



Additional Estimates

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Ms Marlena Davis, Acting Chief Operating Officer

Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Key Messages

- The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) was established on 1 July 2023 to safely and securely acquire, construct, deliver, technically govern, sustain and dispose of Australia’s conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability for Australia.
- We are committed to developing Australia’s workforce to build, operate and maintain Australian conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines, including by placing Australian industry personnel in United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) shipyards and facilities.
- The Agency works with AUKUS partners, Australian government departments and agencies, states and territories, and industry to deliver this whole-of-nation program.

Talking Points

Workforce

- Within Australia the majority of the ASA’s workforce are based in the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria.
- Internationally, the ASA has workforce in the US (primarily Washington D.C.) and the UK (primarily London and Bristol).
- ASA’s footprint in the US and UK will extend to additional locations as Australians undertake nuclear related training and work in AUKUS partner shipyards and in UK and US industry.

Agency APS Workforce Funding

Period	Funding
Forward Estimates (2025-26 to 2028-29)	\$685.2 million

*ADF workforce funding is managed by the Department of Defence

Approved Average Staffing Level (ASL) and Average Funded Strength (AFS)

Financial Year	APS (ASL)	ADF (AFS)
2025-26	883	117
2026-27	995	122



Key witness: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Marlena Davis

Agency Headcount (as at 31 December 2025)

Type	Number
Australian Public Service	808
Australian Defence Force (Defence Submarine Unit)	108
Contractors (Above the Line)**	134
Total	1050

*Data correct as per PMKeyS

ASA Headcount - Locations (Australia and International) (as at 31 December 2025)

Location	APS	ADF
Australian Capital Territory	496	72
South Australia	118	1
Western Australia	48	20
Victoria	69	1
Other states	18	2
United States	31	7
United Kingdom	28	5

*Data correct as per PMKeyS

Diversity Data (as at 31 December 2025)

Type	Indigenous	Disability	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
APS	7	12	261
ADF	1	2	41

*Data correct as per PMKeyS

Travel Costs

- The Agency spending on business travel for 2024-25 financial year was \$10.661 million consisting of \$4.813 million in international business travel and \$5.847 million in domestic business travel. This included airfares, accommodation and allowances.
- All travel by ASA officials is required to be conducted within the parameters of the Defence Official Travel Policy.
- In accordance with the ASA Accountable Authority Instructions and the Defence Official Travel Policy, travel is only to be undertaken when there is a genuine business need that cannot be met by other means, such as tele-conferencing or video-conferencing.
- International travel is critical for ASA officials to participate in integrated planning with our AUKUS partners, undertake facility inspections in the US and UK, and ensure Australia learns from our AUKUS partners so it can meet the highest nuclear stewardship standards.
- Domestic travel has also been undertaken to engage and consult with State and Local Governments and communities, and to support the business activities of the ASA to deliver the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program.



Agency Culture

- As a new Agency with a dispersed workforce, the ASA's culture is still evolving and will continue to do so as the ASA grows and matures. Previous results from internal and whole-of-government surveys highlight our workforce as being highly engaged and committed to delivering on the ASA's unique mission.
- The ASA has a significant amount of work underway to build the ASA's unique culture, while also maintaining connection to Defence.
- The inaugural ASA Health & Wellbeing Program was released in April 2025. As a key deliverable of the 2024 ASA APS Census Action Plan, it aims to take proactive and preventative steps to support the physical, mental and emotional health of all ASA personnel.
- The inaugural ASA People and Culture Plan was released in October 2025 detailing key programs, initiatives and strategies to shape and build the culture of the ASA.

How ASA is working to ensure staff have the skills and experience required to undertake their roles

- The Agency is working closely with our AUKUS partners, Defence, Commonwealth agencies, Australia's universities and existing nuclear organisations to develop the requisite skills, knowledge and behaviours required of our nuclear suitably qualified and experienced personnel.
- An Agency suite of Competency Frameworks – including a suite of Nuclear Engineering, Science and Technology (NEST) competencies - have been developed to define required competencies and proficiency levels. These are being mapped to job roles and provide the basis for structuring our skilling pathways and career roadmaps for the Agency.
- Our initial focus is on submarine engineering, specialised nuclear engineering, science and related technical requirements, due to the long lead-time to develop these high-level skills, experience and required qualifications in these and other related highly technical domains.
- In order to further develop the skills and experience of ASA and ADF personnel in a nuclear-powered submarine and nuclear context, our personnel are being supported to undertake workforce exchanges and embedments with our AUKUS partners and Australian Defence and nuclear agencies. It is also envisaged that when ASA nuclear facilities and shipyards are functional, "reverse embeds" from our AUKUS partners will train Australian personnel in real time on the job.

[Handling note: For specifics of contractor numbers, exchanges, and embedment/placements locations and numbers refer to RADM David Mann, Head Virginia, Workforce and Commercial Division.

For nuclear training elements, refer to Mr Tim Hodgson, Deputy Director-General Technical]



Division: Chief Operating Officer	
PDR No: SB25-000589	
Prepared by: Tracey Crawford Assistant Director-General People Services Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 2 February 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Marlena Davis A/Chief Operating Officer Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 2 February 2026
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

PROGRAM COSTS

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Timmy Lam, Acting Chief Financial Officer

Key Messages

- The Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) Program is a whole-of-nation undertaking with significant investment in Australia’s future.
- The 2024 Integrated Investment Program allocated \$53-63 billion over the decade from 2023-24 for the acquisition and sustainment of conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines and supporting infrastructure.
- As outlined in the Defence Portfolio Additional Estimates Budget Statement 2025-26 \$3.9 billion is estimated to be expended in 2025-26 to continue the strong progress being made to deliver Australia’s conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines.
- A range of complex variables will affect costs over the life of the Program.
- The total costs associated with the Program will not be known until design and production processes are settled and commercial and other arrangements are finalised between governments and delivery partners.

Talking Points

Recent Investment by the Government in the NPS Program

- Australia has already committed to invest over \$30 billion to 2055 in Australia’s infrastructure, workforce and supply chains to facilitate industry participation. Recent investment decisions by the Government includes:
 - Australia is investing \$262 million to develop Australia’s Nuclear-Powered Submarine supply chain and support industry.
 - Equity investment injections for Australian Naval Infrastructure to continue early construction and design works for a submarine construction yard in SA.
 - Funding to support housing and related services for personnel deployed to Submarine Rotational Force-West in WA.
 - Funding for our Sovereign Submarine build partners to establish and mobilise an enduring Australian workforce and submarine enterprise.
- Australia is making a fair and proportionate contribution to the US Submarine Industrial Base of US\$3 billion from 2025 to 2035 to accelerate US production rates and maintenance to enable the delivery of Australia’s future Virginia class submarines and GBP£2.4 billion to the UK for the design costs for SSN-AUKUS and the industrial uplift of Rolls-Royce Submarines at Derby.
- Australia has also approved funding for trilateral Program Offices with the US and UK, including payments to Naval Reactors and National Nuclear Security Administration.



Recruitment and Development of the Enterprise

- The Australian Government is working closely with the Governments of Western Australia and South Australia on workforce development, leveraging the existing experienced conventionally-powered submarine workforce in both states including investments of over \$250 million that include:
 - \$68.4 million over seven years from 2024 for initiatives delivered through the new Skills and Training Academy.
 - \$16.3 million over six years to establish the Nuclear-Powered Submarines (NPS) Student Support Scholarships Program, delivering 3,000 scholarships for students studying relevant undergraduate STEM courses.
 - Launched the Jobs for Subs program to grow the workforce required to deliver Submarine Rotational Force – West (SRF-West) by supporting around 200 graduates, apprentices and trainees.
 - \$128 million to fund 4,001 new Commonwealth supported university places over four years, starting in 2024, for STEM-related courses, designed to attract more students to train in engineering, mathematics, chemistry and physics.
- ASC Pty Ltd (ASC) and BAE Systems Australia (BAE) have been announced as our sovereign build industry partners to establish a substantive and enduring capability to the Australian submarine enterprise.
- Australia is already investing equity with ASC Pty Ltd (ASC) to uplift workforce growth, supply chain planning, equipment, cyber security, and digital transformation, in addition to funds for deploying and training ASC personnel in the US to build Australia's sovereign capacity and provide services and sustainment support on US Virginia class submarines at HMAS *Stirling* from 2027.

New Infrastructure Development

- The Australian Government has approved \$2.4 billion for priority works to upgrade infrastructure, training facilities and security at HMAS *Stirling* in Western Australia to enable the operation of SRF-West from 2027.
 - This forms part of Australia's planned \$8 billion investment over the next decade to upgrade HMAS *Stirling* to be an operating base for Australia's sovereign SSN fleet.
- Australia will build its SSN-AUKUS submarines at Osborne, South Australia, providing a fourth SSN shipyard among AUKUS partners.
 - Design of the Osborne Submarine Construction Yard continues to progress and early construction works have already commenced. Over 2023-24 to 2028-29, it is estimated that over \$3.9 billion in equity will be invested in South Australian infrastructure to support the SSN-AUKUS program.
 - Australian and South Australian Governments also agreed to establish a dedicated Skills and Training Academy to deliver the high-tech education and



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Alexandra Kelton

training needed for continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in South Australia.
\$480 million in equity is being invested to establish this dedicated facility.

- In 2024, the Australian Government made an initial investment of \$127 million over three years to progress planning, consultations, preliminary design, feasibility studies, and enabling works for the Henderson Defence Precinct.
- The Government has committed a further \$12 billion, marking the initial capital funding for the delivery phase and long-term development of the Precinct with early independent advice indicating the Precinct infrastructure alone, will require in the order of \$25 billion over the decade.

Financial Contributions to the US Industrial Base

- To date US\$2 billion (AU\$3.120 billion) has been transferred to the US and is a testament to our commitment to the successful delivery of AUKUS Pillar I outcomes.
 - US\$500 million (AU\$803 million) was transferred in Quarter one, 2025.
 - US\$500 million (AU\$777 million) was transferred in Quarter two, 2025.
 - US\$1 billion (AU\$1.540 billion) was transferred in Quarter four, 2025.
- A further US\$1 billion (adjusted for inflation) is scheduled to be transferred over 10 years from 2026 to 2035, with US\$100 million paid annually.
- Australia's contribution will help accelerate production rates and maintenance to enable the delivery of Virginia class submarines to Australia. It complements the US Government's investment of over US\$17.5 billion into its submarine industrial base to support initiatives related to supplier development, shipbuilder and supplier infrastructure, workforce development, technology advancements, strategic outsourcing and government oversight.
- We understand that the US plans to spend Australia's contribution on recruiting, training and retaining the submarine industrial base workforce at US shipyards, and upgrading facilities, equipment and infrastructure needed to repair and maintain submarines at US shipyards.

Financial Contributions to the UK Industrial Base

- To date GBP£229 million (AU\$452 million) has been transferred to the UK.
 - GBP£149 million (AU\$285 million) was transferred in April and June 2024.
 - GBP£80 million (AU\$167 million) was transferred in July 2025.
- The next contribution to the UK for industrial uplift of Rolls-Royce Submarines and our contribution to the design costs incurred by the United Kingdom for SSN-AUKUS is scheduled to be paid in the final quarter of Financial Year 2025-26. The exact timing of payments is at the mutual agreement of Australia and the UK.
- Australia agreed a fixed contribution with the UK government. Australia's GBP£2.4 billion contribution is scheduled over ten years, with at least half to be paid by the end of 2027-2028 and the remainder over the rest of the decade. The exact timing of payments is at the mutual agreement of Australian and the UK.



- Australia’s arrangements with the UK will cover a broader scope of activities including a proportionate contribution to enhance the production output of Rolls-Royce Submarines in Derby and a contribution elements relating to SSN-AUKUS design costs incurred by the UK government.

Portfolio Budget Statement 2025-26 budget measures related to the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program

- The Government will provide \$61.7 million in 2025-26 to continue to provide regulatory, safety and policy advice in support of Australia’s acquisition of a conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability. Funding includes:

Department/ Agency	Amount	Reasoning
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	\$28.0 million	provide international policy advice and diplomatic support for the NPS Program
Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office	\$11.1 million	development of non-proliferation and safeguard arrangements with the International Atomic Energy Agency
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	\$6.9 million	conduct nuclear licencing activities and provide protection and safety advice and services
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation	\$6.1 million	conduct radiological baselining and monitoring, and advise on the safe implementation of nuclear technology
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	\$3.0 million	conduct environmental regulation and assessments required under environmental legislation
Department of Finance	\$2.4 million	provide commercial, financial and investment program management advice in support of the delivery of the NPS Program
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	\$1.9 million	support the delivery of skills and training initiatives for the NPS Program
Department of Health and Aged Care	\$1.2 million	provide radiation health and safety advice, and support the development of regulatory arrangements
Attorney-General’s Department	\$1.1 million	provide legal and policy advice for the NPS Program



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Alexandra Kelton

Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2025-26 budget measures related to the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program

Department/ Agency	Amount	Reasoning
Australian Federal Police	\$199.1 million	Funding provided for the Australian Federal Police to continue to develop capabilities to provide protective security to the NPS Program.
Department of Finance	nfp	The Government is providing an equity injection for Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd over four years from 2025–26 to continue early construction and design works for a submarine construction yard in South Australia.
Department of Defence	\$61.2 million	Funding to support housing and related services for personnel deployed to Submarine Rotational Force-West, to be delivered through Defence Housing Australia
Australian Submarine Agency	\$2.0 million	Funding for the Australian Submarine Agency to support community engagement and awareness activities

Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
19 November 2025	HIFraser is the first Australian company qualified to supply parts for US Virginia class submarines through the Government-funded Defence Industry Vendor Qualification Program (DIVQ) – supporting advanced manufacturing, creating high-value jobs, and strengthening Australia’s security through the AUKUS partnership.
17 October 2025	Huntington Ingalls Industries Australia (HII) has been awarded a contract to deliver additional work packages to deliver the Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification Pilot program with a further investment of \$9.3 million. This increases the initial \$9.6 million contract to a total of \$19 million.
25 July 2025	The Honourable Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Australia and the Right Honourable John Healey MP, Secretary of State for Defence, United Kingdom signed the bilateral Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Treaty (the Geelong Treaty) at the UK-Australia Defence Ministers’ Meeting in Geelong, Victoria. The Geelong Treaty will enable comprehensive cooperation on the design, build, operation, sustainment, and disposal of our SSN-AUKUS submarines. It will support the development of the personnel, workforce, infrastructure and regulatory systems required for



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Alexandra Kelton

	Australia’s SSN-AUKUS programme, as well as support port visits and the rotational presence of a UK Astute-class submarine at HMAS <i>Stirling</i> under Submarine Rotational Force – West.
25 July 2025	The Australian Government awarded \$3.6 million of grants towards 6 projects that are funded by the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program through Australian Submarine Agency. The funding provided under the Defence Industry Development Grants program enables uplift towards Australia’s industrial base and support to the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine program.
17 March 2025	The Defence Industry Pathways Program (DIPP) and the Shipbuilding Employment Pathways (SEP) pilot initiative a collaborative effort between Australian and South Australian Government began today with a first cohort of 30 trainees and apprentices. The DIPP is a 12-month paid traineeship that will provide training and hands-on experience across various sectors of the defence industry, supporting 150 trainees over three years. The SEP funding will attract and recruit apprentices up to 125 apprentices to commence their trade qualifications over the next two years.
07 March 2025	Huntington Ingalls Industries Australia (HII) has been awarded a contract to deliver the Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification Pilot program over the next two years, with an initial value of \$9.6 million and the option to extend based on achievement.
05 March 2025	The Australian Government is investing \$480 million into Australia’s naval shipbuilding and submarine construction workforce with the build of the Skills and Training Academy at Osborne in South Australia.
8 February 2025	Deputy Prime Minister’s meeting with US counterpart US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth confirms the first payment of US\$500 million towards the US submarine industrial base uplift.
21 January 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry announced an additional investment of \$262 million to support local defence industry uplift and develop Australia’s AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine supply chain.



Division: Chief Operating Officer Division	
PDR No: SB25-000590	
Prepared by: Timmy Lam a/Chief Financial Officer CFO Branch Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 3 February 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Marlana Davis a/Chief Operating Officer COO Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 3 February 2026
Consultation:	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

CONTRACTORS & CONSULTANTS

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Rear Admiral David Mann AM CSC RAN, Head of Virginia, Workforce and Commercial

Key Messages

- The ASA will continue to use specialist and technical expertise, including surge requirements or where skills and expertise are not readily available within the Agency.
- All procurement activity undertaken within the ASA is in accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, ASA or Defence Accountable Authority Instructions and approved by an ASA financial delegate.
- As at 31 December 2025, AusTender reported the ASA had:
 - 7 active contracts with one (1) of the 'Big Four' accounting firms, KPMG. The total contract value of these is \$7.6 million (incl. GST).
 - no active contracts with any of the 'Big Three' consulting firms.

Talking Points

Services being provided by United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) nationals

- The ASA leverages experience and expertise by selectively employing UK and US nationals — both former government officials and industry leaders.
- This includes through Foreign Military Sales and forums such as the Naval Shipbuilding Expert Advisory Panel.
 - These forums provide confidential, expert advice that supports the government's decision-making process across the shipbuilding enterprise.
- The remuneration individuals receive is subject to their seniority, expertise and experience.

Contracts in place with eminent US and UK Admirals and seniors

- The ASA has had none of these contracts since the establishment of the ASA on 1 July 2023.

Contracts in place with eminent nuclear US or UK personnel

- In 2025, the ASA engaged with companies specifically for provision of international nuclear-related expertise from the UK and US.
- As at 31 December 2025, AusTender reported the ASA had a \$3.238 million (inc GST) contract with one (1) company, Bechtel Management Pty Ltd. This contract is for the provision of nuclear infrastructure experts to support the ASA infrastructure program for 12 months.



Services being provided through each contract entered into by the ASA

- The ASA's contracts consist of a range of services that include, but are not limited to:
 - Legal advice;
 - Probity services;
 - Export control services;
 - Professional program related services;
 - Professional technical and engineering services;
 - Management advisory and expert consultancy;
 - Technical financial advice and cost development; and
 - ICT capability, facilities and recruitment services.

Contracts with the 'Big Four' firms (Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC)

- As at 31 December 2025, AusTender reported the ASA had \$7.6 million (incl. GST) in active contracts with one (1) of the 'Big Four' accounting firms comprising:
 - KPMG (\$7.6 million incl. GST), seven (7) current contracts.
- The range of services provided to the ASA from KPMG are predominately program management, financial and delivery support services.

Contracts with the 'Big Three' consulting firms (McKinsey&Co, Boston Consulting Group, Bain & Company)

- As at 31 December 2025, AusTender reported the ASA had no active contracts with any of the 'Big Three' consulting firms.
- The ASA did have contracts with two (2) of the 'Big Three' consulting firms, comprising:
 - Boston Consulting Group (\$13.288 million incl. GST), no current contracts.
 - McKinsey (\$12.782 million incl. GST) no current contracts.

Contracts for Contractors

- As at 31 December 2025, the ASA had:
 - 73 active Contracts for Above the Line (ATL) Contractors with approximately 134 Specified Personnel employed within these contracts.

Contracts for Consultants

- As at 31 December 2025, the ASA had:
 - 5 active contracts for Consultants, with approximately 17 Specified Personnel employed within these contracts.

Contracts for Outsourced Service Providers

- As at 31 December 2025, the ASA had:
 - 13 active contracts that are for Outsourced Service Providers with approximately 72 Specified Personnel employed within these contracts.



Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
20 August 2025	Australian supply chain uplift partner, H&B Defence announced the award of the first Request for Quotation to Hoffman Engineering to supply several parts into the US aircraft carrier shipbuilding supply-chain.
4 December 2024	The Australian Government awarded several contracts for Australian businesses under the DIVQ process.
13 November 2024	The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA), ASC Pty Ltd and BAE Systems entered into a collaborative mobilisation agreement to commence preparatory work for the SSN-AUKUS build.

Media

On 29 September 2025, [ABC News](#) reported that the ASA has spent five times what it first planned for consultants to review its operations and ensure they were “fit for purpose.” The article [Consultancy bill to review 'struggling' submarine agency blows out to \\$12.1 million - ABC News](#) referred to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) contracts for the review of the ASA and also made linkages to the Dennis Richardson Review and previously reported culture issues within the Agency.

Event

On 27 July 2025, [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) reported that the Labor government vowed to crack down on consultants, but spending across all agencies in the second half of the financial year exceeded spending in six months prior. Listed in the article is the top 10 consulting service costs by government departments, which does not include the ASA. The article focused on consultancy contracts valued above \$2 million.



Division: Virginia Workforce and Commercial	
PDR No: SB25-000591	
Prepared by: Laura Fanning Assistant Director-General Commercial Virginia Workforce and Commercial Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 23 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Rear Admiral David Mann, AM, CSC Head Virginia Workforce and Commercial Virginia Workforce and Commercial Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 23 January 2026
Consultation: Nil	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

SOCIAL LICENCE

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Mikaela James, Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Key Messages

- The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) is committed to open, transparent and through-life meaningful engagement on the Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) Program with all stakeholders.
- The ASA has engaged extensively with First Nations Australians, government leaders, industry, the education sector and the community on the progress of the AUKUS Optimal Pathway.
- This engagement has focused on informing the community via a range of channels and activities that build on the opportunities that exist for partnership in delivery of the program, including with industry, workforce and educational pathways.

Western Australia Engagement

Governance/government engagement

- ASA regularly engages with the local and state governments in Western Australia, as well as local representatives of Commonwealth agencies, to enable collaboration and coordination on social licence through both formal and informal arrangements. These include:
 - Joint Henderson / HMAS Stirling Task Force with representatives from Federal and state governments, the NPS Steering Group (most recent meeting 18 September 2025), and its subordinate Joint Social Licence and Engagement Working Group (most recent meeting 4 December 2025).
 - Regular briefings for the Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance (PSWMA) group of local governments on community engagement, infrastructure upgrades, industry opportunities and nuclear stewardship.

First Nations engagement in WA

- Trust-based, respectful relationships with First Nations communities in WA, supported by Navy's Regional Indigenous Development Coordinator, have been built with:
 - National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA);
 - Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia (AACWA);
 - South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC);
 - Gnaala Karla Booja (GKB) Aboriginal Corporation; and



- Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation.
- In 2025, ASA led and participated in eleven engagement activities with First Nations communities.
 - These have occurred in a variety of formats, including briefings and consultations, a range of cultural experiences, and career and industry events with a focus on sharing information on workforce and industry opportunities.

Recent community engagement activity

- ASA has conducted extensive engagement with local communities.
- ASA hosted several Community Information Sessions in 2025:
 - Rockingham and Cockburn on 15 and 16 December respectively.
 - Rockingham and Fremantle on 16 and 18 September respectively.
 - The sessions included updates on the NPS Program, Priority Works at HMAS Stirling, Henderson Defence Precinct and community Q&A.
 - Representation included senior officials from ASA, the Department of Defence (including the Royal Australian Navy, Security and Estate Group, the Naval Sustainment and Shipbuilding Group, the NPS Regulatory Design Team) and the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation.
 - ASA intends to host future community information sessions, broadening the scope to include other local government areas in the Southwest metropolitan region.
 - Key themes included: progress on implementing SRF-West; community infrastructure, community safety and nuclear waste.
- Further outreach (with Navy’s Submarine Recruiting) team included:
 - Pop up kiosks in Rockingham, Baldivis, Kwinana, Cockburn and Mandurah;
 - Outreach with future workforce at the Rockingham Jobs Fair (10 June 2025), Kwinana Future Ready Expo (20 August 2025); Perth Royal Show (2 October) and the Mandurah Jobs and Careers Expo (23 October 2025).

Submarine Discovery Centre (Rockingham)

- ASA signed the lease for a Submarine Discovery Centre in central Rockingham.
- It will be a one-stop-shop for the community to learn about the NPS Program.
- ASA is working towards a launch in Q1 2026.

Garden Island Freeway

- Traffic management in the Rockingham region continues to be of concern for the local community.



- A petition, with 802 signatures, was tabled with the Western Australian Parliament on 13 January 2026 in response to Main Roads Western Australia concluding a new Garden Island Highway was not required.
- Defence regularly engages with the Western Australian Government and affected councils to coordinate and manage its activities in the Cockburn Sound region.
 - Defence acknowledges concerns with the current volume of traffic leading to HMAS Stirling and the Henderson Defence Precinct.
 - Defence has completed redevelopment of the base entry at Stirling to mitigate traffic congestion and is designing a reconfigured intersection at Point Peron Road (including traffic lights).
- Defence continues to work with the Western Australian Government and local governments on improvements to state and local roads.

South Australia Engagement

Consultation on the site licence for ANI

- From 12-21 November 2025, ASA supported public drop-in sessions for ANI's site licence public consultation. Six public sessions were held across Adelaide with particular focus on the Port Adelaide-Enfield area.

[Handling note: Refer questions on site licence to ANNPSR]

Governance/government engagement

- ASA regularly engages with the local and state governments in South Australia to enable collaboration and coordination on social licence through both formal and informal arrangements.
 - Arrangements include the AUKUS Pillar 1 Steering Committee co-chaired by the South Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet and ASA.
 - Three subordinate working groups are focused on Industry, Infrastructure, and Social Licence and Communications.
 - Additionally, ASA holds monthly infrastructure and social licence and communications working group meetings with the City of Port Adelaide Enfield Council as well as monthly meetings with community stakeholder groups.

Community engagement activity

- The ASA undertook public consultation on the draft Strategic Impact Assessment Report for the Osborne Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard from 03 February to 17 March 2025
 - This process occurred concurrently with public consultation on an Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Australian Naval Infrastructure (ANI) in accordance with requirements under South Australian legislation.



First Nations engagement in South Australia

- Key feedback from First Nations engagement includes seeking to understand more about the Program’s:
 - Environmental impacts; and
 - First Nations career and training pathways.
- ASA is collaborating with the Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC), the prescribed body corporate under the Native Title Act for the Adelaide region, to determine the next steps in strengthening ongoing engagement. This partnership focuses on:
 - Meaningful consultation on key projects and environmental initiatives;
 - Upholding cultural responsibility and addressing consultation fatigue;
 - First Nations career and training pathways.
- The Agency remains committed to providing regular program updates through continued engagement with KYAC representatives.
- The ASA also engages on the NPS Program with:
 - RAW SA;
 - Cultural Immersion; and
 - Port Adelaide Enfield Council Aboriginal Advisory Authority

Recent community engagement activity

- ASA has conducted/planned extensive engagement with local communities, including through:
 - five SA High School careers and training pathways expos (June, July, August);
 - South Australia’s largest careers expo (May);
 - the ‘Science Alive’ expo (August);
 - the Royal Adelaide Show (30 August to 7 September 2025); and
 - the Young Endeavour Open Day (20 September 2025)
 - BP Adelaide Grand Final (28-30 November 2025).

Media

- 28 Dec 2025 [ABC News](#) reports Rockingham's leap to major AUKUS defence hub leaves some locals trepidatious
- 18 Dec 2025 [ABC News](#) reports proposed highway to alleviate AUKUS traffic congestion scrapped after feasibility study
- 19 Sept 2025 [ABC News](#) reports Australian Submarine Agency lobbies Fremantle locals amid protest over AUKUS defence hub



- 20 Aug 2025 [Australian Associated Press \(AAP\)](#) reports Aussie anxiety fuelling AUKUS submarine social licence
- On 18 Aug 2025 [The West Australian](#) reports AUKUS build-up in Perth sparks recruitment drive for new apprentices
- On 14 July 2025 [The West Australian](#) reports Sussan Ley and Basil Zempilas warn WA moving too slow on AUKUS during first meeting since their elections
- On 14 July 2025 [InDaily](#) reports AUKUS Anxiety: Local fears grow around Submarine build
- On 12 June 2025 [ABC News](#) reports Osborne Shipyard traders face nervous wait in new AUKUS review
- On 28 April 2025 [The West Australian](#) reports Rockingham locals hold 'No AUKUS, no nukes' snap protest

Division: Policy, Strategy and Engagement	
PDR No: SB25-000592	
Prepared by: Kylie Wright Assistant Director-General Strategic Engagement and Policy Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 22 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Mikaela James Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 28 January 2026
Consultation: NIL	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

US PARTNERSHIP

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General
Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy
Mikaela James, Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Key Messages

- The US Administration has expressed strong support for AUKUS, including through President Trump's commitment that AUKUS is moving 'full steam ahead'.
- As the Government has said, we welcomed the Pentagon's Review into AUKUS.
- Australian officials have received the outcomes of the Review and are continuing to work through it.

[Handling note: Defence is the Portfolio lead on the US Review. In the first instance, requests should be directed to Defence.]

Talking Points

US Review into AUKUS

- We have received the outcomes of the Pentagon's AUKUS Review and are providing advice to Government.
 - Our officials are working closely with counterparts in the US and the UK on the Review's outcomes.
- The Review has reaffirmed the US's support for AUKUS, consistent with President Trump's recent commitment that AUKUS is moving 'full steam ahead'.
 - This was also reaffirmed by Secretaries Rubio and Hegseth during AUSMIN 2025, on 8 December.
 - And again at the AUKUS Defence Ministers' Meeting, on 11 December, where all three partners (Secretaries Hegseth and Healey, and DPM Marles) reaffirmed the critical importance of our submarine cooperation under Pillar I.
- AUKUS is squarely in the interest of all three nations.
- Welcome President Trump's commitment to:
 - the transfer of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines to Australia; and
 - 'moving along very rapidly' to deliver AUKUS.
- Australia shares this commitment to pursue this partnership at pace.
- Our engagement with the Trump Administration has shown clear and consistent support for AUKUS.



- The Prime Minister (11 Feb, 5 May, 20 Oct), Deputy Prime Minister (7 Feb, 30 May, 27 Aug, 8 Dec, 10 Dec) and Foreign Minister (21 Jan, 20 Jun, 8 Dec) have discussed AUKUS with their counterparts.

Australian contribution to the US submarine industrial base

- Australia has committed to a total contribution to the US of USD 3 billion.
- To date, Australia has transferred a total of USD 2 billion to the US.
 - Transfer of USD 500 million was initiated in January 2025.
 - Transfer of USD 500 million was initiated in May 2025.
 - Transfer of USD 1 billion was initiated in December 2025.
 - The remaining USD 1 billion will be paid in regular instalments, adjusted for inflation over ten years from 2026-27.
- Australia will continue to make payments in line with the schedule of payments agreed with the US.

How Australia's contribution will be spent

- The US National Defense Authorization Act 2024 sets out that Australia's contribution will be spent on supporting non-nuclear related aspects of AUKUS submarine cooperation activities.
 - This includes investments in: recruiting, training and retention of the submarine industrial base workforce at US shipyards; and upgrading facilities, equipment and infrastructure needed to repair and maintain submarines at US shipyards.
- We have appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure we have transparency over and assurance about US expenditure of our contribution to their SIB, including in line with our non-proliferation obligations.

US investments in the SIB

- Australia's financial contribution contributes to work and investment already underway by the US government.
 - The US Government has decided to invest approximately USD 17.5 billion into its submarine industrial base to support initiatives related to supplier development, shipbuilder and supplier infrastructure, workforce development, technology advancements, strategic outsourcing and government oversight.
 - This funding will bolster the US maintenance and production capacity for nuclear-powered submarines, and boost the resilience of the submarine supply chain.
 - This will have positive flow-on effects for the AUKUS partnership and help get boats into the water faster for both Australia and the US.

Progress in US submarine production rates



- The outcome of US and Australian investment to expand the US submarine industrial base will take time to show in the rates of submarine production, as additional infrastructure, facilities and workforce are continuing to come online.
 - The challenges are well known and we are confident we will see increases in those production and sustainment rates over time.
 - There are already strong positive indicators of progress, such as the US Maritime Industrial Base office (April 25) reporting that since 2018 the Navy has funded nearly 800 supplier uplift projects across 39 states, resulting in a 250% increase in submarine parts delivery in that time.
- With the amount of Congressional support and investment, and focus from the Administration, in workforce, infrastructure and manufacturing technologies, we are confident that challenges and barriers will be overcome.

[Handling note: ASA COO is the lead on dollar values of US SIB contributions. Reference PDR: SB25-000590.]

Submarine Rotational Force – West

[Handling note: Head Virginia, Workforce and Commercial is the lead on Phase I SRF-West. Reference PDR: SB25-000598.]

Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
10 December 2025 (local time in Washington DC).	The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, met with US Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth and the UK’s Secretary of State for Defence, John Healey for and AUKUS Defence Ministers’ Meeting in Washington DC.
8 December 2025 (local time in Washington DC).	The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister met with US counterparts Secretaries Hegseth and Rubio for the AUSMIN 2025 in Washington DC.
20 October 2025 (local time in Washington DC).	The Prime Minister met with President Donald Trump as part of his official visit to the US, where AUKUS was discussed. The meeting included, from the US side: Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth and Secretary of the Navy John Phelan.
26 August 2025 (local time in Washington DC).	The Deputy Prime Minister met with Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth in Washington DC
31 May 2025	Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, met with the then US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth in the margins of the 2025 Shangri-La Dialogue.
16 August 2025	The Prime Minister met with Representative Courtney (Democrat-Connecticut) in Sydney on the conclusion of a bipartisan Congressional delegation. Rep. Courtney said “It was an honor to



	meet with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese as part of a bipartisan delegation in support of AUKUS.”
7 February 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister met with Representative Courtney (Democrat-Connecticut) on 7 February 2025. Representative Courtney said that Australia’s payment of USD500 million “strengthened the ties of our two nations and the AUKUS agreement, ensuring the mission will endure and the US submarine industrial base can meet the demands of the security agreement.”
7 February 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister met with new US Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth in Washington DC. Their discussions reaffirmed our shared commitment to delivering on AUKUS.
29 January 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister spoke with new US Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth. During their introductory call, the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary Hegseth discussed key initiatives across the breadth of the Alliance, including AUKUS.

Media

- On 25 January, the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese, announced that he will recommend to the Governor-General that Defence Secretary Mr Greg Moriarty AO be Australia’s next Ambassador to the United States.
- On 12 January, [Australian Media](#) reported Secretary Moriarty was ‘leading a delegation for high-level talks in Washington...primarily expected to focus on the AUKUS partnership’.
- On 9 December 2025, the [ABC](#) reported Penny Wong and Richard Marles meet US counterparts in Washington after AUKUS Review.
- On 22 October 2025, the [ABC](#), and many other Australian and international outlets, provided positive coverage of the Prime Minister’s meeting with the President.
-

Division:	Policy, Strategy & Engagement	
PDR No:	SB25-000593	
Prepared by: s47E(c) Director Trilateral Strategic Policy Strategic Engagement and Policy Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 23 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Mikaela James Head Policy, Strategy & Engagement Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 29 January 2026	
Consultation:		



Post Washington

Cleared by Director-General:

VADM Jonathan Mead

Date: 29 January 2026

Director-General

Australian Submarine Agency

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Additional Estimates

UK PARTNERSHIP

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Acting Deputy Director-General Program and Policy

Mikaela James, Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Key Messages

- Australia's SSN-AUKUS remains on track to be delivered in the early 2040s.
- The Geelong Treaty entered into force on 19 December 2025, facilitating bilateral cooperation across all aspects of the design, build, operation, sustainment and disposal of SSN-AUKUS vessels.

Talking Points

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)

- The Geelong Treaty [signed 26 July 2025], which entered into force on 19 December 2025, is a historic agreement and another significant AUKUS Pillar I milestone.
- It is important demonstration of Australia and the UK's commitment to AUKUS and our implementation of the Optimal Pathway.
 - The Geelong Treaty will facilitate bilateral cooperation across all aspects of the design, build, operation, sustainment and disposal of SSN-AUKUS vessels.
 - It will also expand our respective undersea presence in the Indo-Pacific, and reaffirm our shared commitment to support security and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.
- The Geelong Treaty includes provisions to:
 - facilitate the delivery of both nations' respective SSN-AUKUS programmes;
 - support port visits and the rotational presence in Australia of UK conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs); and
 - enhance our individual and combined industrial capability and capacity to build and maintain SSNs.
- Importantly, the Geelong Treaty provides that all activities will meet Australia and the UK's respective international and domestic obligations, including non-proliferation obligations.
- The Geelong Treaty complements and operates alongside the trilateral AUKUS Naval Nuclear Propulsion Agreement (ANNPA), which entered into force on 17 January 2025.



Financial and Economic Implications for Australia

- The Geelong Treaty establishes principles to ensure that future program delivery costs between Australia and the UK are shared appropriately on a fair, justifiable and proportionate basis.
 - This will ensure both nations can derive benefit from the partnership.
- The Geelong Treaty does not establish any new payment schedule for Australia to make payments to the UK, beyond those previously agreed.
- Importantly, this Treaty will drive significant economic growth for Australia.
 - It will create jobs, increase and foster trade, fortify supply chains and uplift our submarine industrial bases.
- The Geelong Treaty establishes tax concessions that will save Australia significant costs in the delivery of our SSN-AUKUS vessels.
 - It establishes duty free imports and exports with the UK, which will save Australia costs. It will also streamline market access and provide opportunities for growth and investment for Australian industry.

If raised: indemnity and liability provisions

- Some of Australia and the UK's most sensitive defence equipment will be transferred pursuant to the AUKUS partnership.
- In this context, to ensure the providing government does not assume additional risk or liability, the Treaty requires the parties to enter into arrangements that provide appropriate reciprocal indemnities as well as risk and liability mitigations in respect of government-to-government transfers of equipment and material and the provision of services.
- The Geelong Treaty does not manage liability related to nuclear risks, which are governed under the AUKUS Naval Nuclear Propulsion Agreement, the ANNPA.

Financial Contribution to the UK

- Australia agreed to a fixed contribution of £2.4 billion with the UK Government to be paid over ten years.
- To date [February 2026], Australia has transferred GBP 229 million to the UK.
 - The first payment of GBP 149 million was transferred in April and June 2024.
 - The second payment of GBP 80 million was transferred in July 2025.
 - This covers Australia's contribution to the industrial uplift of Rolls-Royce Submarines; and the design costs incurred by the UK for SSN-AUKUS.

SSN-AUKUS

[Note: Refer to separate SSN-AUKUS briefing material for additional detail.]

- Australia and the UK are rapidly progressing delivery of SSN-AUKUS, which remains on track to be operated by the UK from the late 2030s, and Australia in the early 2040s.



- . We look forward to welcoming the first UK SSN Astute boat to Australia as part of a visit to HMAS Stirling in Q1 2026.
 - This visit will support building Australia’s capacity to operate and maintain our own nuclear-powered submarines, particularly as we look ahead to SSN-AUKUS.
 - This visit is also an important step towards preparing for the commencement of Submarine Rotational Force – West in 2027.
 - In December 2025 at the AUKUS DMM, Secretary of State Healy confirmed that “for the UK, AUKUS is quite simply the most important military collaboration for the last 70 years”, and “the UK is all in on AUKUS”. The upcoming visit by the first Astute-class SSN is a tangible demonstration of that commitment.

If raised: Media reporting on a UK Astute class submarine on route to Australia

[Handling note: While there is media speculation on which Astute class has been seen, the UK has not confirmed the type or name of the boat]

- . Aware of reports that a Royal Navy submarine visited Gibraltar recently.
 - This is an operational matter for the UK.

UK AUKUS Review

- . Sir Stephen Lovegrove presented the outcomes of his AUKUS Review to the UK Government at the end of 2024.
 - Sir Stephen has spoken publically about his recommendations to the UK Government following his review, including updated UK governance structures and more centralised arrangements to optimise AUKUS delivery in the UK.
 - The UK Government has implemented recommendations over the past 12 months, including through the appointment of Sir Stephen as the Prime Minister’s Special Representative on AUKUS in April 2025.
- . Australia continues to work closely with Sir Stephen and our partners in the UK and the US to unlock opportunities that enhance AUKUS delivery.
- . All three countries are committed to ensuring AUKUS meets national and trilateral objectives. We will continue to invest significantly to ensure the success of AUKUS to meet these respective requirements on time.

[Handling note: detailed questions on the UK AUKUS Review should be directed to the UK Government, it would be inappropriate to comment in further detail on the findings of a UK Government Report]

UK House of Commons Defence Committee inquiry

- . The UK parliamentary House of Commons Defence Committee is conducting an inquiry into how AUKUS is progressing against existing milestones, and how the UK can best support delivery.
- . Committee members visited Australia in October 2025 to understand of how AUKUS is being implemented in Australia.



- Engagements in Australia affirmed that AUKUS is an appropriate strategic response to an increasingly complex global security environment, and that AUKUS delivery is on track.
- . During the committee's inquiry, the Government provided a written submission outlining the progress made to date, emphasising:
 - Pillar 1 is on track to deliver Australia's fleet of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines, under the 'Optimal Pathway'.
- . AUKUS partners will continue to work together to collectively uplift the industrial capacity of all three nations to ensure Australia does not have a capability gap. We look forward to the Committee's findings when it publishes its report in 2026.

Work to support SSN-AUKUS Delivery in the UK

- . The UK Government is firmly committed to delivering SSN-AUKUS and is investing significantly to uplift its industrial capacity.
- . In June 2025, the UK committed to investing GBP 6 billion in the UK supply chain to deliver SSN-AUKUS, on time, including through capital works at BAE Systems Submarine in Barrow, and Rolls-Royce Submarines in Derby.
 - At Barrow, the UK is working with BAE Systems to lay down the requirements to double capacity including through outsourcing work to wider industrial base.
 - This will enable the UK to meet its intent of building up to 12 SSN-AUKUS submarines, delivering a new boat to Royal Navy every 18 months.
- . Further, in January 2025, the UK Government announced a new contract with Rolls-Royce (the 'Unity Contract'), worth approximately GBP 9 billion to bolster support to the UK Royal Navy's submarine fleet.
 - The contract will support the production of nuclear reactors to power UK submarines, including SSN-AUKUS.
- . In addition, the UK has committed:
 - GBP 4 billion to continue the detailed design work of SSN-AUKUS [*announced in 2024*];
 - GBP 200 million in the 'Team Barrow' initiative to ensure Barrow thrives as the home of UK nuclear submarine-building and can attract the necessary workforce [*announced in 2024, with funding provisioned over the next decade with GBP 20 million per year*]; and
 - GBP 3 billion across its Defence Nuclear Enterprise, including for the construction of submarine industrial infrastructure that will help to deliver SSN-AUKUS [*announced in 2023*].

If raised: Lord Case (Independent Chair of Team Barrow) AUKUS commentary regarding Barrow's infrastructure is not yet in place

- . [**Handling note:** Senator Shoebridge raised Lord Case's comments when asked by the UK House of Commons Defence Committee whether or not the AUKUS SSN Project was on track]
- . We support the comments by Lord Case, that the build of SSN-AUKUS, whether in the UK or Australia, is a very demanding challenge.



- It is the most complex undertaking that Australia has embarked, and it will be the most complex engineering task in the work.
- BAE Systems, the UK Ministry of Defence’s Submarine Delivery Agency and the Defence Nuclear Organisation have told ASA that the UK SSN-AUKUS remains on-track – as it is in Osborne, South Australia.
- Team Barrow is a public-private partnership between UK Government, local council, industry and community stakeholders, which looks to cohere efforts and investment sources to uplift the local community at Barrow-in-Furness.
 - The UK has also announced investment of GBP 20 million per year in the ‘Team Barrow’ initiative which coheres public and private funding and lines of activity to uplift the local community at Barrow-in-Furness, the UK centre for nuclear-powered submarine construction.
- Team Barrow does not represent the UK Government, it advocates broadly for investment including across transport infrastructure, education, housing, to ensure Barrow is able to attract and retain the workforce required to support the NPS enterprise.
 - Lord Case is the independent chair of Team Barrow, and former UK Cabinet Secretary.
 - Lord Case brings important expertise in central government coordination, ensuring for instance that housing and transport infrastructure policy and investment is aligned with Defence investment.
- As he noted in his response to UK parliamentary questioning, Lord Case is not best placed to comment on programmatic deliverables for SSN-AUKUS and referred such questions to BAE Systems.

If raised: ‘High probability of failure: Dire (UK) AUKUS warning (RADM Philip Mathias, retd)

- The Government has always been clear that this is an ambitious program, and acknowledged the challenges involved when the optimal pathway was announced in 2023.
- AUKUS remains squarely in the interest of all three nations. We are working at pace with our partners to ensure the long-term success of the AUKUS partnership.
- We are meeting key milestones and AUKUS remains full steam ahead.
- Significant progress has been made towards delivering AUKUS Pillar I.
 - Includes the signing, and entering into force, of the Geelong Treaty to facilitate bilateral cooperation across all aspects of the design, build, operation, sustainment and disposal of SSN-AUKUS vessels.
- At the AUKUS DMM [December 2025] Secretary of State for Defence Healey confirmed “for the UK, AUKUS is quite simply the most important military collaboration for the last 70 years”, and “the UK is all in on AUKUS”.
- We remain confident in the ability of all three nations to work collectively to deliver this program. AUKUS partners are investing significantly into their industrial bases to deliver this program.



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Alexandra Kelton

- Through AUKUS, all three partner nations have committed to enhancing their respective submarine industrial capacities.
- The UK has committed [in September 2024] GBP 4 billion to continue the detailed design work of SSN-AUKUS, and a further investment of GBP 3 billion to expand production capabilities across its Defence Nuclear Enterprise.
- . In June 2025, the UK announced GBP 6 billion investment to uplift its submarine industrial base, which includes boosting production at BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce Submarines.
- . Australia is contributing a fixed GBP 2.4 billion over 10 years to further support UK submarine industrial uplift, as well as Australia's contribution to the design costs incurred by the UK for SSN-AUKUS.



Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
19 December 2025	The Geelong Treaty is entered into force.
4 December 2025	The bill to amend the <i>Customs Tariff Act 1995</i> in order to implement the Geelong Treaty passed into law following Royal Assent by the Governor General.
29 October 2025	The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties tabled its report on the Geelong Treaty, including its recommendation supporting binding treaty action.
28 July 2025	The Geelong Treaty was tabled in Parliament.
26 July 2025	Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles and UK Secretary of State for Defence John Healey signed the <i>Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Treaty</i> (the Geelong Treaty) during AUKMIN.
7 April 2025	The UK Government appointed Sir Stephen Lovegrove as the Prime Minister’s Special Representative on AUKUS.
2 April 2025	The UK House of Commons Defence Committee launched its inquiry into AUKUS.
17 January 2025	AUKUS Naval Nuclear Propulsion Agreement (ANNPA) entered into force.
November 2024 to June 2025	Negotiations on Geelong Treaty.
26 September 2024	Australia and the UK publicly announced plans to commence negotiations on a bilateral treaty in support of AUKUS during the AUKUS Defence Ministerial Meeting.

Media

- On 12 January 2026, Matthew Knott reported in the Sydney Morning Herald that RADM Philip Mathias (retd.), a former director of nuclear policy with the UK Ministry of Defence, said he feared Australians were not adequately informed about the troubles plaguing the British navy, which could sink both nation’s AUKUS ambitions.
- On 22 October 2025, Andrew Tillett at the [Australian Financial Review](#) reported on oral evidence provided to the HCDC inquiry on AUKUS by UK industry stakeholders, stating that “UK defence company chiefs sounded warnings on AUKUS delays”. This saw BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce Submarines and Babcock executives address the UK parliamentary inquiry on AUKUS to the pace and complexity of program delivery in the UK and Australia.



Additional Estimates

RADIOACTIVE WASTE & SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Tim Hodgson, Deputy Director-General Technical

Belinda McNamara, Head Stewardship and Security

Key Messages

- The Government is committed to the highest standard of nuclear stewardship, including the safe and secure disposal of radioactive waste as a result of Australia's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
- Australia will not receive intermediate-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel from the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), or any other country.
- All radioactive waste will be managed in line with international best practice and in accordance with Australia's international and domestic legal obligations and commitments, including the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga).
- Routine nuclear-powered submarine operations and maintenance activities undertaken at HMAS *Stirling* will result in the generation of low-level radioactive waste, which will be managed in a manner that prioritises safety and security at a licenced radiological facility, before it is transported for longer-term storage and permanent disposal.
- Intermediate-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, will be stored and disposed on the current or future Defence estate.
- No sites have yet been identified to dispose of intermediate-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel as a result of Australia's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine program.

Talking Points

Management of Radioactive Waste

- Australia has committed that it will be responsible for the management, storage, and disposal of radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel generated from its conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
 - This is a key part of being a responsible nuclear steward.
- Australia will not receive intermediate-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel from the UK, the US, or any other country.

Managing low-level radioactive waste at HMAS Stirling

- Routine nuclear-powered submarine operations and maintenance activities undertaken at HMAS *Stirling* by US and UK nuclear-powered submarines as part of Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West) will result in the generation of low-level radioactive waste.



- Developing expertise to manage low-level radioactive waste from routine operations and sustainment will be an important part of Australia building the necessary stewardship capability to operate and maintain its own conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines.
- The low-level radioactive waste resulting from this routine maintenance will include items such as gloves, wipes, plastic bags, tape, personal protective equipment, pipes and valve caps.
- This low-level radioactive waste will be managed in a manner that prioritises safety and security at a licenced and regulated facility, before it is transported for longer-term storage and permanent disposal.
- Low-level radioactive waste will be managed in accordance with requirements under relevant legislation including the *Australian Naval Nuclear Propulsion Safety Act 2024* and Regulations, and the *Australian Radiation Protection and Safety Act 1998*.

Managing low-level radioactive waste at the Osborne Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Shipyard

- It is anticipated that the submarine construction, testing and commissioning activities planned for Osborne will generate small amounts of low-level radioactive waste.
 - The low-level radioactive waste could include items such as gloves, wipes, plastic bags, tape, personal protective equipment, pipes and valve caps.
- This low-level radioactive waste will need to be managed and temporarily stored in a licenced facility similar to the purpose-built Controlled Industrial Facility currently planned for HMAS *Stirling*, in accordance with domestic regulatory requirements.

Managing low-level radioactive waste and intermediate-level radioactive waste at Henderson Defence Precinct

- It is anticipated that a purpose-built radiological facility would be required at Henderson Defence Precinct, to manage low-level radioactive waste and small amounts of intermediate-level radioactive waste;
 - Generated through activities such as changing a filter or replacing a part during depot level maintenance periods.
- No spent nuclear fuel is planned to be generated, or stored, during maintenance activities at Henderson.

Managing high-level radioactive waste including Spent Nuclear Fuel when Submarines are decommissioned

- Intermediate-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel will be stored and disposed on the current or future Defence estate.
 - No sites have yet been identified to dispose of spent nuclear fuel or intermediate-level radioactive waste as a result of Australia’s NPS Program.



- A facility to store or dispose of spent nuclear fuel and intermediate-level radioactive waste will not be required until the 2050s when the first nuclear-powered submarine is expected to be decommissioned.
- Australia will determine where and how spent nuclear fuel will be disposed of, and will do so in a manner that sets the highest standards for safety, security and nuclear non-proliferation safeguards, and which builds the social licence for a disposal solution.
- Determining a suitable location and methods for safe and secure disposal will take time and requires community consultation, including with First Nations people, and detailed consideration of technical requirements.

Cost of managing radioactive waste for the NPS Program

- Preliminary activities have commenced to inform planning for the future management of radioactive waste arising from Australia’s nuclear-powered submarines.
- Given the preliminary status of this work no cost estimates have been developed.

Australia’s acceptance of radioactive waste from US and UK Submarines

- Australia will not receive or manage intermediate-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel from US and UK submarines.
 - To put the matter beyond doubt, Government amended the *Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024* (ANNPS Act) to make clear that nothing in the Act authorises the storage or disposal of spent nuclear fuel from other countries, including US or UK submarines.
- Routine nuclear-powered submarine operations and maintenance activities undertaken at HMAS *Stirling* as part of Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West) by US and UK submarines will result in the generation of low-level radioactive waste.
- This low-level radioactive waste will be managed in a manner that prioritises safety and security at a licenced and regulated facility at HMAS *Stirling* before it is transported for longer-term storage and permanent disposal.

Australia’s decision to use highly enriched uranium (HEU) for its conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines

- Australia’s decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines that use HEU was underpinned by thorough consultation and consideration of all options.
 - Submarines designed for low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel do not meet Australia’s requirements.
 - LEU-fuelled submarines would require refuelling the nuclear reactor on each submarine every 10 years in another country.
 - : This would add unnecessary complexity to our submarine capability – we would need to plan for access to refuel in the country of origin, introducing significant additional diversion pathways.



- Use of HEU fuel means Australia’s conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines will not require refuelling.

Review into Site Selection Process for Disposal

- In 2023, the ASA and Defence conducted a review, working with the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) and relevant agencies, to inform the development of a site selection process.
- The review looked into the potential site selection process to identify locations in the current or future Defence estate suitable for the storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and intermediate-level radioactive waste from Australia’s conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines.
- With the program maturing, the ASA continues to refine NPS Program requirements to safely and securely manage intermediate-level and spent nuclear fuel generated by Australia’s conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
 - These decommissioning requirements will be developed in lock-step with the program schedule and milestones
 - At this stage in the program, a facility to store or dispose of spent nuclear fuel and intermediate-level radioactive waste will not be required until the 2050s when Australia’s first nuclear-powered submarine is expected to be decommissioned.

Inclusion of NPS radioactive waste in the 2024 National Inventory of Radioactive Waste

- The third edition of Australia’s National Inventory of Radioactive Waste includes waste produced by the Department of Defence, and provides an estimate of future waste from Australia’s Nuclear-Powered Submarine program.
 - Current assessment indicates that radioactive waste from the NPS program is not expected to constitute a significant portion of the national radioactive waste inventory.
 - Over 50 years of waste generation, the NPS program will produce an estimated 4 cubic metres of intermediate-level radioactive waste, and 130 cubic metres of low-level radioactive waste.
 - : High-level radioactive waste (spent nuclear fuel) estimates generated during the decommissioning of the NPS are still being quantified.

Background

- Once operational, Australia’s conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines will produce small amounts of low-level radioactive waste every year, annually much less than the annual amount from Australia’s nuclear science and research at Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation’s (ANSTO) Lucas Heights reactor.
 - This amounts to roughly two cubic metres of processed waste each year per submarine, consisting of items such as gloves, wipes, plastic bags, tape, personal protective equipment, pipes and valve caps.



- ARWA publishes an inventory of Australia’s radioactive waste every three years. The inventory estimates:
 - The amount of radioactive waste in Australia that will require disposal
 - How much radioactive waste Australia will produce in the foreseeable future
- Through scientific, medical and industrial pathways, ARWA has concluded that Australia, in 2024, has around 3700 cubic metres of low-level radioactive waste and expects this amount to continue to grow into around 11000 cubic metres by 2120.
- The Australian National Inventory of Radioactive Waste 2024 notes:
 - “For the first time, the report includes information about future waste volumes that the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine program will produce. The ASA has provided estimated quantities of projected inventories of LLW and ILW for 50 years of waste generation. In the tables and figures we have attributed this data to ASA, not Defence”.

Table 3: LLW volumes in 2024 inventory (m³)			
Organisation / group	Existing	Future	Total
ANSTO	2,460	4,770	7,230
CSIRO	1,050	-	1,050
Defence	69	88	157
ARPANSA	70	-	70
ASA	-	130	130
Other Commonwealth government	1	-	1
State and territory government and regulators	24	-	24
Total	3,674	4,988	8,662

Table 6: ILW volume in 2024 inventory, packaged (m³)			
Organisation / group	Existing	Future	Total
ANSTO	1,040	1,170	2,210
CSIRO	-	-	
Defence	22	2	24
ARPANSA	16	-	16
ASA	-	4	4
Other Commonwealth government	-	-	
State and territory government and regulators	8	-	8
Total	1,086	1,176	2,262



Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
15 & 16 December 2025	The ASA held Community Information Sessions in Western Australia – in Rockingham on 15 December and in Cockburn Sound on 16 December.
12 - 15 November 2025	Australian Naval Infrastructure (ANI) held public consultation sessions on the Site Licence for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard in Adelaide.
1 November 2025	<p>The <i>Australian Naval Nuclear Propulsion Safety Act 2024</i> (ANNPS Act) came into effect and established the Australian Naval Nuclear Propulsion Safety Regulator (ANNPSR).</p> <p>Under the <i>Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety (Transitional Provisions) Act 2024 (Cth)</i> licences that had been issued by ARPANSA transitioned to ANNPSR on 1 November 2025 when the ANNPS Act and Regulations came into effect.</p>
20 October 2025	ARPANSA publicly announced its decision to grant a construction licence for the Controlled Industrial Facility at HMAS <i>Stirling</i> via the ARPANSA website and social media platforms. The application for this construction licence was submitted on 6 December 2024.
16 & 18 September 2025	The ASA held inaugural Community Information Sessions in Western Australia.
12 June 2025	The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment (DCCEEW) and Water published the <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (EPBC Act) referral for the relocation of utilities at Osborne on 12 Jun 25. The public consultation period for this concluded on 26 June 25.
11 June 2025	ARPANSA commenced public consultation on the construction licence application for the Controlled Industrial Facility at HMAS <i>Stirling</i> . ARPANSA led public consultation commenced on 11 June 2025 and concluded on 17 July 2025 included a virtual public consultation session on 2 July 2025.
27 May 2025	The SRF-West Priority Infrastructure works, including the Controlled Industrial Facility were approved as a Controlled Action under the EPBC Act (1999), published on the EPBC Act Public Portal.
3 February 2025	The ASA undertook public consultation on the draft Strategic Impact Assessment Report for the Osborne Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard from 3 February 2025 to 17 March 2025.



29 January 2025	The Deputy Prime Minister made a public announcement regarding the SRF-West Priority Infrastructure works at HMAS <i>Stirling</i> and the EPBC Act public comment period between 29 January 2025 and 14 February 2025.
20 January 2025	DCCEEW determined the SRF-West Priority Infrastructure works to be a 'Controlled Action', with Assessment on Preliminary Documentation under the EPBC Act, published on the EPBC Act Public Portal on 20 January 2025.
09 August 2024 Interview - ABC News Breakfast	The Deputy Prime Minister stated the AUKUS Naval Nuclear Propulsion Agreement does not allow the transfer of Intermediate-Level Waste, High-Level Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel from the United States and United Kingdom to Australia. "We are responsible for our nuclear waste and we made that clear in March of last year. And there's a process underway in respect of that. And to remind you that the first moment in which we will need to be disposing of our own nuclear reactors will be in the 2050s. So, we have time to get that right."
14 March 2023 Press Conference - Parliament House, Canberra	The Deputy Prime Minister stated that waste for Australia's nuclear-powered submarines would be on the current or future Defence Estate, and that there will a process established to understand disposal siting.

Media

- Australian media has reported consistently on the management of radioactive waste including spent nuclear fuel from the NPS Program.
- On 15 November 2025, Andrew Greene of [The West Australian](#) reported on popular Garden Island fishing and boating being prohibited for "public access to process nuclear-powered submarine program low-level waste." Greene quoted Senator David Shoebridge's claims this would turn popular civilian areas into 'nuclear dumps.'
- On 22 October 2025, David Penberthy of [The Australian](#) reported on South Australian Labour Treasurer Tom Koutsantis urging the Commonwealth to lead a national conversation on where and how nuclear waste from the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program will be stored.
- On 21 October 2025, South Australian Labour Treasurer Tom Koutsantis appeared on FIVEAA Adelaide Breakfast Radio Program, and called for a national conversation on waste disposal pathways.
- On 13 August 2025, Ben Doherty of [The Guardian](#) reported on the *Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024* and potential waste disposal or storage locations under the Act.



- On 10 August 2025, Ben Doherty of [The Guardian](#) reported on the waste that would be generated from Australia’s nuclear submarines and on US and UK programs.
- On 25 July 2025, Rex Patrick of [Michael West Media](#) reported on radioactive waste matters across the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program, on previous estimates, cost speculation, FOI, the Waste Review and US and UK waste management systems.

Division: Stewardship and Security	
PDR No: SB25-000595	
Prepared by: Faye Murray Assistant Director-General Stewardship Policy Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 27 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Belinda McNamara Head Stewardship and Security Ph: s47E(c) Date: 04 February 2026
Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

INDUSTRY

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Kate van Hilst, First Assistant Director-General Workforce, Industry and Supply Chain

Key Messages

- On 5 March 2025, the Australian Government launched Australia’s AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy (the Strategy) which outlines the ambitious plan to uplift Australia’s military and industrial capability, under the Optimal Pathway timeframes.
- We are working with our United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) counterparts to refine vendor and product qualification processes to maximise and accelerate Australian industry participation across the trilateral submarine industrial base.
- The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) has awarded six contracts under the Defence Industry Vendor Qualification (DIVQ) Program, funding Australian businesses to commence manufacturing of sample standard US Navy valves, pipe fittings and anti-vibration mounts for assessment and qualification as a critical step to becoming approved vendors within the US submarine industrial base.
- On 19 November 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister announced that HIFraser was the first Australian company qualified through DIVQ to supply parts for US Virginia class submarines.
- On 6 March 2025, the Government announced the Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification (AUSSQ) Program with HII Australia, expanding the avenues for qualification for Australian suppliers into the United States HII Newport News Shipbuilding supply chain. The ASA has since expanded the AUSSQ Program to include further work packages for qualification of additional components.

Talking Points

Australia’s AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy

- The Strategy was launched on 5 March 2025 by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Industry.
- The Strategy outlines Government action to be taken in support of Australia’s Nuclear-Powered Submarine (NPS) program. It focuses on industry participation, leveraging a range of existing programs to support Defence industry and on introducing targeted support measures.
- Action is focused across five key lines of effort:



- Creating demand clarity through proactive and progressive communication as requirements mature.
 - Increasing investment attractiveness for industry in critical areas.
 - Simplifying industrial regulation and processes impacting Australian participation.
 - Growing our skilled workforce in partnership with employers, unions, state governments and training providers.
 - Integrating into UK and US supply chains through qualification of Australian suppliers.
- The Strategy was developed in consultation across federal and state governments, defence industry, unions and academia. The Strategy lays the foundation for growth and will evolve over time to reflect key developments and program requirements.
 - Since the Strategy’s release, the ASA has progressed a range of uplift initiatives, including the provision of grants funding, progress through qualification activities, and attendance at a range of public engagements in order to communicate contemporary program priorities with the industrial base.

Government Investment in Australian Industry Uplift Initiatives

- Over the next 30 years, \$30 billion is being invested by the Australian Government into Australia’s Industrial Base.
- The near-term funding envelope for ASA uplift initiatives was announced by Government in the Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook 2024.
 - Funding includes \$280.4 million over three years from 2024–25 to enhance domestic industry capacity, expanding the DIVQ Program to increase Australian industry participation in trilateral NPS supply chains, and supporting Australian industry to build their supply chain resilience and security, as part of a broader strategy to grow Australian industry participation.
- As part of the 2024-25 Budget, the Australian Government provided:
 - \$68.4 million over seven years from 2024-25 for initiatives delivered through the new Skills and Training Academy. Initiatives include:
 - : The Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) initiative, to increase the available supply of NDT technicians for Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment (NSS), NPS related work (60 trainees over life of initiative).
 - : The Defence Industry Pathways Program (DIPP), a 12-month, South Australian based, traineeship which upon completion, graduates will receive a Certificate III in Defence Industry Pathways (150 trainees over life of program).
 - : The Shipbuilding Employment Pathways (SEP) Initiative, a 4 year, South Australian based apprenticeship in Engineering – Fabrication, Engineering – Mechanical or Electrotechnology; with apprentices receiving host placements within the NPS and NSS industry (125 apprentices over life of initiative).



- : \$16.3 million over 6 years to establish the NPS Student Support Scholarships Program, delivering 3,000 scholarships for students studying undergraduate STEM courses relevant to the NPS enterprise.

Defence Industry Vendor Qualification Program

- . In January 2024, ASA commenced the DIVQ program, which expands and accelerates the qualification of Australian products into US and UK submarine supply chains.
- . The DIVQ program is separated into targeted 'Waves', with initial Waves focusing on the US Navy's Virginia Class Submarine supply chain.
- . DIVQ US Waves 1-2, delivered by the ASA, have seen six Australian vendors contracted to undertake manufacturing processes that are validated by the US Shipbuilders, General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) Newport News Shipbuilding.
 - HIFraser is the first Australian company qualified through DIVQ to supply three valve types and pipe fittings to the US, for use in the construction and sustainment of Virginia class submarines.
- . DIVQ US Waves 3-5 are being delivered by ASC as Australia's Sovereign Submarine Partner for Sustainment, with validation activities to be undertaken by an In-Country Qualification Team (ICQT), comprising US Shipbuilder personnel from General Dynamics Electric Boat and HII Newport News Shipbuilding. The first ICQT personnel from General Dynamics Electric Boat arrived in Port Adelaide in August 2025 and it is now fully operational.

Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification (AUSSQ) Program

- . The ASA has engaged HII Australia to deliver the Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification (AUSSQ) program.
- . AUSSQ is led and delivered by HII Australia in partnership with H&B Defence – a joint venture of HII and Babcock.
- . AUSSQ aims to streamline and accelerate the qualification of Australian suppliers and products into the United States HII Newport News Shipbuilding Supply Chain through a separate, complementary activity to the DIVQ Program.
- . AUSSQ was expanded on 23 September 2025 to move from an initial two to four work packages. Ongoing qualification activities for Work Packages 1 and 2 are being completed in accordance with the contract schedule.
 - Product types for Initial Work Package 1 and 2 are Casting and Forgings, and Precision Machining.
 - Product types for Additional Work Packages 3 and 4 are Air and Gas Flasks, Fabricated Parts.
- . As at 26 November 2025, 32 companies are progressing towards qualification. This is comprised of 9 companies from the original South Australia and Western Australia Pilot Programs and 23 companies from the AUSSQ Program.



- Ten companies have received Supplier Qualifications, with Hofmann Engineering Pty Ltd selected as the first Australian company to be invited to bid for work in the HII Newport News Shipbuilding supply chain.

ASA-funded Nuclear-Powered Submarine Grants

- To facilitate investment for eligible Australian businesses intending to participate in the AUKUS submarine supply chain, the Australian Government has further invested into the extant Defence Industry Development Grants (DIDG) Program. The funding will be used to uplift security, skills, international accreditations and manufacturing capital equipment for defence domestic or export supply chains.
 - On 25 July 2025, the Minister for Defence Industry announced 40 additional DIDG grants worth \$17.3 million to support Australian businesses, including six NPS grants valued at \$3.6 million, to uplift Australia’s industrial base and support the NPS program.
 - On 23 January 2026, the Minister for Defence Industry announced additional DIDG grants worth more than \$17 million to support 44 Australian businesses. This announcement includes eight NPS funded grants valued at \$2.9 million, to support the uplift of Australia’s submarine industrial base.

Australian Steel Qualification Program

- The ASA has entered into a \$15 million contract with Australian steel manufacturer, Bisalloy Steel, for the qualification of Australian steel for Australia’s future SSN-AUKUS submarines.
- Bisalloy Steel performs advanced heat treatment on the raw plate steel to produce high-grade submarine steel to both the UK and US standards. The raw plate steel is supplied by another Australian business, BlueScope.
- In addition to the Australian steel qualification program, Bisalloy Steel has also been contracted by Newport News Shipbuilding, a division of HII, the largest military shipbuilder in the US, to provide Australian steel for training and testing purposes. This order represents a critical step in strengthening the AUKUS industrial supply base.

ASA Industry Engagement

- Since August 2024, the ASA has significantly expanded its industry engagement efforts, hosting or participated in more than 20 domestic and international activities designed to prepare Australian businesses to participate in the NPS Program.
- The engagements have included capability demonstrations, trade delegations, and site tours across Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, providing industry with firsthand insights into submarine program requirements, partner national industrial capability and future pathways for participation.
- A major milestone within this period has been the launch of the ASA Industry Capability Network Engagement Portal, creating a single, accessible entry point for Australian



suppliers to register interest, receive updates, and connect with opportunities across the submarine enterprise.

- The ASA has also moved to a regular cadence of domestic seminars, that deliver timely information on upcoming manufacturing, and services support opportunities ahead of SRF-West, Virginia Class Submarine sustainment and the SSN-AUKUS build program.
- The seminars' key areas of focus were:
 - The roles of the ASA and Sovereign Submarine Partners, including channels and timelines for Australian industry pathways into the NPS Program.
 - The themes of Australia's AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy.
 - The roles of States and Territories in the NPS Program, and their industry perspectives.
 - The security requirements and considerations for industry, such as participation in the Defence Industry Security Program.
 - ASA updates on industry participation in the NPS Program highlighting the role of Industry Uplift Initiative programs including DIVQ and uplift support grants available from programs like Defence Industry Development Grants (DIDG).
 - Question and Answer sessions to hear from businesses, and engage with industry on local issues.
- Public advice and invitations to these forums are provided to registrants on the ASA Industry Portal and through relevant communication channels such as the Office of Defence Industry Support, and state government distribution lists.
- The ASA will continue to participate in domestic and international Defence industry forums throughout 2026 in order to advocate for opportunities for Australian industry participation in partner nation supply chains, ultimately supporting the broader goals of AUKUS to assure resilience in the trilateral submarine industrial base.

Industry Protections against Rising Threats of Espionage and Sabotage to AUKUS

- The ASA and Defence are working with ASIO and the Australian Cyber Security Centre, as well as our US and UK partners, to protect Australia's defence industry.
- The Defence Industry Security Program (DISP) includes guidance and requirements for mandatory physical, information, personnel and governance to protect Defence technologies.

[Handling Note: Refer questions regarding espionage risks to ASIO, and questions regarding the Defence Industry Security Program to the Department of Defence]



Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
23 January 2026	The Government announces eight NPS funded Defence Industry Development Grants, totalling \$2.9 million to support the uplift of Australia’s submarine industrial base.
19 November 2025	HIFraser is announced as the first Australian company qualified through the Defence Industry Vendor Qualification program.
4 November 2025	The Government announces that PMB Defence is partnering with BAE Systems in the United Kingdom to enable the potential integration of its advanced nickel zinc battery system into the design of SSN-AUKUS.
17 October 2025	The Government announces the expansion of Australia’s Submarine Supplier Qualification program.
20 Aug 2025	The Australian Government and WA State Government jointly supported an announcement from Australian supply chain uplift partner, H&B Defence, regarding the awarding of the first Request for Quotation to supply into the US shipbuilding supply-chain.
25 July 2025	The Australian Government awarded a further 40 grants to support Australian businesses, totalling over \$17.3 million.
23 May 2025	The first rounds of the Defence Industry Development Grants program were completed, with 58 grants worth \$16.5 million awarded to Defence suppliers in four streams, including export, skilling, security and sovereign industrial priorities.
28 March 2025	The flagship publication of the 2025 Australian Defence Export Catalogue featuring 336 business showcasing their export-ready products.
06 March 2025	Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification Pilot Program announced.
05 March 2025	Australia’s AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy launched by the Australian Government.

Media

- On 23 January 2026, a [media release](#) from Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy announced that over \$17 million has been allocated to 44 Australian businesses in the latest rounds of the Defence Industry Development Grants (DIDG) program.
- On 19 November 2025, during the USS Vermont Maintenance Period at HMAS Stirling, the Government [announced](#) HIFraser as the first Australian company qualified to supply parts for US Virginia class submarines through DIVQ.



- On 17 October 2025, the Government [announced](#) a further investment of \$9.3 million to deliver additional work packages.
- On 20 August 2025, Australian supply chain uplift partner, H&B Defence [announced](#) the award of the first Request for Quotation to Hofmann Engineering to supply several parts into the US aircraft carrier shipbuilding supply-chain.
- On 17 August 2025, H&B Defence [announced](#) they had commenced validation visits to the first group of suppliers selected to join the AUSSQ Program.
- On 5 August 2025, Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP and Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy MP released a [joint media release](#) that covered the new Strategic Shipbuilding Agreement with Austal. The agreement aims to enable the stability and long-term planning required to accelerate the delivery of sovereign defence capabilities in Western Australia.
- On 30 July 2025, the Governments of Australia and the UK signed the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Treaty (the Geelong Treaty). Following the signing, Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP, released a [statement](#) on the benefits of the treaty.
- On 25 July 2025, a [media release](#) from Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy announced that the Government has awarded a further 40 grants to support Australian businesses and back Australian jobs. The grants come under the \$170m Defence Industry Developments Program (DIDG) and will deliver priority defence capabilities, support local manufacturing and strengthen Australia's sovereign defence industry.
- On 1 July 2025, VADM Mead delivered a [keynote address](#) at the South Australian Defence Summit. VADM spoke on uplift efforts in Australia, primarily WA and SA. The address made mention of how ASA will help to uplift and integrate Australian companies to support the trilateral supply chain through the DIVQ and AUSSQ programs.
- On 27 June 2025, a [joint media release](#) from Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy and Senator the Hon Don Farrell announced the Albanese Government's support for the expansion of Austal's shipyard in the US. This expansion further deepens defence industrial cooperation with Australia's key ally, the United States, and complements Australia's investments into the sovereign industrial bases of AUKUS partners
- On 27 June 2025, [H&B Defence](#) announced their plan to utilise global expertise to advance Australian supplier readiness. The announcement comes just weeks after the Australian Government awarded H&B the contract to deliver the AUSSQ Pilot Program.
- On 16 June 2025, [VADM Mead spoke on the panel](#) of the 2025 edition of NewsCorp's 'Defending Australia' event. The focus of this year's event was workforce and engaging young people in careers related to defence and national security.



- On 23 May 2025, a [media release](#) from Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy, announced the Albanese Government had made a significant investment in the defence industry. The Government awarded grants to more than 50 businesses across the country that provide priority defence capabilities with the funding supporting hundreds of jobs, and a future made in Australia.
- On 12 May 2025, H&B Defence [announced](#) they had secured their first contract to enhance supply chain capabilities for the global AUKUS enterprise through the AUSSQ Pilot Program.
- On 4 April 2025, ASA hosted a [Submarine Industrial Base Engagement Forum](#) in Washington, D.C, ahead of the US Sea Air Space (SAS) maritime exposition.
- On 28 March 2025, a [media release](#) from Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon Pat Conroy, affirmed the Albanese Government is committed to driving global export opportunities for Australian defence industry and boosting Australian global supply chains.

Division: Workforce Industry and Supply Chain	
PDR No: SB25-000596	
Prepared by: Sam Ring a/Assistant Director-General ISC Uplift and Engagement Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 22 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: John Shipp a/First Assistant Director-General Workforce Industry and Supply Chain Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 23 January 2026
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I confirm this brief follows the template guidance and checklist	



Additional Estimates

PHASE I: SRF-WEST

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead, AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Rear Admiral David Mann AM CSC RAN, Head Virginia, Workforce and Commercial

Key Messages

- From as early as 2027, United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines will begin a rotational presence at HMAS *Stirling*. (also known as Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West).
- No foreign base is being established as part of SRF-West
- SRF-West will develop Australia's ability to operate, maintain and safely steward our future nuclear-powered submarines (SSN).
- Planning is underway for a visit by a UK SSN in 2026.
- ASA continues to work with the AUKUS partners, Defence, Government agencies and Industry to ensure that Australia will meet the SRF-West Initial Operating Support (IOS) milestone in 2027.
- ASA continues to work with other Defence and Federal Government agencies and the Western Australian Government to provide for housing and personnel support services to US and UK personnel and families for SRF-West.
- The Priority Works project upgrading facilities at HMAS *Stirling* to enable SRF-West IOS from 2027 is transitioning from design to delivery, with major construction contracts underway.
- The SRF-West Priority Infrastructure Works project, including the Controlled Industrial Facility (CIF) and Maritime works were approved as a controlled action under the *EPBC Act (1999)* on 27 May 2025.

Talking Points

Submarine Maintenance Period 2025

- As part of Phase 1 of the Optimal Pathway, US and UK nuclear-powered submarines will conduct longer and more frequent visits to HMAS *Stirling* to determine our SSN support and infrastructure requirements and to provide opportunities to build our capabilities ahead of the arrival of SRF-West in 2027.
- Work is well underway for SRF-West delivery in 2027, most recently demonstrated through the successful Submarine Maintenance Period (SMP) conducted on USS Vermont (SSN-792) in November 2025
 - This included the 13 RAN personnel embedded on the USS Vermont.



- . Last year's SMP built on the AUKUS partners' inaugural maintenance activity, the Submarine Tendered Maintenance Period (STMP) held in September 2024.
 - By comparison, SMP 2025 involved a larger and more complex package of work, more closely reflecting the type of maintenance that will be required for SRF-West.
 - Unlike the previous maintenance period, this work was carried out without a tender ship – meaning Australian personnel took on even greater responsibility for planning, coordinating and delivering complex maintenance activities on site.
- . SMP25 was completed on time.
 - Using a blended workforce of 210 personnel from Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard (PHNSY), ASC Pty Ltd, the Royal Navy, RAN Divers, Fleet Support Unit West, and the crew of the USS Vermont.
 - 20 ASC Pty Ltd workers returned from training with PHNSY in Hawaii to support SMP.

UK SSN Visit 2026

- . A visit by an UK *Astute* class SSN to conduct a Self Maintenance Period at HMAS *Stirling* will occur in 2026.
- . The details of this visit are approved and being executed.

SRF-West Sustainment Workforce

- . Since July 2024, Australian sustainment personnel, the majority from ASC, have been conducting training in the maintenance of Virginia class submarines in Hawaii. This training will provide a base of expertise in Australia so we can provide intermediate level maintenance of the submarines rotating through SRF-West and ultimately of our own Virginia Class submarines. Today ASC has over 200 personnel training in Pearl Harbor.
- . Once this training is completed, these personnel will take up key roles in SRF-West where they will support the maintenance of rotating US and UK nuclear-powered submarines, and will eventually train other Australian SSN maintainers.

Family and Personnel Support Services

- . The provision of housing support for US and UK personnel as part of SRF-West remains a key priority.
- . Australia is committed to providing housing in a manner that limits the impact on local communities and supports integration of US personnel and their families.
- . The US has requested a range of family and personnel support services be provided at or in the vicinity of HMAS *Stirling* to support quality of life for US military, civilian and contractor personnel, and their dependents.
- . The ASA and Defence are developing a suite of options to provide housing for UK and US personnel and their families.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Alexandra Kelton

- The primary method of housing service delivery will be through Defence Housing Australia (DHA). Recent amendments to the DHA legislation support broader application of Defence housing to AUKUS partners.
- Additional on base accommodation for unaccompanied US and UK personnel is also being delivered under the SRF-West infrastructure program.

[Handling Note: defer to Department of Defence SEG representative for housing questions].

- ASA is engaging with the Western Australian Government and local Governments to prepare for integration of the US and UK families into the WA community and to access services such as:
 - Licensing and vehicle registration;
 - Education and childcare services;
 - Health services;
 - Transport;
 - Access to base facilities and amenities; and
 - US Postal Services.
- SRF-West will not only have enduring benefits for the future of national security and defence capability, but will likely make a substantial contribution to the socio-economic resilience of local communities around the Rockingham, Kwinana, Cockburn and Fremantle local government areas.
 - ASA and SEG expect the socio-economic benefits of SRF-West will be similar to those realised by Marine Rotational Force - Darwin.

Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the US

- Australia expects all visiting forces, including US forces, to act in accordance with Australian Law and uphold high standards of discipline while they are in Australia
- US forces presence in Australia is governed by a status of forces agreement with the US
- *[Handling note: Defence is the Portfolio lead on the SOFA and Force Posture Agreement. In the first instance, requests should be directed to Defence.]*

Media

- On 20 November 2025, [ASA reported on Australian industry workers making the grade with US Virginia class submarines](#). The report highlighted the Submarine Maintenance Period for United States Ship (USS) Vermont at HMAS *Stirling*. A ministerial delegation included a visit from the Prime Minister, the Hon, Anthony Albanese at HMAS *Stirling*. On 19 November 2025 a press conference supporting the announcement of milestones for Australian industry opportunities through AUKUS was held.
- On 20 November 2025, [the WA Today article As AUKUS accelerates, is Rockingham ready for what comes next?](#) reported on comments from US Navy Rear Admiral Lincoln Reifsteck which highlighted HMAS *Stirling's* growing appeal among US sailors during a



tour of the USS Vermont, the Virginia-class submarine undergoing maintenance as part of the AUKUS partnership.

- On 19 November 2025, the West Australian article [Albanese Government insists community is 'supportive of the opportunities' to come with nuclear-powered subs](#) reported on comments made by Prime Minister Albanese during a press conference at HMAS *Stirling*, reaffirming that AUKUS is progressing rapidly and will deliver major economic benefits to Western Australia.
- On 30 October 2025, the West Australian article [US nuclear submarine arrives in Western Australia as AUKUS boss gives assurances over radiation risks](#) reported on the arrival of the USS Vermont to HMAS *Stirling* for a planned maintenance period. Vice Admiral Mead and US Rear Admiral Cavanaugh provided assurances that safeguards were in place to prevent any radiological incident.
- On 29 October 2025, the Australian article [Admiral backs WA base progress for AUKUS subs](#) reported on the start of the Submarine Maintenance Period at HMAS *Stirling*. The report includes comments by Vice Admiral Mead affirming that Australia will have the necessary infrastructure in place for the start of Submarine Rotational Force – West in 2027.
- On 11 August 2025, the Australian article [Port risks to AUKUS submarines can be managed: Minister](#) reported on concerns raised about potential security risks over Western Australian Government plans to relocate the state's container port to HMAS *Stirling* and Henderson.
- On 20 August 2025, The West Australian [Richard Marles remains confident WA firms set to be part of US submarine builds in AUKUS agreement](#) reported Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles is confident the US will continue support for AUKUS and notes Western Australia's defence sector is poised to support expansions at HMAS *Stirling* and Henderson.
- On 19 August 2025, The WA Government reported on [Australia's home of AUKUS hosts global submarine event | Western Australian Government](#). The report centred around the Submarine Institute of Australia's conference being held in Perth, and reinforced how this event would strengthen industry engagement ahead of achieving its own sovereign nuclear capability.
- On 06 August 2025, the ASA reported on [UK delegation visits HMAS Stirling ahead of Submarine Rotational Force – West |](#). The report highlighted this was the third visit to HMAS *Stirling* by a senior UK delegation in 2025, and followed the signing of the Geelong Treaty.
- On 08 May 2025, ADM reported [ASC to sustain Submarine Rotational Force-West Virginia class submarines - Australian Defence Magazine](#). The report identifies ASC being selected to provide sustainment to visiting United States Navy Virginia Class submarines from 2027.



Division: Virginia Workforce and Commercial	
PDR No: SB25-000598	
Prepared by: CDRE Fiona McNaught, RAN Assistant Director-General SRF-West Delivery Virginia Workforce and Commercial Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 2 February 2026	Cleared by Division Head: RADM David Mann, AM, CSC Head Virginia Workforce and Commercial Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 3 February 2026
Consultation: Policy Strategy & Engagement Division Navy Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group Security and Estate Group	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

PHASE II: VIRGINIA CLASS SUBMARINES

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Rear Admiral David Mann AM CSC RAN, Head Virginia, Workforce and Commercial
Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Key Messages

- Australia will acquire three Virginia class submarines from the US with the option of a further two Virginia class submarines if needed.
- Australia's Virginia class nuclear-powered submarines will be commanded and operated by the Royal Australian Navy and under the sovereign direction of the Australian Government.
- A pre-condition for Australia to receive its first Virginia class submarine is that it be 'sovereign ready' to operate and sustain the vessel.
- In March 2024, ASC Pty Ltd (ASC) was selected as Australia's sovereign submarine partner for nuclear-powered submarine sustainment, commencing with Virginia class submarines and to be followed by the SSN-AUKUS class.

Talking Points

Australian ownership and operation of the Virginia Class submarines

- Australia's Virginia class SSNs will be commanded and operated by the Royal Australian Navy under the sovereign direction of the Australian Government.
- Decisions on the deployment, missions and operations of Australia's Virginia class SSNs will be matters for the Australian Government, as with all of Australia's sovereign defence capabilities.
- Australia will acquire three Virginia class SSN submarines from the US.
- Australia also has the option to purchase an additional two Virginia class SSNs off the production line if required, subject to Congressional approval.
- The first Virginia class SSN will be acquired in the early 2030s.

US submarine production rates

- The US Administration has a clear focus on uplifting submarine production rates and are making significant investment in critical areas such as infrastructure and workforce in order to get more submarines to sea.
- Australia has committed to make a fair and proportionate contribution of US\$3 billion to support the uplift of the US submarine industrial base (SIB) and accelerate production of Virginia class submarines.
- Australia's contribution is to accelerate US production rates and maintenance enabling the delivery of Australia's future Virginia class submarines.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Alexandra Kelton

- Australia's financial contribution complements the approximate USD\$17.5 billion that the US Government is investing in US SIB uplift.
- The outcome of US and Australian investment to expand the US SIB will take time to show in the rates of submarine production, as additional infrastructure, facilities and workforce are continuing to come online.
- Australia is conducting maintenance on US submarines in Western Australia, providing critical skills uplift in preparation for acquiring our own submarines, whilst also providing the US additional capacity to undertake submarine sustainment.
- Australia continues to explore how our own industrial base can contribute parts and expertise to US production activities.
- The challenges are well known and we are confident about seeing increases in production and sustainment rates.

Virginia class Submarine Sustainment

- The Government has approved initial investments to grow ASC's nuclear-powered submarine workforce capacity and they have commenced initial Virginia class submarine sustainment planning.
 - Further government decisions on Virginia class submarine sustainment planning, workforce growth and skills development will be sought in line with program needs and maturity.
- On 20 March 2024, Defence entered into contract with ASC to commence initial Virginia class submarines sustainment planning, workforce growth, and related activities.
 - This initial Virginia sustainment workforce growth is occurring through Defence's Collins class arrangements. This is intended to facilitate the transfer of Collins sustainment expertise and to help manage requirements for both Collins sustainment and Virginia sustainment preparations.
- In late July 2025, Defence entered into a subsequent contract with ASC to support ASC's ongoing work to grow the workforce and industrial capabilities needed for sovereign nuclear-powered submarine sustainment.
 - The contract supports ASC to uplift its nuclear capabilities through workforce growth, supply chain management, capability partnerships, equipment procurement and manufacture, international placements, wharf support for visiting nuclear-powered submarines; and continued support for ASC's graduate, apprentices and trainee programs.
- ASC's Virginia class submarine sustainment workforce growth is targeted for work in Western Australia as the selected intermediate and depot-level maintenance location for Australia's conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines.
- Periodic nuclear-powered submarine visits to Western Australia across 2024-2026 will provide opportunities for ASA, Defence and ASC's workforce to exercise their developing nuclear-powered submarine sustainment capacity and competence.

SSN sustainment at Henderson, WA



- In 2024 the Government announced that Henderson, WA will be the location for SSN depot-level maintenance and for a contingency docking capability.
 - depot-level maintenance consists of intrusive, out-of-water maintenance. Depot-level maintenance is traditionally completed in a dry dock. This is needed from the late 2030s.
 - a contingency docking capability complements the depot-level maintenance docks by providing the ability to conduct shorter-term emergency repair and maintenance on SSNs so they can be returned to operations. This is needed from the early 2030s.
- ASA and Defence are collaborating to define the facility requirements and regulatory licensing conditions to conduct both depot-level maintenance and contingency dockings at Henderson, WA.
 - In the first instance, this will be focussed on establishing the Australian regulatory conditions necessary to undertake depot-level maintenance on Australian nuclear-powered submarines at Henderson.
 - Understanding how Australian regulatory conditions and requirements might apply to US or UK submarines undergoing depot-level maintenance at Henderson continues to be explored.

Media

- On 14 September 2025 the [Federal Government announced](#) it will provide \$12 billion towards delivering a Defence Precinct at Henderson to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in Western Australia. The announcement of new money is a significant down payment for the Defence Precinct, with early independent planning and advice indicating the Henderson Precinct will require investment in the order of \$25 billion over the decade.
- On 28 August 2025, [USNI reported that US](#) Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Daryl Caudle, wants to 'Make Good' on AUKUS Submarine Agreement. Caudle told USNI News he had just met with Australian Navy chief Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, further stating that the only way the US will make good on the AUKUS agreement is to achieve a submarine build rate of 2.3 submarines, and it was his goal as CNO to achieve that.
- On 07 August 2025, [Defence Connect](#) reported Australia should double down on Virginia Class and withdraw from SSN AUKUS, confirms risk report - Defence Connect. The website cited an independent white paper from NEW Strategic Risk Management that argued Australia should commit to procuring more Virginia Class submarines from the United States, instead of taking on the cost and schedule risk of building a nuclear powered submarine in Australia
- On 29 July 2025 [The Age](#) reported AUKUS: Incoming US naval boss sounds warning. The report captures comments made by incoming Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Daryl Caudle, on the transformational change needed across the two US shipyards building submarines, in order to fulfil AUKUS demands.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Alexandra Kelton

Division: Virginia Workforce and Commercial Division	
PDR No: SB25-000599	
Prepared by: CDRE Carl Holmes Assistant Director-General Virginia Acquisition Virginia, Workforce and Commercial Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 27 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: RADM David Mann AM, CSC Head Virginia Workforce and Commercial Virginia Workforce and Commercial Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 27 January 2026
Consultation: John Chandler, First Assistant Secretary Submarines and CDRE Daniel Leraye, Director-General – Submarine Sustainment.	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

PHASE III: SSN-AUKUS

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Alexandra Kelton, Deputy Director-General Strategy

Key Messages

- Australia's SSN-AUKUS will be built in Osborne, South Australia, with the build of Australia's first SSN-AUKUS to commence by the end of this decade.
- Since 22 March 2024, ASC and BAE Systems have been working collaboratively to mobilise the SSN-AUKUS build program as the Australian Shipbuilder.
- Enabling works and design effort continues at pace for the Submarine Construction Yard and Skills and Training Academy Campus including:
 - Construction of enabling works continue with the grade-separated road and utilities relocation;
 - Construction of the production demonstration facilities; and
 - Site establishment works for the Skills and Training Academy Campus.
- The United Kingdom (UK) has confirmed to Australia that delivery of the nuclear reactor remains on track.
- Australia continues to cooperate and participate with the UK on the development of the UK-led SSN-AUKUS design.
- The design of SSN-AUKUS is progressing in line with both the UK and Australian build program's milestones.

Talking Points

SSN-AUKUS Build Program

- SSN-AUKUS will be a trilaterally developed SSN-class based on UK next generation design and incorporating technology from the UK, Australia and the United States (US).
- Australia's SSN-AUKUS will be built in Osborne, South Australia, with the build of Australia's first SSN-AUKUS to commence by the end of this decade, with delivery planned for the early 2040s.
- The work to deliver Australia's SSN-AUKUS is well underway with the Australian Shipbuilder on:
 - contract and mobilising,
 - Shipbuilder personnel undertaking placements at the UK's Barrow-in-Furness shipyard,
 - infrastructure works underway,
 - supply chain qualification activities progressing, and
 - Australia participating in the UK-led SSN-AUKUS design program.



- BAE Systems and ASC, working together as the Australian Shipbuilder, have met all contractual requirements to date, with excellent levels of collaboration with ASA at the management and working level.
- To minimise risk to Australia's SSN-AUKUS build program, the Australian Shipbuilder and Commonwealth will test systems, tools, processes and people through upcoming Production Demonstration activities.
- 4,000-5,500 direct jobs are expected to support the build of SSN-AUKUS in South Australia when the program reaches its peak.

Australian Shipbuilder Personnel

- International industry placements continue to enhance Australia's workforce by delivering targeted upskilling in critical capability areas.
- BAE Systems' continues to welcome Australian Shipbuilder personnel in Barrow-in-Furness submarine yard to support the SSN-AUKUS build program. There are currently 16 in Barrow-in-Furness, with another 12 planned to commence in Q1 2026.

ASC and BAE Systems Joint Venture

- The Incorporated Joint Venture between ASC and BAE Systems will establish a substantive, sovereign Australian entity to deliver the build of Australia's SSN-AUKUS fleet.
- ASA is working with ASC and BAE Systems to establish the Joint Venture to meet SSN-AUKUS program milestones.
 - There are a number of complex program, legal, commercial and structural steps to be undertaken. Establishing these arrangements cannot be done in haste; this work must be approached methodically.
 - ASC SSN-AUKUS and BAE Systems Australia Submarines are collaborating under the Mobilisation Deed to mobilise the build program, including the necessary corporate and commercial processes to establish the Incorporated Joint Venture.
 - The details of the ownership and management structure of the Joint Venture entity are being worked through as part of mobilisation.

Nuclear Powered Submarine Construction Yard

- The ASA is working closely with the Government's appointed design and delivery partner, Australian Naval Infrastructure (ANI) to progress the Nuclear Powered Submarine Construction Yard.
- Design of the Nuclear Powered Submarine Construction Yard is being informed by BAE Systems and ASC.
- Enabling works are progressing with ongoing design development for the utilities relocation. The Grade Separated Road, which will provide the primary access into the site, is scheduled for completion in February 2026.



- Construction of the production demonstration facilities is also well underway with the staged handover of facilities to ANI commencing in late 2026. These facilities will provide the Australian Shipbuilder with the opportunity to test their production systems, tools and processes to de-risk the build of Australia's SSN-AUKUS.
- The ASA and ANI are currently progressing the necessary federal environmental and regulatory approvals as well as the South Australian planning approvals for the Submarine Construction Yard.
- The ASA continue to engage with the South Australian Government, Local Council, interested stakeholders, and First Nations people.

Skills and Training Academy Campus (STAC)

- The Skills and Training Academy Campus (STAC) will support the delivery of the workforce for the build of Australia's SSN-AUKUS.
- The ASA is working closely with the Government's appointed design and delivery partner ANI to progress the design and build of the Skills and Training Academy Campus.
- ANI received construction planning approval on 17 July 2025 under the South Australian *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.
- Ground improvement works for the STAC, delivered by ANI's Civil Earthworks Contractor McMahons Services Australia, were successfully completed in 2025.
- Piling works for the buildings substructure commenced on 9 December 2025.
- The pouring of concrete slabs and the erection of structural steel and precast walls for the Skills and Training Academy Campus Trade Halls and Learning and Teaching facilities is expected to commence in the first half of 2026.

Core Production Capability (CPC)

- The UK confirmed to Australia as recently as Q3 2025 that delivery of the nuclear reactor remains on track.
- The RED rating assessment by the UK's National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) in August 2025 is due to ongoing challenges associated with achieving the required delivery date for the first Dreadnought submarine nuclear core and the importance of that milestone to sustaining the UK's Continuous at Sea Deterrent.
 - The ASA is not funding or participating in any activity relating to the manufacture and delivery of the Dreadnought submarine program nuclear reactor cores.
 - In the report, the rating for the SSN-AUKUS is Amber. This is not surprising for a program of this scale, complexity and ambition, at this point in time.



SSN-AUKUS Design

- Early design work commenced in 2021 on the UK’s next generation submarine [SSN(R)], now known as SSN-AUKUS].
- As expressed in the Geelong Treaty, Australia and the UK are cooperating, together with the US, in the development of the common SSN-AUKUS design.
- The design of SSN-AUKUS is progressing in line with both the UK and Australian build program’s milestones, with Australia participating in the design activity.
- Since the AUKUS announcement, Australia has been participating in the UK-led SSN-AUKUS design process, including in design reviews.
 - This will continue as the design matures.
- Design reviews are built into the process as required. Two have taken place so far, with Australian personnel involved in both of those reviews. The next review is scheduled to occur in 2026.
 - The design process is sufficiently mature to support key lines of Australian effort, including to inform the construction of relevant infrastructure at the Osbourne Nuclear Powered Submarine Construction Yard.
- The schedule for the design of SSN-AUKUS is focused on major manufacturing work starting towards the end of the decade with the first UK SSN-AUKUS boat due to be delivered in the late 2030s and Australia’s in the early 2040s.
 - Manufacture of long lead items for SSN-AUKUS has commenced; for example, Rolls-Royce Submarines is building nuclear reactor components for SSN-AUKUS.
 - The design process remains on track to meet program milestones for both the UK and Australia.
- An SSN is a complex system of systems requiring the application of international and submarine specific design standards and processes to ensure that the highest levels of safety and capability assurance are applied throughout the design and build phases.
 - These processes are overseen by the UK Ministry Of Defence, and observed by Australian personnel, to ensure requirements are met.



Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
26 July 2025	Minister for Defence signed the bilateral Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Treaty (the Geelong Treaty) at the UK-Australia Defence Ministers’ Meeting in Geelong, Victoria.
17 March 2025	Minister for Defence Industry announced the commencement of the Defence Industry Pathways Program and the Shipbuilding Employment Pathways pilot initiative in South Australia.
5 March 2025	Minister for Defence announced the commencement of site establishment works at the South Australian Skills and Training Academy Campus.
5 March 2025	Minister for Defence and Minister for Defence Industry launched Australia’s AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy, providing greater clarity to industry to grow and enter AUKUS supply chains.

Media

- On 15 January 2025, the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) published ‘AUKUS is not on the rocks’ reporting that despite concerns by a former Royal Navy admiral and former director of nuclear policy in the UK Ministry of Defence, AUKUS is not on the rocks.
- On 5 December 2025, [ABC News](#) published ‘Pentagon's AUKUS review finds areas to put nuclear submarine pact on 'strongest possible footing' reporting on US intention to keep moving forward with the AUKUS agenda, post completion of the US AUKUS review.
- On 21 October 2025, [ABC News](#) published ‘Trump ends AUKUS uncertainty with firm backing for Albanese’ reporting on Mr Anthony Albanese meeting with Mr Donald Trump in Washington, DC, USA.
- On 25 July 2025, [ABC News](#) published ‘UK and Australia deepen AUKUS submarine pact with 50-year treaty’ reporting on the United Kingdom and Australia intent to sign a new five-decade treaty to cement the AUKUS submarine pact and to bolster shipbuilding in both countries.
- On 19 July 2025, [ABC News](#) reported concerns about the Submarine Construction Yard and the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.
- On 1 July 2025, DG ASA delivered a [Keynote Address](#) at Australia Defence Magazine (ADM) South Australia Defence Summit announcing first cohort to the UK shipyard in Barrow to learn how to build UK design submarines.
- On 1 July 2025, [ASA News](#) reported that Osborne will generate between 4,000 – 5,500 jobs.



- On 13 June 2025, Paul Starick, [The Advertiser](#) published ‘Shipshape for Building Subs’ reporting the first workers for the Australian nuclear-powered submarine project will use production demonstration buildings, construction of which will start at Osborne by the end of the year.
- On 12 June 2025, [ABC News](#) reported concerns of the US review on the Submarine Construction Yard.

Division: SSN Construction	
PDR No: SB25-000600	
Prepared by: Hugh Passmore Assistant Director-General SSN-AUKUS Program Integration Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 27 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: David McPherson Head SSN-AUKUS Mob: Ph: Date: 28 January 2026
Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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Additional Estimates

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS

Lead: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General

Supporting: Tim Hodgson, Deputy Director-General Technical

Belinda McNamara, Head Stewardship and Security

Key Messages

- The Government is committed to maintaining the highest levels of nuclear stewardship, to protect the health and safety of people and the environment.
- The Australian Government, working with states and territories, has robust plans, capabilities and exercises to prepare for, prevent and respond to radiological incidents.
- Reviewing and enhancing plans with relevant emergency and health services will be an important part of the responsible stewardship of conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines.
- The Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) efforts within the ASA have been focused on the capability uplift requirements at HMAS *Stirling*, in order to support Initial Operating Support (IOS) of Submarine Rotational Force – West (SRF-W).

Talking Points

- Australia is working with AUKUS partners to mature stewardship capabilities and effects, as a future manager of nuclear material, technology and facilities.
- At HMAS *Stirling*, we are standing up an emergency response team dedicated to supporting Australia’s nuclear powered submarines and radiological facilities.
 - Including increasing the number of firefighting personnel and equipment at HMAS *Stirling*.
- For over 70 years, the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) have operated more than 500 naval nuclear reactors that have collectively travelled more than 240 million kilometres.
 - The UK and US have never experienced a nuclear submarine reactor accident or accidental release of radioactive material that has had an adverse effect on the public or the environment.
- The US Nuclear Propulsion Program currently operates 97 reactors and has accumulated over 7,600 reactor-years of operation.

Current State of Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning

- Visits to Australia by nuclear powered warships, including submarines, are conducted under Defence Operations Manual 1 – OPSMAN1.
 - This is governed by Australia’s Visiting Ships Panel (Nuclear) (VSP(N)) and chaired by Head of Naval Engineering in the Royal Australian Navy.



[Handling note: Questions on the Visiting Ships Panel (Nuclear) should be referred to the Department of Defence.]

- The UK and US will advise Australian authorities immediately in the event of a nuclear safety incident – this is a longstanding arrangement.
- Integral to VSP(N), States and Territories, and the Australian Government have longstanding robust plans, capabilities and exercises to prepare for, prevent and respond to radiological incidents.
 - This relationship with States and Territories will continue under any future plans for improved capabilities at HMAS Stirling.
- The ASA is working closely with the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR), the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA - as the lead Government Agency under the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework [AGCMF] for all nuclear and radiological incidents), to ensure alignment across Federal, State and local response procedures.

Division: Stewardship and Security	
PDR No: SB25-000635	
Prepared by: Commodore Mark Sander Assistant Director-General Stewardship Enablers, Stewardship Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 27 January 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Belinda McNamara Head Stewardship Division Mob: Ph: s47E(c) Date: 27 January 2026
Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 29 January 2026	
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