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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

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MINISTER FOR DEFENCE INDUSTRY  
MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE PACIFIC

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY AND JOBS**  
**FRONT AND CENTRE OF AUKUS SUBMARINES**

Today's announcement of Australia's sovereign submarine build and sustainment partners demonstrates the Albanese Government's focus on maximising Australian industry involvement and jobs in the build and sustainment of Australia's next generation conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

A strong defence industry is critical to providing the deterrence our strategic circumstances demand. This is a whole-of-nation undertaking that will see around 20,000 jobs created across Australia, with unprecedented opportunities for Australian industry at home and abroad with our AUKUS partners. It is the opportunity to build a Future Made in Australia, by Australians, with record investments in defence, skills, jobs and infrastructure.

**Industry**

The continued development of our industry and workforce is not just important for Australia, but is also pivotal for building more robust and resilient supply chains for all AUKUS partners. This is a key element and strength of the AUKUS trilateral partnership.

The Albanese Government will continue collaboration with AUKUS partners and industry, including ASC Pty Ltd and BAE Systems to develop Australian supply chains and facilitate industry participation in the United Kingdom and United States supply chains. Part of this coordination is the development of an efficient vendor qualification process.

To this end, in January the Defence Industry Vendor Qualification Program was launched. With the assistance of AUKUS partners, the program is reducing barriers and streamlining process as we accelerate the entry of Australian products into UK and US supply chains. Once qualified, Australian companies will be well-positioned to contribute to international supply chains, working with UK and US industrial partners.

In its initial wave, the program is working with 26 companies to qualify supplies across four product families to meet US supply chain requirements. The next wave will expand the program to qualify suppliers into both the US and UK supply chains and will commence in mid-2024.

For further information on becoming involved in the build and sustainment supply chains, on the Defence Industry Vendor Qualification Program and industry engagement activities, companies and industry can register their interest through [www.asa.gov.au](http://www.asa.gov.au).

## **Workforce**

Today, we are pleased to announce new initiatives through the Skills and Training Academy to develop Australia's workforce to build and sustain our nuclear-powered submarines.

These pilot programs will be delivered in close consultation with Australia's Sovereign Submarine Build Partner, Sovereign Submarine Sustainment Partner and the shipbuilding industry and include:

- Non-Destructive Testing Traineeships to grow the testing technician workforce.
- Development of Australia's welding and fabrication pipeline, including:
  - The Welding Aptitude Testing Initiative, providing entry-level workers and mid-career skilled workers opportunities to test their skills and explore welding careers in shipbuilding.
  - A welding bridging initiative for new entrants, existing workers and advanced apprentices in adjacent industries to uplift their skills to fill welding roles in shipbuilding and the nuclear-powered submarine program.
- International placements for a 'train the trainer' pilot.
  - Opportunities for Australia's VET teacher workforce to conduct short-term placements in the US to enable them to build an understanding of AUKUS trilateral training requirements and methods, and support students with understanding nuclear-powered submarine career pathways.

The Defence Industry Pathways Program will also expand to include pathways into the nuclear-powered submarine program.

Through an international placements program under the Skills and Training Academy, Australian trainers will be placed within the US nuclear-powered submarine training system to learn skills to bring back to Australia. In order to support the building of the workforce in support of Submarine Rotational Force-West, this will include personnel from the South Metropolitan TAFE in Western Australia.

## **International Placements**

Australia is working closely with our AUKUS partners to build the pathways for international placements as part of the upskilling of Australia's domestic industrial workforce.

Following the recent passage by the United States of the *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA), Australian industry has benefited from an easing of restrictions that has enabled unprecedented training opportunities in US shipyards, which will enhance the skills and qualifications of Australian workers.

Partnering with US and UK industry will be an important element of our sovereign build and sustainment partners growing the specialist skills and capacity required to build and sustain nuclear-powered submarines, leveraging their decades of expertise.

AUKUS partners are committed to ensuring that all activities to build Australia’s future submarine workforce are undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the highest standards for nuclear non-proliferation.

All work by Australian personnel in the UK and US will remain consistent with Australia’s domestic and international legal obligations, including with respect to nuclear non-proliferation.

***Quotes attributable to Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP:***

“The announcement of the Sovereign Submarine Build and Sustainment Partners is opening up more avenues for Australian industry and jobs.

“What AUKUS is doing is allowing Australian industry to further invest here, but there are opportunities also opening up with our UK and US partners.

“Be it the build partnership with ASC and BAE Systems or the recent passing of the 2024 National Defence Authorization Act, there are now multiple new avenues and opportunities for Australian industry, which will expand the defence industrial base across all three countries – and realise the historic opportunities the pathway envisioned when we announced it last year.”

***Quotes attributable to the Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP:***

“The importance of this announcement cannot be overstated. It heralds unprecedented levels of scientific, technological and industrial collaboration that will see Australian industry contributing to the combined industrial bases of all three AUKUS partners.

“It is particularly significant that the first work undertaken by Australian industry in relation to the build and sustainment program will be for our AUKUS partners, underscoring the immense opportunities for Australian industry and workers.

“This is a critical step that underscores the Albanese Government’s commitment to maximising opportunities for Australian industry and creating jobs and ensures construction of Australia’s first SSN-AUKUS submarine can begin in Australia before the end of this decade.”

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*Authorised by The Hon Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister, Australia.*