



MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday 18 July 2026

Significant insights from Adelaide hearings into AUKUS

The Adelaide hearings of the Public Inquiry into AUKUS this week have demonstrated why there is such an urgent need for scrutiny of the massive submarine deal.

Lead Commissioner Peter Garrett said today "I'm proud to be leading a completely open and publicly funded Inquiry, where testimony from people from all walks of life and political perspectives are welcome. Comments from SA Treasurer Koutsantonis that the Inquiry is a 'show trial' are farcical and misrepresents the hearings, given we've already heard from two former Coalition defence ministers, Linda Reynolds and Christopher Pyne, and one of Australia's most distinguished foreign ministers, Gareth Evans."

"The whole of SA, including Adelaide suburbs, are ground zero for AUKUS and we have heard some remarkable testimonies over the last few days."

Yesterday First Nations people from across the state met with Inquiry Commissioners to express their concern about AUKUS, and repeat their call that the principle of 'free prior and informed consent' be mandated in all situations where local communities are potentially affected.

On Thursday Former Defence Minister Christopher Pyne acknowledged that AUKUS was not just about procurement, but, "...is also creating a new US submarine base in the Indian Ocean, and for the Americans to be able to base their submarines in the Indian Ocean is a massive strategic advantage."

Pyne also said of AUKUS "no, I don't think it will come in on time or on budget. I can say that now because I am not in government."

Former Senator (and submariner) Rex Patrick detailed the extreme risk associated with this project, including the proposition that the Government does have a plan for where it will locate AUKUS nuclear waste but is keeping it secret from the public. One likely site is South Australia and Patrick advised the Inquiry he is currently in the Federal Court seeking access to the plan.

Matt Murphy, Assistant National Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, compared the previous contract for the French submarine build to AUKUS, saying "the SSN-AUKUS arrangement as currently structured contains around 20 per cent less Australian material than the French contract. The highest-technology work will be done overseas, not here. Two generations of Australian workers will lose access to highly-skilled, well-paid, WHS-insured and secure jobs."

AUKUS Public Inquiry media contacts: Phil Davey 0414 867 188 Julie Macken 0400 925 217.