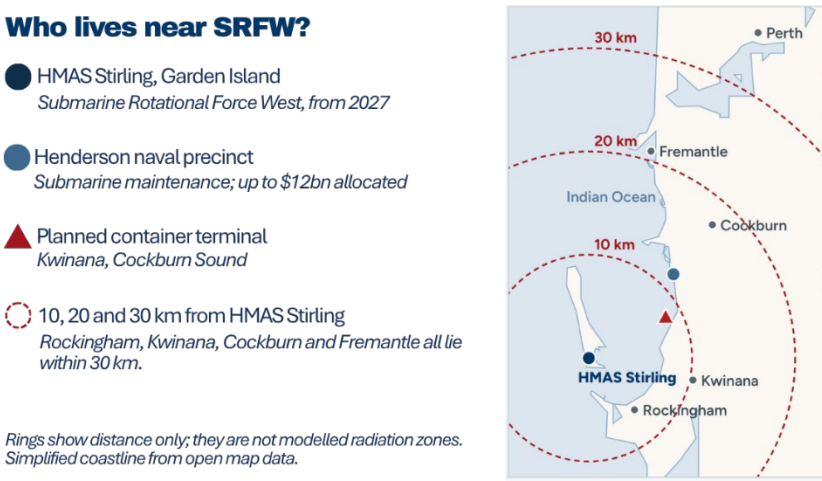
> "China will be unlikely to attack us ever outside of a major war. I see almost no prospect for China, just out of the blue, for reasons to do with some very implausible scenario, attacking Australia with military force absent a great power war going on. In that circumstance, and absent a threat from China like the one I've just described, I actually don't see any need for us to spend anywhere near the amount of money we're spending on defence."
>
> Michael Pezullo, Former Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs
>
> Live from Canberra Hearing, 3 September 2026

- War against China is Australia's nightmare that must be avoided. Not only would Australia be targeted, but our future prosperity and relationship with Asia sacrificed. China is our major trading partner.

> "I have had personal ministerial experience of being a junior allied partner of the US in a hot conflict situation – the first Gulf War in 1991 – and my recollections are not pretty."
>
> Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC KC FASSA FAIIA, Former Minister for Foreign Affairs
>
> Submission No. 10

6. AUKUS SRFW creates unacceptable and unnecessary risks to residents of the Perth region

- SRFW will operate from HMAS Stirling with maintenance provision at Henderson naval precinct. Up to 2,300 US personnel including families will be accommodated between HMAS Stirling and the Rockingham community. The Defence Housing Authority is to acquire 550 houses for US families in the Rockingham area whilst Australians are experiencing a housing shortage.



- Currently there are no defence capabilities or plans to counter ballistic missile or nuclear attack; no evacuation and civil defence plans in the event of nuclear radiation incidents; no environmental or social impact assessments conducted and agreed with the local population; and no consideration given to the potential drone threat from the new civilian container terminal under construction in Cockburn Sound and proximate to HMAS Stirling and the Henderson naval precinct.

> "A major nuclear accident, terrorist attack or wartime attack would be catastrophic within a 25km radius and the clean-up should we survive would make Cockburn Sound uninhabitable for generations. Think Hiroshima."
>
> Dr Colin Hughes Former Head of Public Health Perth
>
> Submission No. 63

7. AUKUS lacks both political and social licence

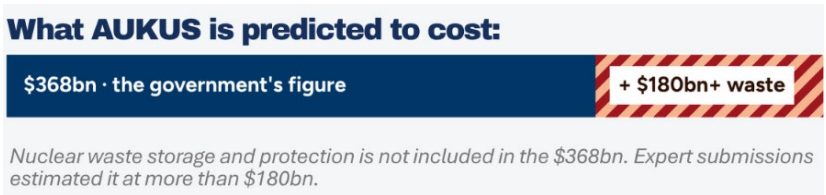
A major finding from many submissions is that AUKUS currently lacks a clear social license.

- The Australian community who participated in the Inquiry is fearful, concerned, and remains unconvinced, due to the uncertainty and lack of knowledge about AUKUS.
- The Australian community has been denied adequate information about AUKUS.
- Communities most impacted by AUKUS, including First Nations communities, have to date not been afforded proper consultation.
- Minimal attempt has been made to explain the economic, regional and social implications of a possible future war with our largest trading partner, China.
- Australians know more about AUKUS from US and UK sources than from the Australian government.

> "Neither [pillar] has the social license to sustain itself across the lifecycle of the program that will likely stretch 30 years … no federal government has built the trust necessary to obtain the public's support."
>
> Dr. Nishank Motwani, Senior Fellow, The Alliance Futures Initiative (TAFI), USA; Senior Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)
>
> Submission No. 998

8. AUKUS costs are substantial and unexplained

- AUKUS was conceived without credible analysis, expert advice or a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis.
- The $368 billion figure is an estimate only, first made public on a single page release with no ancillary information.
- Defence experts predict a much larger spend due to underestimates, project variation and inevitable cost overruns.
- The budget does not include design, planning, construction, management and permanent long-term storage of long-lived highly enriched weapons-grade nuclear waste, a figure estimated to exceed $180 billion.



- Australians cannot understand why billions of dollars are being paid, without any guarantees or refunds, to expand naval shipbuilding in the US and UK, both far larger economies than Australia.

"The marginal benefit to Australia's own defences is minimal while the cost is maximal – indeed, off the scale. The proposal is irrational in every dimension. And an affront to public administration."

The Hon Paul Keating

24th Prime Minister of Australia

National Press Club, 15 March 2023

- The community is alarmed that the huge cost of AUKUS is impacting the ADF, preventing the establishment of a balanced and independent defence force focused on the defence of Australia.
- Concern was also raised that AUKUS reduced funds available for other critical national security priorities such as climate, healthcare, education, and housing.
- Climate disruption, nuclear proliferation and unregulated AI were considered more important immediate security threats to Australia.

"When governments commit resources on this scale to one conception of national security, Australians are entitled to ask what other forms of security could have been strengthened with comparable political determination: housing, health, education, water security, Indigenous communities, climate adaptation, renewable energy, disaster preparedness, regional development, caring for Country, science, diplomacy and peace-building."

Anne Poelina

Nyikina Warrwa Warlungurru Indigenous Australian Woman

Submission No. 1010

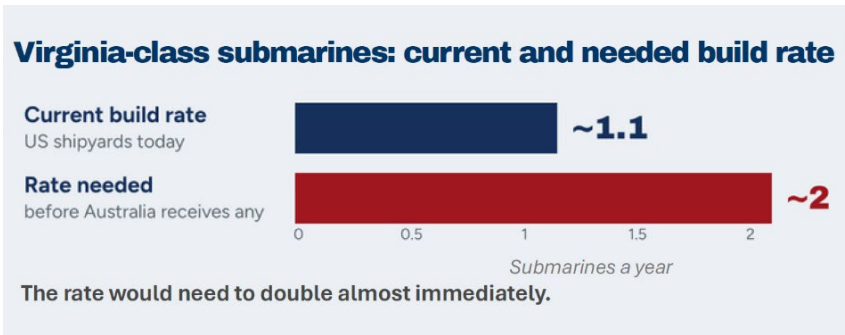
9. AUKUS delivery is highly uncertain

During the Inquiry serious doubts were raised as to whether the US and the UK nuclear-powered submarines can be delivered on time and on budget, if at all.

- Based on available expert evidence from the US and the UK, it is most unlikely that nuclear-powered submarines can be delivered in accordance with the stated 'optimal pathway'.

> "Whilst the United States may sell some [nuclear-powered submarines] to Australia, there is a high probability that the UK element of AUKUS will fail, making the international row in 2021 over the cancellation of the plan for Australia to build French-designed submarines look like a non-event."
>
> Rear Admiral Philip Mathias (ret'd)
>
> Former Director of Nuclear Policy with the UK Ministry of Defence
>
> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 2026

- The current build rate of Virginia submarines is around 1.1 per year. In order for Australia to receive any second-hand submarines that rate needs to double to around 2 immediately, a target that seems unachievable even considering US plans for a new submarine shipyard.



> "It would be very difficult and expensive for the US submarine industry to increase production of attack submarines while also building 1 Columbia class ship per year."
>
> An Analysis of the Navy's 2025 Shipbuilding Plan
>
> US Congressional Budget Office Report , January 2025

- This means that Australia is highly likely to suffer a submarine capability gap unless alternatives are progressed quickly.
- Australia has been given no guarantee of delivery, let alone a delivery date, and there will be no compensation if the submarines are not delivered or arrive well behind schedule.
- AUKUS brings with it a high likelihood of technological obsolescence at a time of rapidly evolving autonomous weapons and greater vulnerability to large platforms.

> "A 24-year delivery window means Australia is committing to a platform whose strategic relevance in 2050 is highly uncertain. Technological disruption, geopolitical shifts, and the emergence of new operational concepts (such as autonomous undersea vehicles and distributed maritime networks) could make large and expensive platforms like this completely obsolete."
>
> Scientia Professor Toby Walsh
>
> Artificial Intelligence at the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of New South Wales,
>
> Submission No. 550

10. AUKUS raises legal issues of concern

- Firstly, the overriding of state with federal legislation without proper public consultation or stringent parliamentary oversight. The federal government has power under the *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012* to over-ride state legislation to identify a nuclear waste storage site.

- The federal Labor government has secured legislation (Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulations 2025, Regulation 111) to impose any AUKUS-related facilities – including nuclear waste stores and dumps – on Aboriginal land without consultation or consent. State laws providing Aboriginal heritage protections and consent rights have been overridden by new federal laws. (see Annex A)
- Secondly, the legal basis for the storage of radioactive waste needs clarification. The government has declared this will be on Defence land, but despite the Defence Minister's promise to do so, the location has not been identified and there has been no consultation with local communities. The potential impact on First Nations people is of particular concern, particularly given the history and consequences of nuclear testing at Maralinga, Emu Field and Monte Bello Islands.
- Thirdly, civil liberties are potentially constrained with additional powers given to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) through the establishment of AUKUS Command.

AUKUS Command is part of the AFP's multifaceted approach to national security, and is tasked with three distinct key responsibilities:

1. Protective Security for the AUKUS Submarine Program

2. Strategic responsibility for Protective Security at Defence Bases

3. Developing the Future PSO Workforce

AUKUS Command, 2025

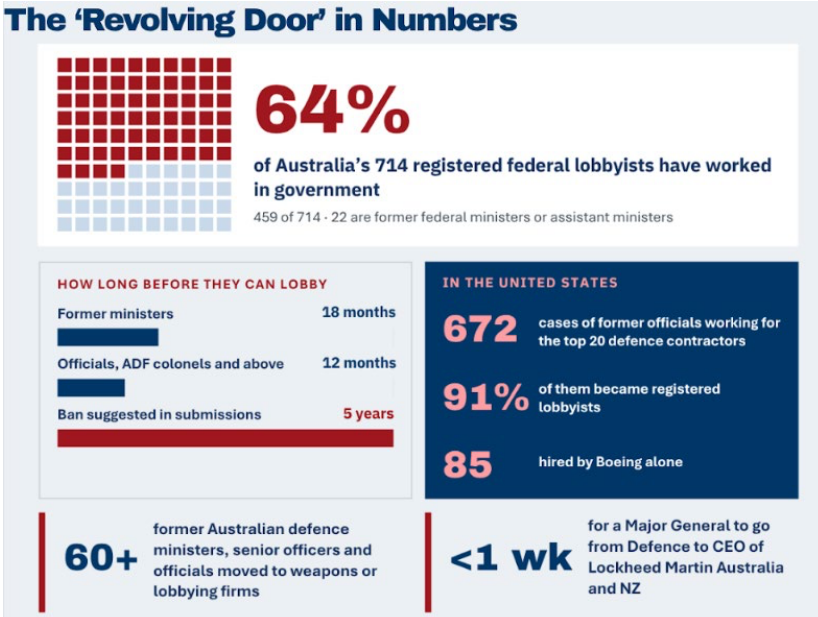
- While protection of potential nuclear waste sites is necessary, the full responsibilities of AUKUS Command need to be confirmed, particularly in relation to the policing of civil demonstrations or rallies against AUKUS.

11. AUKUS demonstrates significant potential conflicts-of-interest

Significant public concern was expressed about the 'revolving door' epidemic and the practice of 'regulatory capture', whereby the independence of statutory bodies is compromised by their reporting chains.

- AUKUS (and other major defence projects) are in danger of potentially breaching national security standards by failing stringent conflict-of-interest protections. Evidence shows that senior politicians, military leaders and public servants in all three AUKUS countries quickly transition between government and the public sector to the private sector (and in reverse) to advance private and commercial/political interests of the defence industry.
- To prevent the possibility of corruption many people suggested that regulation was required to prevent this 'revolving door' practice for a statutory period of time – for example, five years.
- Regulatory capture and the lack of independent oversight was evident. In the case of AUKUS, the regulation of managing safety incidents and radioactive waste is the responsibility of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR), established in November 2025. However, this new body reports to the Minister for Defence, hence compromising the independence of the regulator.

> "Detailed research of the arms industry over decades by UK researchers has established that arms industry involvement can drive and distort arms procurement decisions."
>
> Michelle Fahy
>
> Independent writer and researcher
>
> Submission No. 549



Sources: Australian Democracy Network (August 2026); Australian Government Lobbying Code of Conduct; Senator Elizabeth Warren, Pentagon Alchemy (April 2023; figures for 2021); ABC Four Corners analysis (24 August 2026).

12. AUKUS creates dangerous nuclear risks

AUKUS establishes Australia as the first non-nuclear weapon state, and with no existing nuclear power industry, to store and protect high-level weapons-grade radioactive waste that will exist for tens of thousands of years.

- The government is understating and obscuring the critical issue of nuclear risks, leaving the Australian community not fully informed.
- **A consistent opinion expressed during the Inquiry was that AUKUS must not proceed unless and until an accepted safe and affordable method to manage and store high-level weapons-grade radioactive waste was assured.** Without a proven and agreed plan in place the government did not have a mandate to leave this legacy for future generations to manage. Submissions noted that 60 years on, neither the US nor the UK had satisfactorily resolved this intractable problem with far greater resources and expertise than Australia.

- Based on evidence presented, the Inquiry concluded that it would not be feasible for Australia to build in time a completely new, safe and permanent below ground nuclear waste repository. It is fanciful to claim that Australia can successfully undertake and complete this highly complex, dangerous and expensive task, especially given that successive Australian governments have failed for over thirty years to develop a national facility for the management of low and intermediate level waste.
- The presence and maintenance of nuclear-powered and/or nuclear-armed submarines create significant risks to urban areas adjacent to bases where currently there are no safety guidelines or emergency protocols to manage any incident arising from an accident or armed attack.

From submarine to storage: the five stages



13. AUKUS creates negative social impacts

- The government has provided no assessment of social risks for communities arising from expanding bases and the long-term stationing of foreign troops. Increased sexual violence in the vicinity of large US bases is a documented reality: women bear the brunt of these social impacts.

> "It is stupid of everyone not to acknowledge the great risk."
>
> Aunty Barb Nicholson, Previous Citizen of the Year
>
> Live from Wollongong Hearing, 11 August 2026

- First Nations communities are affected by potential nuclear waste storage on their lands; and have already experienced adverse impacts and continuing harms from nuclear testing. To date there has been no commitment from the government to the foundation principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for First Nations peoples in relation to AUKUS radioactive waste management.

> "South Australian Traditional Owners have consistently rejected proposals for nuclear waste facilities because of their lived experience with the devastating legacy of radioactive contamination. The historical trauma resulting from British nuclear weapons testing during the 1950s and 1960s – including displacement, illness and ongoing damage to Country – continues to affect communities today."
>
> Mothers for a Sustainable South Australia
>
> Submission No. 374

- The government has provided no detailed assessment of environmental impacts, including specific damage to natural ecosystems from the expansion of bases to accommodate nuclear-powered submarines.

> "We have very little confidence about how seriously the public will be engaged and how seriously the radioactive elements of this project are being assessed in environmental terms."
>
> Mia Pepper,
>
> Conservation Council
>
> Live from Fremantle Hearing 29 July 2026

14. AUKUS opens the door to nuclear weapons in Australia

AUKUS further facilitates the presence of nuclear weapons in Australia and the region. This is because of Australia's current policy of 'don't ask, don't tell' in response to the US policy of 'neither confirm nor deny'.

The Force Posture Agreement does not currently prevent the US from deploying nuclear weapons on Australian territory, such as B52 bombers at RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory. Current Virginia-class submarines can be nuclear-armed, although this is not normally the case. Future Virginia-class (Blocks V and VI), however, will be nuclear-armed.

> "We are now in a situation where, because of the AUKUS strategy of integrated deterrence in defence of US regional primacy, Australia is more likely to be attacked, potentially with nuclear weapons."
>
> Dr Michael Keating AC and Jon Stanford
>
> Former Secretary and former Division Head, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
>
> Submission No.158

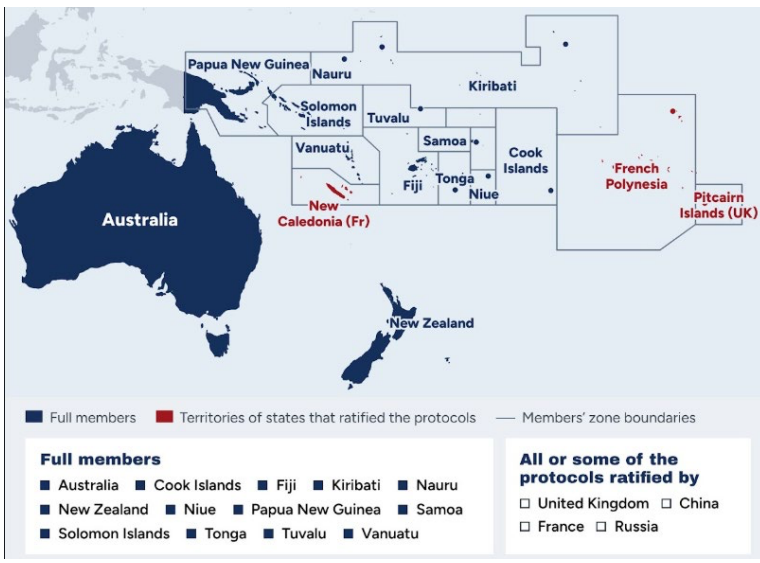
McCaul also said it was "logical to assume" US nuclear powered submarines rotating through Australian bases could also be nuclear armed after 2032, and that Australia's participation in a US war against China over Taiwan was assumed by the US military establishment.

"Australia, being a Five Eyes [intelligence-sharing network member] and an ally of the United States, would be at odds with China invading Taiwan and threatening the Indo-Pacific."

US Republican Congressman Michael McCaul, quoted by Ben Doherty

The Guardian 18 September 2026

Treaty of Rarotonga, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty Status



- Stationing of nuclear weapons in Australia is prohibited by treaty. Australia is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Treaty of Rarotonga, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. AUKUS is incompatible with these treaties.

15. AUKUS fails to provide more jobs

The government has exaggerated the number of jobs generated by AUKUS.

A similar amount of money spent on clean energy transition, healthcare and education would create up to three times more jobs.

> Education Spending: creates about 13 jobs per $1 million, nearly three times more than military funding.
>
> Healthcare Spending: creates roughly 9 jobs per $1 million, representing about an 84% increase over the military sector.
>
> Infrastructure and Clean Energy: creates 7 to 8 jobs per $1 million, yielding a 24% to 64% increase over military investments.
>
> Military Spending: generates only about 5 jobs per $1 million (including direct and supply chain positions).
>
> Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament
>
> Submission No. 1003

The government has to date failed to provide credible evidence to support the claim of 20,000 jobs. More jobs would have been created by the abandoned French submarine program than by AUKUS.

> "When Australia cancelled the French Attack class contract in September 2021, we did not just cancel a submarine. We cancelled a deal for 12 conventionally-powered submarines to be built onshore, in Australia, by Australian workers."
>
> Electrical Trades Union
>
> Submission No.71

More jobs will be created in the US and the UK than in Australia. The current construction of naval bases near Perth and Adelaide are taking skilled builders, plumbers and electricians away from building houses, hospitals and schools.

16. AUKUS encourages further penetration of the education system by the US/UK military-industrial complex

Pillar II is not well understood in the community.

The government's priority to boost defence research and exports is distorting the STEM education sector and changing the nature of tertiary education.

Universities are becoming too dependent on defence research and development grants and alliances to the detriment of other research opportunities.

> "The Commonwealth has committed $128 million to fund more than 4,000 additional STEM places across 16 universities specifically to grow the workforce for the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine pathway. In addition, the Australian Submarine Agency's Propel program offers up to 3,000 scholarships to STEM students, pairing financial support with mentoring from figures in the defence and engineering sectors."
>
> Sydney Peace Foundation
>
> Submission No. 640

Government has allowed increasing involvement in the education system by the military-industrial sector with the introduction of specific AUKUS-related programs for primary and secondary students.

> "Unfortunately, the Australian education sector has already been infiltrated by funding and influence of defence related interests."
>
> Daniel McClelland, First Nations Officer
>
> National Union of Students
>
> Submission No. 435

17. Pillar II and AI concerns are unaddressed

Concerns were raised that Pillar II agreements erode existing controls around intellectual property and indemnity. There is growing concern about the use of AI linked to autonomous and uncontrolled weapons. Ethical issues concerning lethal autonomous weapons systems require regulation to ensure guardrails and accountability of human responsibility.

18. There are viable alternatives to AUKUS Pillar 1

The Inquiry was advised that there are credible alternatives to the current AUKUS plan that are less expensive and more suitable for the self-reliant defence of Australia.

- These alternatives include other capable submarine platforms that could be acquired in greater numbers and at reduced cost, combined with autonomous underwater and joint sea/air capabilities.
- A more independent Australian submarine and maritime warfare capability would better contribute to the defence of Australia and provide a demonstrable deterrent to any aggressor.

Alternatives might include, for instance:

- the French LEU nuclear-powered Suffren-class
- the South Korean KSS-III submarine
- the German ThyssenKrupp Type 212CD submarine being acquired by Canada.

Canada, a Five Eyes country with a similar submarine history to Australia and also in need of defending its long maritime borders, has decided to continue with modern conventionally-powered submarines. Due to their complexity and the extreme conditions under which they operate, submarines require regular maintenance and trained personnel. And so, fleet size matters; for every single submarine on active service, the standard ratio is 3:1, which means for each one operational, two are undergoing regular maintenance. Experts advise that a minimum of 12 submarines are required to maintain a viable submarine service. AUKUS does not achieve this.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE COMMUNITY

The future of AUKUS will greatly depend on the role the public plays in sharing information, participating in public debate, and interacting with the political system, including in the lead-up to the next federal election.

FOR GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

1. Terminate AUKUS Pillar I
2. Consider and determine a Plan B for Pillar I
3. Suspend plans for a US naval base near Perth (SRFW)
4. Suspend AUKUS work at the Osborne naval precinct in Adelaide
5. Cease seconding RAN submariners on US submarines
6. Review and recast AUKUS Pillar II
7. Convene a Royal Commission into AUKUS
8. Develop a comprehensive national security strategy
9. Recalibrate our alliance with the US
10. Recalibrate our security relationship with China
11. Strengthen regional peace and security
12. Disband ANNPSR and transfer any legacy responsibilities to the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)
13. Release details of the Office of National Intelligence 2022 threat assessment on national security risks of climate change
14. Disband AFP AUKUS Command
15. National security is a key priority for all parliamentarians
16. Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) audit of AUKUS

Based on the findings in chapter 3, we make one principal recommendation for the Australian community, and highlight sixteen further recommendations for action by the federal government and parliamentarians.

FOR THE COMMUNITY

The government's failure to participate and contribute to this Public Inquiry suggests they will likely ignore our recommendations.

Accordingly, the future of AUKUS will greatly depend on the role the public plays in sharing information, participating in public debate, and interacting with the political system, including in the lead-up to the next federal election currently expected no later than May 2028.

AUKUS was contrived in secret and announced without parliamentary or public consultation in September 2021. More than five years later in November 2026, AUKUS remains highly contentious. The government still has no mandate for AUKUS, an exorbitantly expensive decision that will impact the security of Australians for generations to come, and which we have assessed will not make us safer.

Our Report provides a useful information resource to assist understanding and inform community responses to the AUKUS pact.

FOR GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

1. Terminate AUKUS Pillar I

- AUKUS Pillar I - the acquisition of HEU nuclear-powered attack submarines - should be scrapped as soon as possible, before any further taxpayer expense is incurred.
- The Government should give notice and terminate AUKUS Pillar I agreements on the grounds of the inability of the US and the UK to guarantee the terms of the delivery schedule, and the adverse impacts of inevitable delay on Australia's submarine capability.

> "AWPR recommends that Australia give notice to the US and British government to terminate the AUKUS agreement."
>
> Australians for War Powers Reform
>
> Submission No. 687

- Due to unacceptable long-term intergenerational risks, LEU nuclear-powered submarines should not be considered unless and until a proven safe nuclear waste management and storage regime has been planned, fully costed and agreed by the public. In relation to nuclear waste, it is critical that First Nations' rights are respected through genuine transparency, dialogue and the mandated adoption and application of the international principle of FPIC.

> "No radioactive waste facility associated with the AUKUS program should be located on Aboriginal Land or Sea Country without the free, prior and informed consent of the relevant Traditional Owners, consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."
>
> Gregory Andrews, Lyrebird Dreaming
>
> Submission No. 994

2. Consider and determine a Plan B for Pillar I

- Subject to thorough cost-benefit and value-for-money considerations, commence the Life-of-Type Extension (LOTE) of Collins-class submarines without further delay, or acquire an interim replacement for the Collins-class.
- To ensure Australia maintains a viable submarine capability for the defence of Australia and our northern approaches over the long term, a Plan B to replace the Collins-class submarines is required urgently.
- The replacement for Collins should ensure sovereign control and be able to operate with allies when required. The government should undertake a rigorous procurement evaluation, risk benefit analysis and comprehensive consideration of alternative and less costly options to inform Plan B. Specific consideration needs to be given to increasing employment opportunities, maximising local content, and achieving a long-term continuous build program.
- The Inquiry revealed evidence of credible high-quality alternatives with either conventional or LEU propulsion systems. Should the LEU option be preferred, the safe management of low and intermediate level radioactive waste would first need to be guaranteed, assured and costed.
- The submarine capability must be considered as an ADF joint capability, linking with air and ground assets and optimized modern autonomous and drone systems and sea mine warfare. The capability should not be optimized for offensive operations as part of a US campaign to contain China, which is beyond the capability of Australia and more likely, and unnecessarily, to lead to war.
- A fleet of 12 submarines is required to maintain a viable submarine capability, even given the extended range of nuclear-powered submarines.

> "Alternatively, a much smaller investment – say, in a fleet of twenty-four conventional subs, costing $200 billion – would still deliver more combat power where it counts than eight nuclear-powered boats, and deliver it much faster and with far less risk of failure."
>
> Hugh White AO, Emeritus Professor Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU
>
> Australian Foreign Affairs, February 2024
>
> Submission No. 1020

3. Suspend plans for a US naval base near Perth (SRFW)

SRFW at HMAS Stirling should be suspended until critical questions on nuclear security, social impact, health and environmental safety are fully examined and agreed through public consultation. Before SRFW can proceed detailed military and civil defence planning is required to address:

- the risk to Australia's security of having US submarines stationed near local suburbs, including Rockingham;
- the environmental and social impacts on the local population;
- preventive medical and remedial action required for the surrounding population in the event of any nuclear radiation accident or incident occurring; and
- confirmation of defence measures required, including costs, to defend the population against inter-continental ballistic missile and/or nuclear attack, and the prevention of state-sponsored terrorist drone attacks against SRFW submarines, facilities and personnel.

4. Suspend AUKUS work at the Osborne naval precinct in Adelaide

For the reasons applicable to SRFW, work on AUKUS at Osborne should be suspended. Facilities and infrastructure suitable for construction or modification of alternative propulsion systems could be continued if considered

necessary. The facilities and infrastructure could then, if necessary, be redeployed for the construction and modification of alternative replacement submarines.

5. Cease seconding RAN submariners on US submarines

The sinking of the Iranian Navy frigate IRIS Dena by the US Navy nuclear-powered submarine USS Charlotte in international waters off the coast of Sri Lanka on 4 March 2026, with three RAN submariners embarked, highlights the dangers of such secondments. The USS Charlotte was not threatened or under attack, and Australia was given no warning of this action. RAN personnel must not be placed in situations where the Australian government has ceded its legal responsibility for the actions of Australian personnel under US or any other foreign command.

6. Review and recast AUKUS Pillar II

There is a pressing need for the government to fast-track research and development in modern technologies including AI to ensure sovereign defence capability. Importantly, this needs to be budgeted and capabilities need to be developed and made operational as quickly as possible.

> "If Pillar II is useful, Australia should pursue the useful elements through publicly controlled, sovereign, accountable and independent assessed pathways."
>
> Michael Sanderson
>
> Concerned citizen
>
> Submission No. 122

The Inquiry found this essential technology requirement did not need to be aligned specifically to AUKUS. Existing defence research partnerships with countries beyond the AUKUS partners already provided a tested and more beneficial model.

The Inquiry also noted that the existing Pillar II arrangements, particularly in respect to sovereign IP, were not beneficial to ensuring Australia's sovereign defence capability. Most advantage accrued to the US and the UK and their defence companies.

> "The Pillar II focus on sharing technologies between partners means in practice a mostly one-way sharing towards the US – that Australian research and IP and Australian government capital will be provided to build up the US defence industry."
>
> Eileen Whitehead
>
> Concerned citizen
>
> Submission No. 698

Cooperative arrangements on the development of advanced technology capabilities should ensure robust guardrails and mechanisms around IP and indemnity, and be entered into with a variety of partners as appropriate.

7. Convene a Royal Commission into AUKUS

The government must convene a Royal Commission into AUKUS to investigate the process, procedures, responsibilities and implementation of the largest-ever defence acquisition in Australia's history. The Royal Commission should investigate the origins and decision-making processes that were followed, ascertain what advice on estimated costs and benefits was provided, what program risks were identified, what assessments were made on the deliverability of US and UK submarines, the implication of the pact for Australia's sovereignty, and what alternatives were considered.

8. Develop a comprehensive national security strategy

Despite the significant degradation in international security Australia has not had a national security strategy since 2013. In this vacuum, 'defence strategy' has become the dominant priority. But defence is only one component of national security. To ensure decisions such as AUKUS are not

repeated, the government must develop a comprehensive national security strategy as a policy imperative.

A national security strategy must go beyond the military dimension and address a range of interconnected risks and inter-related aspects of safeguarding the economic and social wellbeing of the Australian community, as well as contribute to regional and global peace and security.

The national security strategy must reflect the community's understanding of national security priorities. Accordingly, it should not be written exclusively by a small group of bureaucrats and intelligence advisers for sole consideration of the National Security Committee of Cabinet.

9. Recalibrate our alliance with the US

The inconsistency and rapid abandonment of the existing international rule of law that has characterised recent US decision-making is significantly contributing to global uncertainty and instability. The government must, as a matter of priority, recalibrate Australia's relationship with the US to emphasise Australia's national sovereignty and independence.

AUKUS extends the current Force Posture Agreement with the US, providing the US with access to an additional base near Perth. This further jeopardises our sovereignty and control, increasing the likelihood of Australia being targeted in the event of war.

> "Good diplomacy could have protected the alliance, as we negotiated a US-Australian position that argued, on review, there are better ways of managing Australia's submarine needs."
>
> The Hon Bob Carr, Former Minister for Foreign Affairs
>
> Live from Sydney Hearing, 10 August 2026

10. Recalibrate our security relationship with China

China is now a global superpower and the leading power in the Asian region. China's level of activity in the South China Sea and the expansion of its sphere of influence in southeast Asia

and the Pacific introduces a challenging dimension to the Australia-China relationship. China is also our largest trading partner and central to our future prosperity. AUKUS directly threatens this coexistence by contributing to the attempted containment of China. It is clear the AUKUS decision was based on unsubstantiated threats from China and to accord with the US policy to contain and contest China.

Since economic prosperity and national security are core national goals, the government must better inform the community how it intends to manage this critical relationship.

"As to the threat posed by China, there is certainly much about the PRC's recent behaviour to justify security concern in our region, including its international law-defying territorial ambition in, and militarisation of, the South China Sea; its repeatedly stated determination to unify Taiwan with the mainland by force if necessary; its dramatically increasing military capability, including nuclear arsenal; its manifest desire to resume its historical role of regional hegemon, to whom obeisance is due, in South East Asia; its continued assertiveness on other territorial fronts with Japan and India; and its efforts to increase its presence and influence in smaller but strategically significant regional players, including the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste.

"All that acknowledged, panic is not remotely warranted. Much of the behaviour in question is no more than can and should be expected of a hugely trade-dependent, not just regional but now global, economic superpower, resentful of any continuing claim by America to unchallenged primacy in regional and global affairs, and wanting to claim its own strategic space, and to generally reassert some of its historical greatness after more than a century of wounded national pride.

"There is no reason to assume that, Taiwan apart, China would ever contemplate outright military aggression – Hitler, Tojo or Putin-style – against any of its regional neighbours, let alone the US."

Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC KC FASSA FAIIA

Former Minister for Foreign Affairs

Submission No. 27

The government should conduct a thorough assessment of our long-term relationship with China; identifying risks and opportunities and developing a strategy for enhanced cooperation, mindful of China's growth and influence in the region whilst emphasising the crucial importance of a stable rules-based order in international relations.

> "The strategic rationale for AUKUS is founded on the patently false premise that China presents a kinetic threat to Australia."
>
> John Leslie Lander
>
> Former Deputy Ambassador to China | Head of the China Section, DFAT
>
> Submission No. 70

11. Strengthen regional peace and security

AUKUS contributes to an arms race in the Indo-Pacific and does not strengthen prospects for regional peace and security.

The government must adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. AUKUS extends the government's current policy with the US of 'don't ask, don't tell'. This policy does not make Australians safer and should be rescinded.

AUKUS puts into question Australia's commitment to upholding the spirit and intention of the Treaty of Rarotonga, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. Among other requirements, the Treaty prevents the stationing or deployment of nuclear weapons on member territories. Australia's failure to prohibit US nuclear weapons on Australian territory contravenes this requirement.

The government should immediately take steps to honour the ALP's federal platform commitment to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, promised by Anthony Albanese prior to becoming Prime Minister.

The government must strengthen and reinforce regional relationships through strengthened diplomacy, poverty

reduction, confidence-building and peace-building measures based on shared interests, common purpose and methodical risk evaluation, including the risks associated with climate change and pandemics. AUKUS does not contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals which remain critical to Australia's and the region's future security.

> "Importing this material in the form of nuclear-powered submarines could undermine the treaty and compromise Australia's relations with its neighbours in the region"
>
> Dorothea Anthony
>
> Senior Lecturer School of Law, University of Wollongong
>
> Submission No. 759

12. Disband ANNPSR and transfer any legacy responsibilities to the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA)

The cancellation of AUKUS Pillar I would negate the need for ANNPSR, established on 1 November 2025 as Australia's independent regulator for naval nuclear propulsion, reporting through the Minister for Defence to the Commonwealth Parliament. This reporting arrangement is an example of 'regulatory capture', where the organisation's 'independence' is conflicted and constrained.

Should a future LEU (not HEU) nuclear-powered submarine be selected to replace the Collins-class (or its successor), the independent regulatory responsibilities should remain with ARPANSA. ARPANSA was established in February 1999 to protect the Australian public, workers and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation. ARPANSA currently reports to Parliament through the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, and resides in the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

13. Release details of the Office of National Intelligence 2022 threat assessment on national security risks of climate change

AUKUS commands an astronomical budget to contain China. Yet the Paris Agreement threshold of 1.5 degree temperature increase – beyond which climate risk increases greatly – has been breached, meaning climate change is a much higher national security threat. The Office of National Intelligence climate and security risk assessment of 2022 has not yet been released, despite indications that the threats it identified from climate change are extreme. We recommend this report be immediately released.

14. Disband AFP AUKUS Command

The cancellation of AUKUS Pillar 1 negates the need for AUKUS Command, enabling the redeployment of scarce AFP policing resources to better protect Australians against higher threat priorities.

The Inquiry noted community concern about the responsibilities of AUKUS Command. The need to protect AUKUS bases and ensure the protection of nuclear waste was understood and appreciated, but there was concern regarding the possible role of AUKUS Command in preventing peaceful demonstrations and rallies against AUKUS.

15. National security is a key priority for all parliamentarians

All Senators and MPs, regardless of party affiliation, have a primary responsibility to consider national security as a key priority in relation to the wellbeing and protection of their constituents.

MPs and Senators should actively call for and debate significant matters of national security such as AUKUS. Since AUKUS was announced in 2021 there has been insufficient and ineffective parliamentary debate on Australia's largest ever defence decision. This lack of scrutiny erodes the community's trust in parliament and democracy.

All parliamentarians should support a parliamentary inquiry into AUKUS, and insist that the newly established Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence responsible for AUKUS is representative of parliamentarians across the political divide.

Given the significance of AUKUS to Australia's future national security, all parliamentarians should actively seek, and represent, the views of their constituents on AUKUS.

16. Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) audit of AUKUS

The ANAO should undertake an urgent and comprehensive audit of AUKUS. It must exercise its audit powers fully to ensure probity, efficiency and efficacy of AUKUS contractual and procurement arrangements, without security classification preventions.

> "Former prime ministers, defence ministers, staffers, admirals all spinning through the revolving door into lobbying firms, boards, and advisory gigs … defence contracts, consulting fees, board seats. Heaps of money flowing while the rest of us get the bill for $368 billion."
>
> Wage Peace
>
> Submission No.661

The Revolving Door in Australia

	FROM	TO
Scott Morrison	Prime Minister 2018–22	→ Vice Chairman, American Global Strategies Joined DYNE Maritime, venture capital in AUKUS-related military technology
Nick Warner	Head, Office of National Intelligence	→ Senior Adviser, American Global Strategies
Arthur Sinodinos	Former Senator; Ambassador to the US	→ Senior Adviser, American Global Strategies Co-chair, business working group, AUKUS Forum
Joel Fitzgibbon	Labor Minister for Defence	→ Co-chair, business working group, AUKUS Forum
Christopher Pyne	Liberal Minister for Defence	→ Pyne and Partners, strong focus on AUKUS Chair, NIOA (armaments and munitions)
Joe Hockey	Liberal Treasurer; Ambassador to the US	→ Founded Bondi Partners; global chair is former Navy Secretary Richard V Spencer
Gavin Turnbull AM	Air Vice-Marshal (retd); Deputy Chief of Air Force	→ Board member, Bondi Partners*
Gus McLachlan	Major General, Australian Army	→ Board member, Bondi Partners
Peter Yates AM, CSC	Air Vice-Marshal (retd); Defence Enterprise Resource Planning program manager	→ Board member, Bondi Partners
Mark Purcell AM	Rear Admiral (retd); major acquisitions	→ Board member, Bondi Partners
Peter McGauran	Coalition MP	→ Adviser, Bondi Partners
Peter Beattie	Queensland Labor Premier	→ Adviser, Bondi Partners
Paul Papalia	Western Australian Defence Industries Minister	→ Board, Duratec, which had just won a $281m joint venture contract for AUKUS upgrades at HMAS Stirling
David Feeney	Assistant Minister for Defence	→ Advisory board, NIOA**
Brendan O'Connor	Long-serving Labor Minister	→ Board member, NIOA
Lee Goddard	Rear Admiral (retd); CEO, Australian Missile Corporation	→ Board member, NIOA
Tim Brown AM	Commodore (retd); Royal Australian Navy Director of Submarines	→ Managing Director, H&B Defence Australia

Notes:
Compiled from public sources
** a strategic investment and advisory company*
*** an Australian family armaments company*

5.THE PUBLIC'S VIEWS: WHAT WE LEARNED

The Public Inquiry received over 1,000 submissions and heard from more than 150 witnesses. Many of the submissions were detailed and expert. Others made their points briefly. Taken together, they are a significant repository of advice that government should have sought before committing taxpayers to an agreement of this magnitude and risk.

Cost, Jobs and Fiscal Impact

Overall, a great majority of submissions were opposed to the huge expense of AUKUS.

> "There's an absolute cost issue, and there's also an opportunity cost. $368 billion — if you think about what you can spend with that amount of money on defence and indeed other things."
>
> Rex Patrick, former Senator for South Australia and former RAN Submariner
>
> Live from Adelaide Hearing, 16 July 2026

Successive Australian governments have been reluctant to release detailed information on the capability, financial and other policy aspects of AUKUS. Ministers have made numerous announcements unsupported by facts and analysis. To judge from Ministerial statements, media releases and the two Defence strategy documents released in 2024 and 2026, the rationale for AUKUS appears to be based on containing and countering China, and providing economic benefits to Australia in terms of job creation and skills development. These are assertions without supporting evidence.

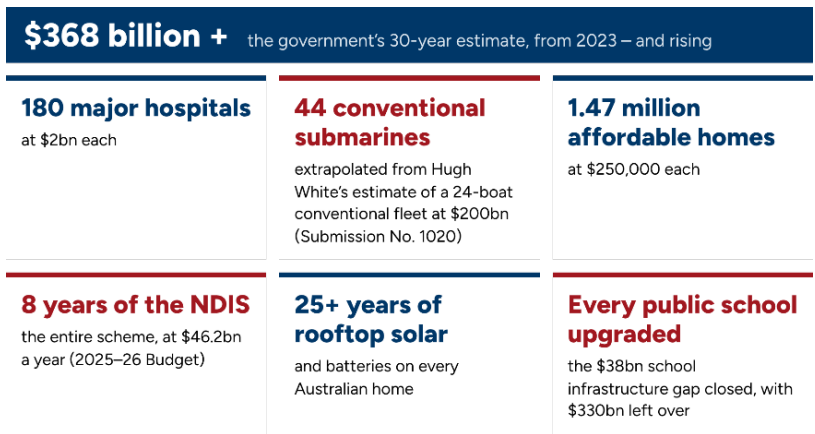
The AUKUS Pillar I cost estimate of $368 billion has not been accompanied with any detailed analysis or scoping estimates. This figure does not account for the complex and costly construction, management, safe storage and protection of high-level weapons-grade radioactive nuclear waste, a figure estimated to be at least $180 billion.

Nonetheless, costs are already being incurred, and cash flows in the form of submarine construction industry assistance – on a 'no strings attached' basis – to both the UK and the US have so far exceeded $4 billion of an estimated $9.2 billion. Significant sums have been allocated and works commenced for submarine facilities in WA and SA – up to $25 billion over the decade for the Henderson naval precinct at Rockingham, of which $12 billion has been committed; and up to $30 billion for the Osborne naval precinct at Adelaide, of which $8.5 billion has been committed.

AUKUS has become the highest priority for the ADF. Anecdotal evidence suggests savings are being garnished from across the Defence portfolio to fund AUKUS, with consequent belt-tightening and resultant capability impacts across each of the three services.

At a time of economic austerity for taxpayers, successive governments have failed to justify the enormous cost of AUKUS in terms of the opportunity costs of other national security priorities. A significant number of submissions highlighted the opportunity costs of climate disruption, education, housing, cyber protection, AI regulation, health and aged care, closing-the-gap and other social services. Submissions pointed to high levels of concern at the mid and long-term impacts of an open-ended approach to expenditure on AUKUS.

The estimated cost of AUKUS is equivalent to …



In April 2026 Defence raised the submarine budget for the next ten years by a third, to as much as $96 billion. The 30-year $368bn figure has not been updated and comes from a single, undocumented 2023 estimate; the real cost could land anywhere from under $300bn to over $500bn.

Citizens questioned the robustness of job creation estimates and held deep reservations about whether the extended skills needed for such a project could be developed from such a slender national base.

> "A nuclear submarine base is the lowest-value form of defence investment a region can receive – and for the Hunter it would come at the direct expense of the industries that will carry this region's workers through the largest industrial transition in our history."
>
> Hunter Workers' Union
>
> Submission No. 1024

Submissions also cited research that job generation would be two to three times greater if the same funding were invested in other sectors such as energy transformation, housing construction and health care, than in AUKUS.

> "A rushed decision to build these boats in the US or the UK means two generations of Australian workers will lose access to highly skilled, well-paid, secure jobs."
>
> Matt Murphy, Electrical Trades Union
>
> Live from Adelaide Hearing 16 July 2026

Members of the public also questioned whether labour mobility would be sufficient to sustain the relocation of skilled workers from the eastern seaboard, where most of the relevant universities and TAFEs are located, to the less populated parts of South Australia and Western Australia.

> "We are being told that supplying steel from Port Kembla for the AUKUS submarine program will somehow offset these risks. It will not. … if you want to consider a real boost to our steel industry, look to the renewable sector."
>
> Arthur Rorris, South Coast Labour Council
>
> Submission No. 449

Strategic Rationale

Many submissions highlighted the lack of strategic rationale for the AUKUS decision, and that after a period of five years, there was still no coherent justification.

The announcement of AUKUS was perceived as a stage-managed political event lacking policy substance. The US President and the two Prime Ministers worked on quite different assumptions.

President Biden locked Australia into a deep American embrace for at least half a century. UK Prime Minister Johnson undercut France's submarine contract with Australia while securing the promise of Australian funding for the renewal of the British submarine construction industry.

Prime Minister Morrison parlayed both American and British interest into a submarine capability that was otherwise well beyond Australia's reach.

Australia agreed to fund these non-convergent objectives with no guarantee of success and with no mandate from the Australian people. Australia's most expensive defence acquisition in history had been prepared in secret and announced in the absence of community consultation and parliamentary scrutiny.

AUKUS reflected no common strategic basis, saving vague propositions such as 'disruptive times', 'a complex strategic environment' and 'global uncertainty'. China loomed in the imaginations of each AUKUS partner, though for different and unsubstantiated reasons.

Many of the submissions to the Public Inquiry identified the preoccupation with the China 'threat' based on assertion rather than compelling evidence. Some submissions acknowledged the risks of China's economic and strategic rise. They questioned how these risks might change over time, and whether a massive investment in a single capability – eight nuclear-powered submarines over half a century – could possibly protect Australia in the near future, if at all.

Several submissions noted that, over the past four decades, strategic policy principles have shifted from the primary goal of 'denial' of any adversary to a more 'threat-based' focus –

the unsaid threat being China. They commented that armed aggression from China was an unlikely scenario unless Australia made it so through AUKUS and its alliance with the US.

Submissions highlighted the fact that the attack class of submarines to be purchased under AUKUS clearly represented an offensive capability primarily to support the US in containing China by attacking and destroying China's ballistic missile submarines. This proposition was generally rejected, with a priority given to the defence of Australia and its northern approaches.

> "China is a distant power and there is no indication that its leaders intend supposed harm to Australia."
>
> Adjunct Professor Dr Albert Palazzo
>
> Submission No. 389

Many submissions noted the changing nature of warfare with the use of drones and autonomous weapons, the increasing vulnerability of large weapons platforms, and advances in detection of submarines. They questioned the high cost and strategic value of investing in a small number of nuclear-powered attack submarines when alternative and more cost-effective options could be considered and acquired more quickly.

There was an underlying concern that Australia lacked a cohesive and comprehensive national security strategy that brought together Australia's diplomatic, economic, military and political resources, skills and advice to provide integrated guidance for government decision-making in line with the public's national security priorities.

In short, the general tenor of the public's submission was the relative poverty of government strategic policy explanations to date, and the lack of evidence for the strategic basis for AUKUS.

Sovereignty and Independence

Of the many matters addressed in submissions, constraints on Australian sovereignty and independence of action raised the deepest concerns.

Government announcements consistently used the terms 'sovereign' and 'sovereignty' in a flexible and non-specific way to justify AUKUS. For government the emphasis is on sovereign ownership of the capability. For the concerned public the emphasis is on sovereign control and decision-making in the use of AUKUS submarines. This latter interpretation reflected the accepted understanding of sovereignty in international politics: the foundational principle that a state holds supreme independent authority. Many expressed concern that Australian submarines would be part of the US arsenal, particularly because the US would only sell their second-hand Virginia-class submarines on the condition they would be used in accordance with US priorities. Defence Minister Marles' declaration that US and Australian submarines would be "interchangeable" under AUKUS added to the community's concern of loss of sovereignty and independence of action.

Many submissions expressed concern at the erosion of Australia's military, political and strategic independence resulting from a loss of agency. AUKUS was an expensive exercise in further reducing Australia's independence of action.

In the opinion of many, AUKUS accorded primacy to American interests over Australian interests, validating American assumptions that Australia would automatically continue to support US military interventions. Submissions were critical of the increased military integration with the US that AUKUS facilitates.

Some technical submissions extended their analysis of the lack of sovereignty and independence to the specific industrial, maintenance and sustainment demands of the Virginia-class submarines and Australia's lack of relevant capabilities.

> "Our resources companies, agricultural exporters, universities, and technology sector are all building independent relationships across the Indo-Pacific on Australian terms, without waiting for external direction."
>
> Barbara Jackson
>
> Concerned citizen
>
> Submission No. 133

A number of submissions offered sophisticated understandings of the economic, political and social dimensions of 'sovereignty' and 'independence'. They recognised that examination of these matters through a strategic policy lens, proceeding beyond military objectives in a time of conflict to the 'whole of nation' basis of any credible national strategy went to the core issue of whether Australia was yet, or could be, in a position to integrate such an advanced military capability into our national industrial and infrastructure system.

Operational Sustainability

> "Breaks all the rules of sound project management without any due diligence."
>
> Ian Dunlop, Australian Security Leaders Climate Group
>
> Submission No. 466

A common theme was the view that the complexities of submarine ownership and operation were of high risk and remained unaddressed. Concerns ranged from initial design, through construction, maintenance, sustainment, refit and eventual disposal (including highly enriched uranium); to civil and military personnel recruitment, training and career management. The 'optimal pathway' for AUKUS would require Australia to crew and maintain three different types of submarines simultaneously. This would be a significant challenge, particularly given the historical difficulties experienced in maintaining operational capability of a single

Collins-class. Many submissions asked: 'How can such an ambitious program proceed when we don't know the answers to critical questions?, like what happens if the yet to be tested SSN-AUKUS nuclear propulsion system fails to operate safely?'

> "Yet for the four decades since, the west has hosted the fleet without the means to fully sustain, maintain and defend it. The deepest maintenance stayed in the east. We did not build the full industrial backbone in Perth, and we did not raise the base defences to standard. That is the pattern AUKUS now risks repeating, on a larger scale and with far less time to build up."
>
> The Hon Linda Reynolds CSC,
>
> Former Australian Minister for Defence
>
> Live from Fremantle Hearing, 29 June 2026

Experts advised that 3 submarines were required to have one operationally available. Further, submissions stated that a minimum of 12 submarines are required to sustain operations, training and maintenance. This number would be required even with the extended range of nuclear-powered submarines.

Submissions also raised doubts concerning Australia's longer-term ability to address the enormous cost overheads and muster the skill set required to sustain the Collins-class and AUKUS submarines.

Highly credible expert presentations, including from retired Rear Admiral Peter Briggs, noted the serious lack of adequate construction and maintenance infrastructure – dry dock, floating dock and alongside maintenance wharves – to enable Australia to manage and sustain its projected eight nuclear-powered submarines. With dependence rather than partnership as the default foundation for AUKUS, sovereignty and independence would be unattainable and operational sustainability both costly and questionable.

"There is currently no realistic engineering timeline to construct, certify, and staff a nuclear-capable dry dock or floating dock at Henderson by the 2032 transfer window. Failing to meet these statutory milestones legally compromises the transfer certification and importantly, leaves Submarine Rotational Force-West without essential domestic emergency docking support."

Rear Admiral Peter Briggs AO RAN (Ret'd)

Submission No. 591

Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Environmental Consequences

Numerous submissions addressed both the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear waste aspects of AUKUS.

They questioned how it was even possible for AUKUS to be approved and commence in the absence of an approved and tested regime to safely store, manage and protect high-level weapons-grade nuclear radioactive waste when submarines are decommissioned. If neither of the AUKUS partners had resolved this problem after 60 years then how could Australia achieve this, and where would highly toxic nuclear waste be safely stored and protected for generations? According to evidence presented, the cost of such a facility was estimated at more than $180 billion, but no figure had been included in AUKUS cost estimates. Grave concerns were raised about the failure to urgently address this issue in advance of any acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines.

Several submissions noted that Australia's proud record of engagement in international nuclear arms control and disarmament activities would further decline under AUKUS.

"Australian governments continue to accept without question the US 'neither confirm, nor deny' policy in relation to nuclear weapons on visiting US vessels or aircraft."

Dr Margaret Beavis OAM & Dr Sue Wareham OAM

Medical Association for Prevention of War

Submission No. 479

Concern was expressed that US submarines visiting or basing from SRFW near Perth or other Australian ports might be nuclear-armed, thereby raising unacceptable risks and breaching Australian treaty obligations.

Submissions addressed two main nuclear non-proliferation issues:

- Australia's interests and responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; and
- Australia's obligations under the Treaty of Rarotonga, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Most advocated the strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation safeguards under Article 3 of the Treaty, and strongly criticised nuclear weapons states for their lack of progress in meeting the weapons reduction and elimination requirements of Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They argued strongly that the stationing of nuclear weapons in Australia was non-compliant with the treaty.

> "If Australia were to proceed with the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS as planned, it would become the first state in the world to exploit the so-called 'paragraph 14' loophole in IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements."
>
> International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
>
> Submission No. 762

Australia's obligations under the Treaty of Rarotonga were incompatible with any US possession and storage of nuclear weapons when 'rotating' through Australia. They pointed out that Australia would be in breach of the Treaty.

Submissions also urged the government to advance Australia's signature of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Where Australia had once been an advocate for comprehensive and effective international measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to limit their numbers in the arsenals of nuclear weapons states, recent

governments had replaced arms control advocacy with acquiescence to the status quo. AUKUS further entrenched this approach.

Given Australia's historical insistence that nuclear weapons are not to be stationed or stored in Australia, submissions were adamant that Australian governments had a moral as well as a strategic need to uphold the nuclear weapon-free basis of the Treaty of Rarotonga. It was felt to be essential that the Australian government rescind its current 'don't ask, don't tell' policy in deference to the US practice of 'neither confirm nor deny'. Simply expressed, the US must not be permitted to deploy nuclear weapons on Australian soil or territorial waters.

Quite a number of submissions were opposed to nuclear propulsion in any circumstance. Those that were either ambivalent or accepting stressed the need for strict and effective nuclear waste management protocols. A number of the technical submissions offered cogent analyses of the relative advantages, from a waste management perspective, of LEU reactors such as those operated by France, in comparison with the HEU reactors operated by the US and the UK. Others pointed out the availability of 'off-the-shelf' technologically advanced diesel/electric propulsion submarines that would be fit-for-purpose for Australian conditions.

> "I have said it before – my Country is not a military zone. It is an important place – culturally, spiritually, and environmentally."
>
> Suzanne Haseldine
>
> Kokatha Woman from Ceduna
>
> Submission No. 987

Submissions highlighted the impact of waste storage on First Nations communities, and the history of injustice to indigenous peoples on nuclear issues. Successive Australian Governments have failed to recognise and respect First Nations rights in relation to over three decades of unsuccessful attempts to site a national radioactive waste

facility for domestic low and intermediate civil nuclear waste. This lived reality is in sharp contrast with the blanket assertions provided by government, without detail, over plans to manage the far more costly, complex and hazardous weapons-grade AUKUS nuclear waste. Submissions noted the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to which Australia is a signatory, and the importance of FPIC. Submissions emphasised the fact that there has been no government commitment to this principle.

Some submissions highlighted environmental impacts of extending existing or establishing new bases, including threats to local eco-systems and biodiversity.

> "Environmental impacts: the extensive dredging required to deepen ports and shipping channels through the sensitive ecosystem of Derbal Nara … [that] are highly sensitive, irreplaceable marine and terrestrial ecosystems. They support critically endangered species and threatened ecological communities, highly endemic flora, migratory fauna, and the nearby Shoalwater Islands Marine Park."
>
> Nuclear Free WA
>
> Submission No. 339

Advanced Capabilities and Education

Submissions were supportive of the need for the government to fast-track research and development in modern technologies including AI to ensure sovereign defence capability was made operational as quickly as possible. Accordingly, the technologies in AUKUS Pillar II were not strongly contested, but needed to be costed and prioritised. It was noted that many of the Pillar II technologies were not relevant to submarine warfare and that these technologies need not be specifically aligned to AUKUS, particularly as existing defence research partnerships with countries beyond the AUKUS partners already provided a tested and more beneficial model.

Submissions addressed the complexities associated with Pillar II design, delivery, evaluation and evolution, and the

enormous education and training demands that advanced capabilities impose on Australia's knowledge economy.

> "The government has not published a baseline comparison demonstrating what AUKUS Pillar II achieves that existing bilateral frameworks do not."
>
> Policy Watchdog Australia
>
> Submission No. 59

While some submissions focused on educational, engineering and industrial shortfalls, others acknowledged that AUKUS, and submarine design and development more generally, offered substantial opportunities for Australia to expand its technological know-how.

The stop-start nature of Australia's naval shipbuilding was identified, along with the consequent financial costs associated with the decommissioning of construction programs, only to be re-funded later when a new Australian-built project emerged. Submissions advocated for a continuous shipbuilding approach to ensure naval capability in general, and non-HEU nuclear submarine capability in particular.

Some submissions referenced an implicit 'cringe' in Australia's approach to naval construction, where self-doubt about Australia's industrial capabilities and capacity engender deference to the ability of other countries. Several submissions recommended positive steps to counter this tendency, including more ambition in moving to continuous build programs, establishing bigger and more capable construction facilities, greater coordination and cooperation between the various shipbuilding facilities located around Australia, and integration and management arrangements that cut duplication, red tape and over-control by the Department of Defence.

There was an underlying optimism that Australian industry could rise to the task of sustained and high-quality submarine construction. There was significant support for the concept of 'sovereign capability', not only as a political aspiration but as a result of the latent capacity of Australian industry.

> "We believe AUKUS is a threat to peace and jobs, a wasteful diversion of critical public funds, a risk to Australia's independence, environment and community safety, and a driver of militarisation in society and educational institutions."
>
> Australian Education Union,
> New South Wales Teachers Federation Branch
>
> Submission No. 1026

At the same time, notable concern was expressed at the increasing infiltration of education by defence industry which had accelerated with AUKUS, including submarine-related activities in schools.

> "NTEU is concerned that financial pressures and defence-related funding opportunities are increasingly reshaping university priorities in ways that risk subordinating independent research and education to military and industrial objectives."
>
> National Tertiary Education Union
>
> Submission No. 219

Submissions relating to the tertiary sector also noted that many areas of research (including peace studies) were underfunded, but that defence project funding had increased substantially. This had resulted in a reorientation of teaching and research priorities. AUKUS Pillar II was viewed as entrenching researchers in projects where there are inadequate protocols and regulations regarding exports, intellectual property and indemnity.

> "For Australia, the issue is not just whether Australian technology companies participate in AUKUS projects. It is also whether Australian-origin technology remains associated with Australian ownership, decision-making authority, production, and commercial returns as it is integrated into a much larger trilateral defence technology system."
>
> Digital Rights Watch
> Submission No.461

In providing input on Pillar II, some expert submissions raised alarm of unregulated AI and lethal autonomous weapons systems, emphasising the urgent need for regulations, guardrails and ethical guidelines.

Alternatives Considered

Submissions, in particular those offered by experts, outlined alternatives to the AUKUS submarine program. Submissions outlined options including: a larger fleet of conventionally-powered submarines, LEU-powered nuclear submarines, and different mixes of submarine capabilities that were viewed as more desirable for Australia's needs.

It is beyond the scope of the Inquiry to comment on which alternatives should be pursued, other than to note the potential for purchasing off-the-shelf submarines from France, South Korea, or Germany/Norway (as Canada has just done), that could be fitted specifically for Australian conditions at a cost well below that of AUKUS.

The government should urgently undertake a rigorous procurement evaluation, risk benefit analysis and comprehensive consideration of alternate less costly options.

There was common agreement that Australia should maintain an affordable and independent submarine capability more relevant than AUKUS for the defence of Australia.

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ANNEX A: KEY AUKUS GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

The Force Posture Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America (2014)

Agreement between the Government of Australia, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Government of the United States for the Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information (ENNPIA) (November 2021)

East Coast Nuclear Base assessments, (2022–23) NSW Cabinet Office and Premier's Department, tabled in the NSW Legislative Council, May 2026

The Defence Legislation Amendment (Naval Nuclear Propulsion) Act 2023

Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Bill 2023

Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety (Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023

Agreement among the Government of Australia, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Government of the United States of America for Cooperation related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion (ANNPA) (August 2024)

Defence Trade Controls Amendment Act 2024

Defence Amendment (Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Act) 2024

Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024

> *Regulation 111 State and Territory laws that do not apply in relation to a regulated activity*
>
> *For the purposes of section 135 of the Act:*
>
> *(a) subsection (2) of this section prescribes State or Territory laws; and*
>
> *(b) subsection (3) prescribes provisions of State or Territory laws; that do not apply in relation to a regulated activity. The following laws of a State or Territory are prescribed:*
>
> *(a) the Protection from Harmful Radiation Act 1990 (NSW);*

(b) the Radiation Act 2005 (Vic.);

(c) the Radiation Safety Act 1999 (Qld);

(d) the Nuclear Activities Regulation Act 1978 (WA);

(e) the Nuclear Waste Storage and Transportation (Prohibition) Act 1999 (WA);

(f) the Radiation Safety Act 1975 (WA);

(g) the Nuclear Waste Storage Facility (Prohibition) Act 2000 (SA);

(h) the Radiation Protection and Control Act 2021 (SA);

(i) the Radiation Protection Act 2005 (Tas.);

(j) the Radiation Protection Act 2006 (ACT);

(k) the Radiation Protection Act 2004 (NT);

(l) an instrument made under an Act mentioned in any of paragraphs (a) to (k).

Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the Geelong Treaty) (July 2025)

Defence Housing Australia Amendment Bill 2025

AUKUS Command, Australian Federal Police, 2025

United Kingdom House of Commons Defence Committee inquiry on AUKUS: Australian Government response, 2026

Written evidence submitted by the South Australian Government, (AUKUS0038), January 2026

Navy Virginia-Class Submarine Program and AUKUS Submarine (Pillar 1) Project: Background and Issues for Congress (January 2026, Congressional Research Service)

AUKUS: Defence Committee Eighth Report of Session 2024-2026 (April 2026, House of Commons)

Department of Defence, 2026 Integrated Investment Program; Australian Submarine Agency, 2026

ANNEX B: AUKUS PUBLIC INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE

Will AUKUS keep us safe … at what cost?

Terms of Reference

1. Preface

The AUKUS security agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States was announced on 15 September 2021 without prior notification or policy explanation. AUKUS provides for Australia to acquire eight nuclear-powered submarines at an estimated cost of at least $368 billion over 30+ years. The opportunity costs are significant.

A summary of AUKUS Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 is at *Attachment A*.

AUKUS expenditures are already reducing the overall capability and force posture of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). At a time of increasing global economic and political uncertainty, a thorough public inquiry is required to assess the implications of AUKUS for Australia's long-term peace and security.

2. Objectives

1. To assess if the AUKUS nuclear-powered attack submarines will keep Australians more secure.

2. To explore the implications of Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines for regional peace and security.

3. To assess the economic, technological, and employment effects of AUKUS-related initiatives, and their overall impact on the ADF's preparedness and force structure.

4. To assess environmental, health, and safety consequences of nuclear technology and waste management for the Australian community, especially for First Nations peoples.

5. To generate broad public awareness of AUKUS and to understand possible cost-effective alternatives to AUKUS.

3. Scope

The Inquiry will address the following critical questions, and other relevant matters:

- What is the strategic rationale for Australia's commitment to AUKUS, and what are its impacts on the operational capability of the ADF?
- Given changing geopolitical realities, does AUKUS enhance or jeopardise Australia's security?
- What are the implications of AUKUS for regional peace and security, including Australia's relations with China, ASEAN, and the Pacific Islands nations, including commitments under the Treaty of Rarotonga (South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty)?
- What are the impacts of AUKUS on Australia's economy, workforce, industry, and research sectors, and what are the opportunity costs for other national priorities?
- What is the likelihood of AUKUS submarines being delivered on time and on budget?
- Could the technological advancements of AUKUS Pillar 2 be achieved through other mechanisms?
- Can AUKUS nuclear accidents in port or Australian waters be absolutely averted or contained, can nuclear waste be stored safely, and what are the environmental and community impacts, especially for First Nations peoples?
- Are there cost-effective and achievable alternatives to AUKUS that better enhance Australia's peace and security?
- What is the status of transparency, public consultation, and parliamentary oversight regarding AUKUS decisions?

4. Methodology

- Public submissions: inviting written and oral submissions from individuals, organisations, experts, and communities.
- Public hearings (in-person and/or virtual) in capital cities and impacted regional centres such as Fremantle, Port Kembla and other locations considered necessary.
- Research and analysis: reviewing relevant literature, government documents, and expert reports.
- Stakeholder engagement: consulting with the public and all affected groups, including First Nations communities.
- Transparency: publishing Inquiry proceedings, submissions, and findings to ensure openness, accountability and transparency.

5. Reporting

The Inquiry will post relevant documents on its website and produce a report with recommendations. It will be publicly available and provided to relevant authorities, including the Australian Government and Parliament.

6. Timeframe

The Inquiry will commence early June 2026 and produce a final report by 30 October 2026.

7. Governance

The Inquiry will be directed by five eminent Australians as Commissioners, convened under the auspices of the Australian Peace and Security Forum. The Commissioners will operate in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, impartiality and inclusivity. Advice will be sought from experts across all relevant areas of public interest. The Commissioners will be supported by a Secretariat and funded by Australian public donations. Audited financial reports will be posted on the Inquiry's website.

8. Confidentiality and Privacy

All personal information provided to the Inquiry will be managed in accordance with relevant privacy laws and regulations. Sensitive submissions may be received in confidence at the request of the submitter.

9. Contact and Participation

The Inquiry seeks written and oral submissions from Australian citizens and organisations. Submission guidelines and hearing schedules are on the Inquiry website and in public notices.

ATTACHMENT A - AUKUS Pillars 1 and 2

The AUKUS trilateral security partnership was officially announced on 15 September 2021 by the leaders of Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US). All three leaders have since been replaced. The legal, trilateral agreement covering the exchange of naval nuclear propulsion information was signed on 5 August 2024.

On 26 July 2025, the UK and Australia signed the Geelong Treaty, a 50-year treaty that covers the design, build and operation of SSN-AUKUS submarines supporting the industrial base and rotational presence of UK submarines.

Pillar 1: Nuclear-Powered Submarines

The first pillar focuses on providing Australia with a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine (SSN) fleet.

Objective: To enable the Royal Australian Navy to acquire, operate, and maintain eight nuclear-powered attack submarines by the mid 2050s.

Key Components

- **Rotational Force:** Starting as early as 2027, US and UK nuclear-powered submarines will begin rotational basing at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia (Submarine Rotational Force-West).
- **Acquisition:** The US intends to sell Australia up to three Virginia-class submarines in the early 2030s.
- **Future Submarine:** Australia and the UK will build a new class of submarines, known as **SSN-AUKUS**, incorporating technologies from all three nations, with deliveries predicted to start in the late 2030s for the UK and the 2050s for Australia.

Pillar 2: Advanced Capabilities

The second pillar involves trilateral cooperation to develop and share cutting-edge military technologies.

Objective: To accelerate the development and integration of advanced technologies, improving interoperability and maintaining a technological edge.

Key Technological Areas:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Autonomy:** Improving decision-making speed and precision.
- **Quantum Technologies:** Developing advancements in quantum for positioning, navigation, and timing (AQuA).
- **Advanced Cyber:** Strengthening cybersecurity, protecting critical communication, and operational systems.
- **Hypersonic and Counter-Hypersonic Capabilities:** Accelerating development of these weapons and defensive measures.
- **Undersea Capabilities:** Enhancing autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) and protecting undersea infrastructure.
- **Electronic Warfare:** Sharing tools and techniques for operating in contested environments.
- **Innovation and Information Sharing:** Accelerating defence innovation and streamlining the sharing of sensitive information.

Pillar 1 is a long-term project stretching into the 2050s. Pillar 2 is expected to deliver more immediate capability enhancements in the near-to-medium term.

ANNEX C: COMMISSIONERS' PROGRAM

CANBERRA - 2 JUNE 2026

Australian Parliament House

Public Inquiry into AUKUS Launch

MELBOURNE - 11 JUNE 2026

Victorian Trades Hall

Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC KC FASSA FAIIA
Former Cabinet Minister in the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments; former Foreign Affairs Minister; Distinguished Honorary Professor, Australian National University

Assoc. Prof. Tilman Ruff AO
Co-founder, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN); Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne

Richard Tanter
Senior Research Associate, Nautilus Institute; Honorary Professor, University of Melbourne

John Leslie Lander
Former Deputy Ambassador to China and former Head of the China Section, DFAT

Professor Joseph Camilleri OAM
Emeritus Professor of International Relations, La Trobe University

Rod Campbell
Research Director, The Australia Institute

Dave Sweeney
Anti-Nuclear Campaigner, Australian Conservation Foundation

Barbara Jackson
Concerned citizen, Melbourne

Jack Howard
Labor Against War

5 Minute Community Voices

Strobe Driver

Renae Carvana

Robert Barwick

Apollo Yiyani

Anthony Hing

Con Pakavakas

FREMANTLE – 29 JUNE 2026

Notre Dame University

The Hon Linda Reynolds CSC
Former Minister for Defence

Jonathan Huston MLA
Independent Member of Parliament, and former Army officer

Mick Macfarlane
Former Royal Australian Navy personnel and Sonar operator

Leo Kerr
Concerned citizen

Dr Michael (Mike) Gilligan
Former Head of Force Development and Analysis Division; responsible for Defence Department advice on submarine options following the retirement of the Oberon-class

Dr Colin Hughes
Former Head of Public Health, Perth

Mark Beeson
Adjunct Professor, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney

Jasmin Diab, CSC
Partner and Managing Director Australia, Global Nuclear Security Partners

Ivy Lee Patrick
Concerned citizen

Leonie Lundy and Sam Wainwright
Stop AUKUS WA

Mia Pepper
Conservation Council of Western Australia

The Hon Sophie McNeill MLC
The Greens, Western Australia

Emeritus Professor Dennis Rumley
Political geographer and Foundation Chair of the Indian Ocean Research Group.

K.A. Garlick
Nuclear Free WA

Heidi Mippy
Noongar and Thiin-Mah Warriyangka Woman

5 Minute Community Voices

Jo Valentine
Jan Teagle Kapetas
Patsy Malloy
Ruth Ellis
Vivienne Glance
Hester Bax
Adrian Glamorgan
Susan Hartley
Chris Johansen
Mark Schneider
Barry Healy

ADELAIDE – 16 JULY 2026

SA Conservation Council

The Hon Christopher Pyne
Former Minister for Defence; Strategic Advisor, Lobbyist and Company Director, Pyne & Partners

Rex Patrick
Former Senator for South Australia (2017–2022); Former Royal Australian Navy Submariner; Transparency Advocate

Andrew Gaczol
Former Department of Defence staffer (10 years); Senior Researcher, Federal Parliament

Matt Murphy and John Adley
Electrical Trades Union, National Assistant Secretary and Branch Secretary

Steve Glasgow
Strategic analyst

Richard Whitebrook
Concerned citizen

Chris Schacht
Former Senator for South Australia and Former Minister in the Keating Government; Former Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

David Orr
Independent and Peaceful Australia Network – South Australia (IPAN-SA)

Eileen Darley and Sandra Dann
Port Adelaide Community Opposing AUKUS (PACOA)

Jack Thrower
The Australia Institute

Prof Al Rainnie
Adjunct Research Professor, University of Adelaide

Tracey Kermond, Maureen Graney, Michelle Parsons, and Mary Houlahan
Mothers for a Sustainable South Australia (MOSSA)

Jim Green and Dr Philip White
Friends of the Earth Adelaide

Kym Davey
Member Labor Against War; Member Australian Peace and Security Forum

Diane Atkinson
Concerned citizen

David Noonan, B.Sc., M.Env.St
Nuclear issues expert

The Hon Melanie Selwood MLC
The Greens, South Australia

5 Minute Community Voices

Julianne d'Auvergne

Allan Kelly

Colin Mitchell

Richard Bentley

Michael Dowling

Kathleen Patitsas

ADELAIDE – 17 JULY 2026

First Nations Yarning Session

SA Conservation Council

SYDNEY – 10 AUGUST 2026

NSW Parliament House

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull AC
29th Prime Minister of Australia

The Hon Bob Carr
Former NSW Premier and former Minister for Foreign Affairs

Warren Smith
Maritime Union of Australia

Natasha Watt and Kelly Marks
NSW Teachers Federation

Dr Lachlan Clohesy
National Tertiary Education Union

Peter Murphy and Pip Hinman
Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition

Dr Alex Byrne
Professional Librarian and Researcher

Prof Toby Walsh
Professor of AI, UNSW

Prof Jocelyn Chey
Adjunct Professor, Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney

Richard Yuan
Founder and Chairman, ABC World Group

Ian Dunlop
Concerned citizen, member of the Australian Security Leaders Climate Group

Peter Hayes
Former RAAF Group Captain

Andrew Fowler
Author and former journalist

5 Minute Community Voices

John Hallam

Melanie Morrison

David Bradbury

Nick Deane

Con Costa

Stuart Burney

Michael Walker

NEWCASTLE – 11 AUGUST 2026

Newcastle City Hall

Kellie Tranter
Lawyer and Human Rights Activist

Theo Bougatsas
Hunter Peace Group

James Whelan
Climate Action Newcastle

Doug Hewitt
Christians for Peace

Cr Charlotte McCabe
Deputy Lord Mayor, City of Newcastle

Cr Siobhan Isherwood
Greens Councillor for Newcastle Ward 3; Environmental and Conservation Scientist

John Queripel
Concerned citizen

Michael Sanderson
Concerned citizen

Mandy Suess
Concerned citizen

Marcus Mariani
Former Deputy Director in the Royal Australian Navy's Engineering Division

Prof Liam Phelan
Associate Professor, School of Science, University of Newcastle

5 Minute Community Voices

Alison Harwood

Pat Filmey Sankey

Annie Rooke-Frizell

Lynda Forbes

Rob Hanks

James Campbell

Stephen O'Brien

Therese Doyle

WOLLONGONG – 12 AUGUST 2026

Art Gallery of Wollongong

Arthur Rorris
South Coast Labour Council

Malika Reece
Previous Citizen of the Year

Melanie Barnes and Nick Southall
Wollongong Against War and Nukes

Rowan Huxtable
Electrical Engineer

Aunty Barb Nicholson
Previous Citizen of the Year

Sally Stevenson
Previous Citizen of the Year

Daniel McClelland
National Union of Students, First Nations Officer

Kim Sattler
Former Long-Term Labor Party Member

Antony Tzamouranis
South Coast Labour Council Youth Action Committee

5 Minute Community Voices

Ryan Chapman

Terry Fox

Simon Green

John Reynolds

Susan Engel

Rocky Reyburn

BRISBANE – 25 AUGUST 2026
Queensland Council of Unions

Marianne Hanson
Associate Professor, International Relations, University of Queensland

Dr Graham Holton
Concerned Citizen

Andrew Isfree-Irvine
Concerned Citizen and member of the Electrical Trades Union

Prof Charles Sampford
Director, Institute for Government Ethics and Law, Griffith University

Mike Henry
Just Peace Queensland

Adrian Pisarski
Executive Officer, National Shelter

Warwick Powell
Adjunct Professor, Queensland University of Technology

Claire Moore
Former Senator for Queensland

Margaret Pestorius
Wage Peace

Barbara Hartley
Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)

Major Cameron Leckie (ret'd)
Former Army Officer

Charli Brand
Peace is Union Business, Magandjin (Brisbane)

5 Minute Community Voices

Annette Brownlie

Jeni Lewington

Alex Mandl

Margid Bryn-Burns

CANBERRA – 2 SEPTEMBER 2026

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Rear Admiral Peter Briggs AO RAN (ret'd)
Former President, Submarine Institute of Australia (2006–2009)

Peter Lewis and Lizzie O'Shea
Digital Rights Watch

Colonel Neil Greet (ret'd)
Australian Security Leaders Climate Group

Dr Sue Wareham OAM
Medical Association for the Prevention of War

Albert Palazzo
Adjunct Professor, University of NSW Canberra

Michael Pezzullo
Former Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs

Chris Gardiner
CEO, The Institute for Regional Security

Senator David Pocock
Independent Senator for the ACT

Senator David Shoebridge
Senator for NSW, Leader of the Australian Greens

5 Minute Community Voices

Sam Wong

Charles Stanger

Brad Golding

Simon Krantzcke

Jessie Price

Pamela Colette

Anthony Kevin

Margaret Dorsch

CANBERRA – 3 SEPTEMBER 2026

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Andrew Wilkie MP
Independent Member for Clark

Yee-Fui Ng
Associate Professor of Law, Monash University

Bernard Keane
Journalist, Crikey

Dr Emma Shortis
Director, International and Security Affairs Programme, Australia Institute

The Hon Dr Don Brash
New Zealand Former Politician

John Blaxland
Professor of International Relations, Australian National University

The Hon Kim Beazley AC
Former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and former Minister for Defence

Peter Robinson
Risk analyst

Rob Baker
Australians for War Powers Reform

Dr Michael Keating and Jon Stanford
Former Secretary and Former Division Head Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Maureen Penjueli
Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)

Tamara Jacka
Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)

5 Minute Community Voices

Ross Sydney

Grant Donohue

Craig Andrews

CANBERRA – 4 NOVEMBER 2026

The National Press Club

Commissioners' Report Launch

ANNEX D: Submissions Received

Individuals (plus 208 anonymous)

A King
A Tatnell
Aaron Reddall
Adam Bennett
Adam Leslie
Adrian Glamorgan
Adrian Pisarski
AJ
Al Lad
Alan Cummine
Alan Glasson
Alan Griffiths
Albert Palazzo
Alex Byrne
Alex Kemeny
Alex Suslin
Alexander Hugh Dean
Alexander Kozlow
Allan Behm
Allan Wilson Kelly
Allison Hill
Aloysius
Amanda Kennedy
Amanda King
Amanda Southern
Amos Owen Thomas
Andrew Anthony
Andrew Fermo
Andrew Gaczol
Andrew Gaines
Andrew Isfree-Irvine
Andrew Olsson
Andrew P O'Brien
Andrew Putnam
Angela C Burrows
Ann Kent
Ann-Marie Balliana
Anne Louise Barrey
Anne Poelina
Annette Brownlie
Annie Marlow
Anthony de Bruyn
Anthony Ilott
Anthony J Learmonth
Anthony John Gill
Anthony Scott Bell
Antony Hing
Anushka Lawrence
Archibald Cruttwell
Arnold Dix
Arthur Rorris
Arthur Rosenwald
Barbara Hartley
Barbara J Quinlan
Barbara Jackson
Barbara Pocock
Barbara Wenck
Barry Healy
Belle Moody
Benjamin Zarfati
Bernard Keane
Bernard Ross
Bernard Sharah
Bevan Leigh Ramsden
Beverley Crossley
Bianca Bertalli
Bill Caldicott
Bill Forrest
Bill Watts
Bob Beaver
Bob Phelps
Brett Murrell
Brian Connor
Bridget
Bridget Ikin
Bronwyn Bell
Brooke Teasdale
Caitlin Alexander
Cameron Leckie
Carol Braack
Carol Thornton
Caroline de Costa
Carre Range
Cate Wauchope
Catelyn Richards
Charles Roche
Charlotte McCabe
Chek Ling
Cheryl Christopher
Chris Gardiner
Chris Johansen
Chris Tallentire
Christine Bennett
Christine Burke
Christine Hooper
Christopher Maltby
Claire Parfitt
Claudia Bertorello Kell
Clinton Fernandes
Colin C Milne
Colin Finnie
Colin Hughes
Colin Mitchell
Costas Costa
Dale Youden
Daniel McClelland
Daniel Speed
Daniel Watts
Darren Johnson
Darryl Nelson
Darryn John Wiley
Dave Sweeney
David Bowyer
David Clarke
David Frank Palmer
David John Fraenkel
David Kanaley
David Lee Andrew
David Lewis
David Livingstone
David Nunn
David Parums
David Scrimgeour
David Spratt
David Taylor
David Tuff
Dawn Jecks
Deborah Melville
Deborah Torrens
Denis Doherty
Denis John Bright
Denise Marcos
Dennis Rumley
Derek Burke
Diane Atkinson
Diane Marie Finlay
Diane Reeves
Don Brash
Don Macrae
Don McAllister
Donald Burgess
Donald Keith Purnell
Donald Yates
Donna Wilkinson
Doron Zelinger
Dorothea Anthony

Doug Hewitt
Douglas John Croker
Dushyant Patel
Dylan Clift
Eileen Darley
Eileen Whitehead
Ella Preece
Emily T
Eric van Beurden
Evan Hadkins
Fay Waddington
Felicity
Felix Bronneberg
Finn Alan Bradfield
Fiona Taylor
Fran Murrell
Frances Letters
Francesca Beddie
Francis Brian Duke
Franco Smargiassi
Frank Lister
Fred Schilling
Frederick Fiedler
Gabriele Harding
Gabrielle Calleja
Gail Boserio
Gail Pirozzi
Gareth Evans
Gary Fry
Gary Saunders
Geoff Dunstone
Geoff Stewart
Geoff Taylor
Geoffrey Charles Kelly
George Wisely
Georgina Napier
Geraldine Ryan
Gillian Blair
Gordon Morton
Graeme Andrew Dunk
Graham Palmer
Graney Michelle
Grant Keady
Grant Periott
Greene Tolstoy
Gregory Andrews
Gregory Brown
Gregory Ernest Fry
Greyson Goodman
Gunnar Martschinke
Fiona Blackburn
Hanzel-Jude Pador
Hayden Shaw
Heidi Glaser
Helen Greer
Helen Irene Wilson
Hester Bax
Hillary Hook
Hilton Adam Solyom
Hollis Thomas
Hugh Martin Milner
Hugh White
Hugo Aurelio Toro
Iain Walker
Ian Crabb
Ian Curr
Ian James Peters
Ian Kruger
Ian Lowe
Ian Murray
Ian Northcott
Ian Sweetman
Ian T Dunlop
Ian W
Ingrid Ralph
Irene Davies
Jack S
Jacob Arnold
Jacqueline Moldovan
Jacqueline Peace
Jake Lloyd Jones
James Beattie
James Laurenceson
James Mumme
James Rickard
James Skipp
James Whelan
Jamie Calder
Jamie Purcell
Jan de Groote
Jan Hutchison
Jane Timbrell
Janet Dean
Janet Harwood
Janet Hunt
Janet Kathryn Baillie
Janet Pukallus
Janette Kodaih
Janine Kitson
Jan Lovell
Jann May
Jasmin Diab
Jasmin Witham
Jason Adamson
Jay Williams
Jennifer Borrell
Jennifer Coote
Jennifer Grant Jary
Jennifer Hole
Jeremy Tager
Jess Whittaker
Jessie Price
Jim Green
Jim Haut
Jimmy Li
Jo Errey
Joanna Hayter
Jocelyn Chey
Joe Lenzo
John Adrian Carver
John Ballantyne
John Benson
John Bird
John Black
John Blaxland
John Christopher Kohl
John Dynan
John Forrest
John Fowler
John Grimes
John Hallam
John Harvey
John Higgins
John Leebold
John Leslie Lander
John Mapson
John P Richards
John Paterson
John Philip Curtis
John Thompson
John Tolhurst
John Urane
John Zammit
Jon Rose
Jon Stanford
Jonathan Peter
Joseph Philippa
Joseph Camilleri
Juanita Doorey
Jude Conway
Judith Carlsson
Judith Morrison
Judith Sheerin
Julie Kolges
Julie Lewin
Julie Long

Julie Marlow
Julie Moon
June R Verrier
Justin Murphy
Justin Tutty
K-A Garlick
Kara Osborne
Karen Burt
Katherine Dwyer
Kathryn Dawes
Kathryn Deacon
Kathryn Kelly
Kay Deaves
Kecia Sandford
Keiran Murphy
Kellie Tranter
Kelly Cheyne
Kelly Duckworth
Ken McLeod
Kensei
Keri James
Kerin Collins
Kerrianne Sheridan
Kerry Sisarich
Kevin Cox
Kim Carr
Kim Salisbury
Kirsten Muir
Kristine Klugman
Kylie Bales
Kym Davey
Lachlan O'Brien
Latoya Voogt
Laura Piggott
Lauren Fox
Lauren Hoey
Lee Rhiannon
Lee Unitt
Leigh Murrell
Len Baglow
Leo Kerr
Leonie Ebert
Leonie Lundy
Leonie Stubbs
Leslie Mitchell
Lidia Thorpe
Lim Teck Ghee
Lindsay
Liz Barrett
Liz Buckley
Lorraine Thomson
Louise Dillon
Louise Fowler-Smith
Lucy Miller
Luke Hocking
Luke Nathan Hayes
Luke Whitington
Lynda Forbes
Lyndal Breen
Lynette Sydney
Lynne Walker
Madeleine Croft
Maggoo Fox
Maire Kashyap
Mandy Sess
Marcus Mariani
Margaret Bearlin
Margaret Beavis
Margaret Dorsch
Margaret E Trudgen
Margaret Gillett
Margaret Hope
Margaret McKay
Margaret Pestorius
Margaret Rowell
Maria Maguire
Maria Schettino
Mario Gabutto
Mark Anning
Mark Beeson
Mark Boast
Mark Davis
Mark Gower
Mark Howard
Mark Robinson
Mark Waddick
Martha Ansara
Martin
Martin Hensher
Martin Newman
Mary Houlahan
Matthew Donovan
Matthew Nolan
Matthew Simpson
Maureen Graney
Maureen Kingshott
Maureen Mulquiney
Maureen Todhunter
Maurice McGahey
Maurice Vaughan
Max Kitson
Maxwell Bell
Megan
Mehrdad Mahdian
Melanie Morcombe
Melanie Morrison
Melanie Selwood
Merril Stokes
MG Page
Michael Cook
Michael Fewster
Michael Houston
Michael Keating
Michael King
Michael Macfarlane
Michael Paine
Michael Prants
Michael Sanderson
Michael Santin
Michele Smith
Michelle Fahy
Michelle Freney
Michelle Parsons
Miriam Pellicano
Moana Rangi
Monica Mesch
Morgan Dodd
Moritz Braunsberger
Mr Seidel
Nat Brauns
Natasha Judd
Neil Richters
Neville Hills
Niall McLaren
Nicholas John Deane
Nick G
Nick Southall
Nick Suess
Nicole Munro
Nigel Foote
Nikolai Liu
Nishank Motwani
Nizza Siano
Noah Quinlan
Noelene Bearns
Nola Kelly
Norman Wills
Otis Carmichael
Owen Milward
Pat Filmer-Sankey
Patricia
Patricia Morrow
Paul Alcorn
Paul Ams
Paul Bourne
Paul Clapham

Paul Desmond
Paul Earle
Paul O'Keeffe
Paul Smith
Paul Wellsmore
Peta Newbound
Peter Ball
Peter Caunce
Peter Clarke
Peter Conigrave
Peter Corkeron
Peter Davison
Peter Dickson
Peter Douglas Briggs
Peter Duffy
Peter F Tuckey
Peter Griffin
Peter Harpas
Peter Holding
Peter Irving
Peter Jerrim
Peter Murphy
Peter Rathborne
Peter Remta
Peter Robinson
Peter Steindl
Peter William Gorian
Phil Curran
Philip Hughes
Philip Timmins
Pingsum Hooi
Quentin Grafton
Rachael Flett
Rachel Kate Davies
Ralph Kaye
Ralph L Boardman
Ravi Krishnamurthy
Ray Funnell
Raymond John Pink
Raymond Timms
Remah Naji
Renee Caruana
Richard (Dick) Cerny
Richard Bentley
Richard Coathup
Richard David Hames
Richard Fisher
Richard Homer
Richard Llewellyn
Richard Simshauser
Richard Staples
Richard Tanter
Richard Whitebrook
Richard Yuan
Rick Boatswain
Rob Hanks
Rob Parnell
Robert Barwick
Robert Buckley
Robert Klenner
Robert L. Cassidy
Robert Maich
Robert McKinnon
Robert Parry
Robert Williams
Robyn Caffel
Robyn Pogmore
Robyn Wood
Rod Campbell
Roger Hunt
Romina Beitseen
Ron Ruys
Ronald Beer
Ros Hart
Rosanna Barbero
Rosemary Longhurst
Ross Gwyther
Ross Sydney
Rowan Moffitt
Royal Carrington
Russell Darmody
Russell Morse
Russell Rollason
Ruth Greble
Ruth Harvey
Ryan Buaron
Ryan Chapman
Sabine Stolle
Sally George
Sally McGushin
Sally Wilson
Sam Stenning
Sam Wong
Samantha Skinner
Sandra Margaret Dann
Sarah Burns
Scott Edward Andrews
Sean Monahan
Sean Rapley
Sebastian Tops
Shane Charleson
Sharon Callaghan
Sharon Lalor
Shayne Whitehouse
Sheherazade Bloul
Sidney Ivan Seiden
Simon CP Brown
Simon Edwynne Beale
Simon English
Simon Green
Simon Murr
Simon Murray
Simon Thwaites
Simone Turr
Slava Volin
Sophie Bolt
Sophie Lyon
Stacey Woodhouse
Stephen John Weatherstone
Stephen Grenville
Stephen Pennells
Stephen Vorreiter
Steve Crothers
Steve Gates
Steve Glasgow
Steve Hirst
Steve Magyar
Steven Middendorf
Steven Robinson
Stuart Edward Burney
Stuart Garland
Susan Hartley
Susan Herbert
Susan Prentice
Susan Rockliff
Susanne Godden
Suzanne Edwards
Suzanne Haseldine
Suzanne Pinchen
Sylvia Jane Innes
Tabitha Lean
Tamara Jacka
Terry McBride
Tessa Morris-Suzuki
Thomas Hayes
Tilman Ruff
Tim Boote
Tim Fletcher
Tim Frodsham
Tim Lingard
Tim Metcalf
Tim Rowse
Timothy Luke Murray
Timothy Martino
Timothy Williams

Toby Sterling
Toby Walsh
Todd Levi
Tom Marwick
Tony Adami
Tony Edye
Tony Fry
Tony Konjarski
Tony Vlachou
Tony Webb
Tracey Asquith
Tracey Carpenter
Tracey Kermond
Travis Bryant
Trevor Steele
Trudy Rosenwald
Valerie Anne Preston
Valerie Joy
Vanessa Chan
Vanessa Cliff
Vinnie Molina
Vivian Dwyer
Vivienne Glance
Vivienne Martin
Volker Ankenbrand
Wanning Sun
Warren Goodall
Warwick Powell
Warwick Richards
Wayne Hawkins
Wayne Reynolds
Wayne Ryan
Wendy Flannery
Wies Schuiringa
William Briggs
William Li
William Ng
Wilma Davidson
Yee-Fui Ng
Yehuda Aharon
Yves Kelner
Yvette Crowther
Zoe Douglas

ANNEX D (CONT.) : ORGANISATIONS

A Progressive Christian Voice Australia
About Turn – Veterans Against War and Racism
Arid Lands Environment Centre
Asian Foresight Institute
Alternative Science Technical Research Org (ASTRO)
ATI
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Education Union NSW Teachers Federation Branch
Australian Nuclear Free Alliance
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Australian Riggers Association
Campaign for International Disarmament
Chinese Australian Forum
Chinese Community Council of Australia, Victoria Chapter (CCCAV)
Christians for Peace Newcastle
Citizens Party
Communist Party of Australia
Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)
Communist Party of Australia, City of Sydney Branch
Development Alternative with Women for a New Era (DAWN)
Digital Rights Watch
Electrical Trades Union (ETU)
Esmerelda Enterprises Environmental (Landcare group)
Friends World Committee for Consultation, Asia West Pacific Section (Quakers in Asia West Pacific)
Global Nuclear Security Partners
Hunter Peace Group
Hunter Valley Quakers
Hunter Workers Union
Inner City Teachers Association
Institute for Integrated Economic Research - Australia
Independent and Peaceful Australia Network
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Australia
International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Maritime Union of Australia
Marrickville Peace Group
Medical Association for Prevention of War Australia
National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)
National Union of Students (NUS)
No AUKUS Coalition Victoria
No Nuclear Dump Alliance
No AUKUS Vic
NSW Socialists Illawarra
NSWTF Sydney Secondary College, Balmain Campus Branch
Our Community
Peace is Union Business Magandjin (PiUB Magandjin)
Policy Watchdog Australia
Port Adelaide Community Opposing AUKUS (PACOA)
Professionals Australia
Quakers Queensland Peace & Social Justice Committee
RAD Faction
Regenesis Lawyers Pty Ltd
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Retired Unionists Network
Retired Unionists of Victoria
Search Foundation
South Coast Labour Council
Stop Astra Aerolab Campaign
Sutherland Teachers Association
Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition
The ACT Chinese Australian Association Inc
The Alliance Futures Initiative
The Australia Institute
The Greens
The Greens South Australia
The Greens Western Australia
The Institute for Regional Security
The Millennium Group
The Sydney Peace Foundation
Tomorrow Movement Wollongong

Wage Peace

West Australian Regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Whiteway Climate Action Group (WCAN)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Australia Section)

Youth Action Committee for the South Coast Labour Council

ANNEX E: OUR SUBMISSION READERS

Dr Albert Palazzo
Amanda Ross
Andrew Fullerton
Barbara Hartley
Bevan Ramsden
Bob Makinson
Cailey Thurlow
Christina Hunter
Deb McLoughlin
Derek Burke
Diane Atkinson
The Hon Doug Cameron
Frances Long
Gordon Biok
Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO
Dr John Fowler
Dr Julie Macken
Kathryn Kelly
Leslie Mackay
Margaret Clarke
Dr Matilda Byrne
Maureen Todhunter
Nick Deane
Peter Griffin
Peter Harpas
Dr Quentin Grafton
Rafael Molina
Renfrey Clark
Rose Kelly
Russell Rollason AM

ANNEX F: OUR SECRETARIAT

Co-Chairs:
Major General Michael G Smith AO (Ret'd)
Former Senator the Hon Doug Cameron

Members:

Allan Behm

Angie Sidonio
Annette Brownlie
Cailey Thurlow
Dr Julie Macken
Dr Matilda Byrne
Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO
Jonathan Pilbrow
Marcus Strom
Phil Davey
Russell Rollason AM
Tony Dobson

ANNEX G: OUR SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

The Public Inquiry into AUKUS was convened by the Australian Peace and Security Forum, and supported by the following organisations:

Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Education Union
Australian Services Union NSW/ACT (Services) Branch
Australians for War Powers Reform
Electrical Trades Union
Independent and Peaceful Australia Network
Josephite Justice Network
Labor Against War
Maritime Union of Australia
Medical Association for Prevention of War
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
Oikoumene Foundation
Pace e Bene Australia
Pax Christi Australia
Quakers Australia
Search Foundation
South Coast Labour Council
Sydney Peace Foundation
The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
World Beyond War

ANNEX H: THE COMMISSIONERS

The Hon Peter Garrett AM, FTSE (Lead Commissioner)



Peter Garrett is an activist and member of Midnight Oil. He served two terms as president of the Australian Conservation Foundation, before entering parliament as a Labor MP in 2004. As Environment Minister, Garrett initiated the campaign to end 'scientific whaling' in Antarctica. As Minister for School Education he legislated the new needs-based school funding model (The Gonski reforms). Following the Oils two recent ARIA number 1 albums: The Makarrata Project and Resist, Garrett's The True North debuted at number 1 on the Australian Artists Album Chart in 2024. Garrett is a Member of the Order of Australia, and an Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters (France). In 2026, he was appointed Board Chair of Landcare Australia.

The Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence AO



After training as a research psychologist, Dr Lawrence entered politics in 1986, serving at both State and Federal levels for 21 years. She was the first woman Premier and Treasurer of a State government in Australia. She was elected to Federal politics in 1994 as the Member for Fremantle and was appointed Minister for Health and Human Services and Minister assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women. She held various portfolios in Opposition and was elected National President of the Labor Party in 2004. She retired from politics in 2007 and is currently Professor Emerita in the School of Psychological Science at the University of Western Australia.

Honorary Professor, Admiral Chris Barrie AC RAN (Ret'd)



Admiral Chris Barrie has worked on strategic leadership issues and with top level leaders over the last three decades. He commanded all arms of the Australian Defence Force from July 1998 till July 2002. After leaving the Navy he has been variously consultant, teacher and mentor working at Oxford University, ANU and the National Defense University in Washington DC. At ANU he was appointed honorary professor in 2015. Today at ANU he is Patron of the Australian Crisis Simulation Summit, a student led national one-week event for aspiring national security policy makers. He teaches occasionally on campus and conducts simulations to complement course work. As an executive member of the Australian Security Leaders Climate Group he is an outspoken commentator on Climate Change and Security matters trying to raise awareness of the risks and potential costs of inaction. He represents Australia on the Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change.

Ms Karina Lester



Karina Lester is a Yankunytjatjara Woman from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY Lands), far north South Australia. She is a second-generation survivor of the British Nuclear Tests at Emu Field, 1953 and is the youngest daughter of the late Yami Lester OAM (1940-2017), who was blinded by the 'Black Mist' (Radiation Fallout) over his traditional lands at Walyatjata (Walatina-APY Lands). The Lester family have been a stalwart of nuclear resistance for decades. Karina is an ICAN Australia Ambassador and attended the negotiating conference, New York City, USA, for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017). Karina attended the Second (2MSP-2023) and Third (3MPS-2024) Meetings of State Parties, New York City, USA. Karina attended the World Nuclear Victims Forum

in Hiroshima, Japan (2015) and spoke about the consequences of British nuclear testing on her family and Aboriginal people more broadly. She worked alongside her grandmother, late Eileen Kampakuta Brown AM (1938-2012) in the Irati Wanti Campaign (1998-2004), against the Howard Government's proposal for a Nuclear Waste Dump in South Australia and in July 2004 the Federal Government abandoned their plans for a radioactive waste dump in South Australia. Karina participated in The Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission in March 2015-May 2016, speaking strongly on the impacts felt by Aboriginal people in South Australia and the 'We Say No' Campaign. In 2024 Karina was a witness at the House Select Committee on Nuclear Energy. Karina continues to speak up about the harms felt by her people and with her Anti-Nuclear activism in South Australia.

Ms Leanne Minshull



Leanne Minshull is the Co-CEO at the Australia Institute and a board member of the Graeme Wood Foundation. She was admitted to practice as a solicitor in 1999 and has worked as a senior strategist in social, environmental, and political organisations. Prior to her appointment at the Australia Institute, she worked at Greenpeace International, based in Amsterdam. Leanne has worked as chief of staff to a State Minister and was the Director of Strategy for Australian Greens Leader Senator Bob Brown. She has also run successful small businesses including a pub in Tasmania and her own strategy consultancy.

COMMISSIONERS' THANK YOU

We sincerely thank independent Senator David Pocock and independent MP Andrew Wilkie, and their staff, for hosting the launch of the AUKUS Public Inquiry.

Thanks also to the organisations that facilitated our Public Hearings: the Victorian Trades Hall Council in Melbourne, the Notre Dame University in Fremantle, the Conservation Council in Adelaide, Parliament House in Sydney, City Hall in Newcastle, Wollongong Art Gallery in Wollongong, Queensland Council of Unions in Brisbane, and the Centre for Christianity and Culture in Canberra. We also thank the National Press Club in Canberra for hosting the release of our Report.

We are extremely thankful to our contingent of professional voluntary Readers who willingly gave their time to read and summarise the submissions received.

We are grateful for the over 1,000 submissions received from experts and public and are extremely thankful for the time and effort of everyone who lodged submissions and appeared at our public hearings.

We'd like to thank all of the supporting organisations and donors, as well as those from the public who donated to the crowdfunding to make this Inquiry possible.

Finally, big thanks to the hardworking AUKUS Public Inquiry Secretariat. On a shoestring budget and with many volunteering, they raised funds; ran the communications; organised the Hearings, flights and accommodation; and managed the Readers and our website. Through their unstinting efforts they ensured this important Inquiry could be successfully undertaken for the benefit of the Australian people.

Please consider passing this report forward.