



Budget Estimates

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Marlena Davis, a/Chief Operating Officer

Mikaela James, a/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 ASA 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.

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

(as at 1 April 2026)

Financial Year	APS (ASL)	ADF (AFS)
2025-26	902	117
2026-27	1209	122

Agency Headcount (as at 1 April 2026)

Type	Number
Australian Public Service	887
Australian Defence Force (Defence Submarine Unit)	120
Total	1007

*Data correct as per PMKeyS



ASA Headcount - Locations (Australia and International) (as at 1 April 2026)

Location	APS	ADF
Australian Capital Territory	560	73
South Australia	130	3
Victoria	68	1
Western Australia	49	25
Other States and Territories	17	3
United States	30	7
United Kingdom	33	8

*Data correct as per PMKeyS

Diversity Data (as at 1 April 2026)

Type	Indigenous	Disability	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
APS	7	13	272
ADF	0	2	39

*Data correct as per PMKeyS

Culture

- Significant efforts are being directed to evolve the ASA culture in response to feedback from staff through the APS Employee Census. Areas of focus are wellbeing and culture, internal communication and transparency, and senior leadership and support.
- Some of the cultural initiatives undertaken since the release of the 2025 Census Highlights Report and Action Plan include:
 - Publication of the inaugural People & Culture Plan and Employee Value Proposition
 - Release of an all Staff Pulse Survey to assess the impact of cultural initiatives
 - Publication of the People and Culture Staff Ideas Register so that the workforce can see how their feedback is being considered and implemented
 - Efforts to build manager capability, including monthly HR Information webinars and site specific HR & Security Upskilling sessions
 - Executive coaching and professional development for senior leaders
 - Mobility initiatives to support staff development
 - Monthly all staff newsletter
 - Promotion of diversity and inclusion through the recognition and celebration of ASA day of significance.

Working from home arrangements

- Flexible working arrangements, which includes working from home, are negotiated between an individual and their supervisor in accordance with the conditions outlined in the *ASA Enterprise Agreement 2024-2027*.



Staff retention

- The ASA separation rate as at 1 April 2026 is 16.7%, which has been steadily decreasing over the past seven months.
- A range of initiatives are being implemented to support staff retention, including:
 - Talent Councils to identify and recognise key talent in the ASA
 - Stay Interviews being conducted for staff remaining in the ASA since the machinery of government transition to understand their motivations and career aspirations
 - Promotion of mobility opportunities to encourage staff to find alternate roles in the ASA
 - The introduction of an ASA Awards Framework.

Agency funding

- Agency departmental funding (operating and capital) is \$512.5 million in 2026-27 and \$1,836.2 million over the Forward Estimates (2027-28 to 2029-30).

Table 1: ASA Resource Statement - Budget Estimates for 2026-27 as at May Budget 2026

	2025-26 Estimated Actual \$'000	2026-27 Budget Estimate \$'000	2027-28 Forward Estimate \$'000	2028-29 Forward Estimate \$'000	2029-30 Forward Estimate \$'000
Departmental					
Annual appropriations - ordinary annual services					
Departmental appropriation	376,595	500,938	582,763	628,892	596,765
Annual appropriations - other services - non-operating					
Equity injection	8,805	11,563	10,737	12,209	4,841
Total departmental resourcing	385,400	512,501	593,500	641,101	601,606
Total resourcing for ASA	385,400	512,501	593,500	641,101	601,606

Table 2: ASA 2026-27 Budget Measures

	2025-26 Estimated Actual \$'000	2026-27 Budget Estimate \$'000	2027-28 Forward Estimate \$'000	2028-29 Forward Estimate \$'000	2029-30 Forward Estimate \$'000	Total \$'000
Departmental Budget Measures						
Savings from External Labour and non-wage expenses - one year extension	-	-	-	-	-33,307	-33,307
Australian Submarine Agency - Additional resourcing	-	16,436	235,824	267,889	191,777	711,926
Total Departmental Budget Measures	-	16,436	235,824	267,889	158,470	678,619
Other Budget Adjustments						
Further Savings from External Labour and non-wage expenses	-	-1,952	-1,345	-1,453	-	-4,750
Other Adjustments ^(a)	-	1,885	2,089	2,180	2,149	8,304
Total Other Departmental Budget Adjustments	-	-67	744	727	2,149	3,554
Variation to ASA Departmental Funding	-	16,369	236,568	268,616	160,619	682,173

- To responsibly resource the ASA to deliver Government direction, Government will provide an additional \$711.9 million over the forward estimates to continue a previously terminating measure.
- ASA workforce growth will include priority job families such as:
 - Engineering and Technical;
 - Program and Project Management; and
 - Procurement and Contract Management.



Australian Government

Australian Submarine Agency

Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Marlena Davis

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Last updated: 20 May 2026

- This funding has been met from existing resourcing within the Department of Defence, with funding transferring to the Agency, with no underlying impact on the Commonwealth budget.

Travel

- ASA travel is undertaken in accordance with our Accountable Authority Instructions and Defence Official Travel Policy.
- The ASA Section 23 Delegates under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)* provide the authority to commit relevant money by entering into and varying arrangements for the ordinary activities of government.
- It is the Section 23 Delegate's responsibility to review and confirm the travel is necessary to achieve business outcomes, represents value for money to the ASA and is aligned with the requirements of the Defence Official Travel Policy.
- All international travel within the ASA is undertaken in accordance with the travel provisions set out in the Defence Determination 2016/19 Conditions of Service.
- Total year-to-date expenditure on domestic and international business travel as at 31 March 2026 was \$6.514 million.

Division: Chief Operating Officer	
PDR No: SB26-000238	
Prepared by: Tracey Crawford ADG People Services Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 2 April 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Marlena Davis a/Chief Operating Officer Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 20 May 2026
Consultation:	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN Director-General ASA Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

PROGRAM COSTS

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Mikaela James, a/Deputy Director-General Strategy

Timmy Lam, a/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 2026 Integrated Investment Program allocated \$71- 96 billion over the decade from 2026-27 for the acquisition and sustainment of conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines and supporting infrastructure.
- As outlined in the Defence Portfolio Budget Statement 2026-27 \$2.8 billion is estimated to be expended in 2026-27 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.

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:
 - \$20.5 million to continue Australia's NPS supply chain and support industry delivering priority parts and services to Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West).
 - \$87.9 million for workforce initiatives to attract and grow the future Australian workforce needed for the NPS Program and Australia's Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment enterprise.
 - New equity investment injections for Australian Naval Infrastructure to continue early construction and design works for the Osborne submarine construction yard in South Australia (SA).
 - Continuation of funding to support housing and related services for personnel deployed to Submarine Rotational Force-West in Western Australia (WA).
 - Continuation of funding for SRF-West and HMAS Stirling including harbour support capability, explosive ordinance equipment and training for ADF personnel to support visiting SSNs, and activities to be delivered by the Combat Systems Integration Partner.
 - Continuation of funding for our Sovereign Submarine Build and Sustainment partners to establish and mobilise an enduring Australian workforce and submarine enterprise.



- Continuation of funding for AUKUS Program Delivery Office to support AUKUS Pillar I activities.
- Funding to upskill Australia's SSN production and sustainment workforce to address trilateral production gaps and continuation of Australia's contribution to drive US Industrial Base readiness.
- Funding for long lead items for construction of Australia's submarines and initial load out of weapons for the VCS fleet.

Financial contributions to the US industrial base

- To date US\$2 billion (AU\$3.092 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\$1.511 billion) was transferred in Quarter four, 2025.
- A further US\$1 billion (adjusted for inflation) is scheduled to be transferred within 10 years from 2026. The exact timing of payments is at the mutual agreement of Australia and the US.
- 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.
- 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£469 million (AU\$908 million) has been transferred to the UK for industrial uplift of Rolls-Royce Submarines and our contribution to the design costs incurred by the United Kingdom.
 - GBP£149 million (AU\$285 million) was transferred in Quarter two, 2024.
 - GBP£80 million (AU\$167 million) was transferred in Quarter three, 2025.
 - GBP£240 million (AU\$456 million) was transferred in Quarter two, 2026.
- Australia agreed a fixed contribution with the UK government. Australia's GBP£2.4 billion contribution is scheduled within ten years. The exact timing of payments is at the mutual agreement of Australian and the UK.
- Australia's arrangements with the UK will cover a broad 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.



Infrastructure development

- The Australian Government has approved \$2.455 billion for priority works to upgrade infrastructure, training facilities and security at HMAS *Stirling* in WA 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.
 - HMAS *Stirling* has already hosted visiting US nuclear-powered submarines for maintenance periods, providing practical training for Australian personnel, testing upgraded infrastructure, and strengthening Australia's nuclear stewardship.
- Australia will build its SSN-AUKUS submarines at Osborne, SA, providing a fourth SSN shipyard among AUKUS partners.
 - The Government announced has invested \$3.9 billion to deliver the new Submarine Construction Yard in Osborne, SA . Australian Naval Infrastructure projections show an estimated projected cost of \$30 billion over coming decades, to deliver the construction yard at Osborne.
 - Australian and South Australian Governments also agreed to establish a dedicated Skills and Training Academy (STA) to deliver the high-tech education and training needed for continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in SA. More than \$500 million is being invested to establish this dedicated facility.
- The Government will provide \$12 billion towards delivering a Defence Precinct at Henderson to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding and AUKUS in Western Australia. This is a significant down payment for the Defence precinct, with early independent planning and advice indicating that Henderson Precinct will require investment in the order of \$25 billion over the decade.
- This commitment builds on the government's initial \$127 million commitment to progress planning for the Defence Precinct.
- The Government is opening a Submarine Discovery Centre in Rockingham in mid-2026, providing a dedicated venue for community engagement, education and transparent information about the multi-billion-dollar AUKUS submarine program and local benefits.
- From 2027, around 1,200 US and UK personnel are expected to rotate through HMAS *Stirling* as part of SRF-West, with approximately half accommodated on-base and the remainder supported through existing Defence housing arrangements.

Domestic industry and workforce uplift

- The Australian Government is working closely with the Governments of WA and SA on workforce development, leveraging the existing experienced conventionally-powered submarine workforce in both states including investments of over \$250 million over eight years from 2023-24 which includes:
 - \$68.4 million over seven years from 2024-2025 for initiatives delivered through the new STA.
 - \$16.3 million over six years from 2024-25 to establish the NPS Student Support Scholarships Program, delivering 3,000 scholarships for students studying relevant undergraduate STEM courses.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Marlena Davis

- Launched the Jobs for Subs program over two years from 2024-25 to grow the workforce required to deliver SRF-West by supporting around 200 graduates, apprentices and trainees.
- \$128 million over four years from 2023-24 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 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. This investment builds Australia's sovereign capacity and provides services and sustainment support on US Virginia class submarines at HMAS *Stirling* from 2027.
- The Government is investing \$262 million to support local defence industry uplift and develop Australia's AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine supply chain. This has supported:
 - Huntington Ingalls Industries Australia (HII) being awarded a further investment of \$9.3 million, building on an initial \$9.6 million pilot program, focused on delivering opportunities for Australian business to secure high-value manufacturing contracts in the US submarine industrial base.
 - HIFraser as the first Australian company qualified to supply parts for US Virginia class submarines through the Government-funded Defence Industry Vendor Qualification Program (DIVQ).
 - A strategic contract between PMB Defence and BAE that paves the way for Australian battery technology to be used in the AUKUS submarine design, supporting local innovation and hundreds of jobs.
 - Six new grants awarded to Australian businesses under the Defence Industry Development Grants program.
 - DIVQ contracts awarded to Australian business with Mack Values, Bale Defence, and STAUFF Corporation to enable these businesses to commence manufacture of a sample of US Navy valves and pipe fittings as part of their qualification process to becoming approved vendors within the US submarine industrial base.



Portfolio Budget Statement 2026-27 budget measures related to the NPS Program

- The Government will provide \$151.9 million over two years from 2026-27 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
Attorney-General's Department	\$2.6 million	Provide legal and policy advice for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program.
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation	\$10.6 million	Continue radiological baselining and monitoring, and advise on the safe implementation of nuclear technology.
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency	\$23.6 million	Support regulatory approvals, provide scientific advice, and conduct radiological monitoring activities
Australian Radioactive Waste Agency	\$11.9 million	Support its work in developing advice to inform Australia's future radioactive waste management and disposal pathways.
Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office	\$35.3 million	Deliver safeguards and nuclear security regulation.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	\$5.4 million	Conduct environmental regulation and assessments required under environmental legislation.
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	\$5.3 million	Advise on workforce and training development required for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine program.
Department of Finance	\$5.4 million	Provide commercial, finance and investment program advice.
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	\$51.7 million	Provide policy and international law advice and diplomatic support for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine program.



Portfolio Budget Statement 2026-27 budget measures related to NPS Program

- The Government will continue to provide funding in 2026-27 to support the delivery of Australia's acquisition of a conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability. Funding includes:

Department/ Agency	Amount	Reasoning
Australian Submarine Agency	\$711.9 million	\$711.9 million over four years from 2026-27 for the ongoing operation of the Australian Submarine Agency, to manage the delivery of Australia's Nuclear-Powered Submarine program, including the continuation of the Nuclear Graduate program.
Department of Defence	\$110.0 million	\$110.0 million over five years from 2026-27 to support housing and related services for personnel deployed to Submarine Rotational Force – West, to be delivered through Defence Housing Australia.
Department of Finance	nfp	The Government will provide Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd (ANI) with an equity injection over four years from 2026-27 to support construction of the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard in South Australia.
Department of Defence	\$87.9 million	\$87.9 million over eight years from 2026-27 for workforce initiatives to grow, train and retain a sovereign qualified and highly skilled workforce to support the Nuclear-Powered Submarine program.
Department of Defence	\$20.5 million	\$20.5 million over two years from 2026-27 to further support Australia's Submarine Industrial Base, including to continue supporting access to the trilateral supply chain with the UK and US.



Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
16 April 2026	The 2026 Defence Integrated Investment Program includes an additional \$14 billion over the next four years, and an additional \$53 billion over the decade, through Defence funding, estate modernisation and alternative financing where appropriate. As a result, Defence spending as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will rise to 3 per cent by 2033 under the NATO approach.
24 March 2026	The Albanese Government announced Propel: Australian Submarine Scholarship program, a \$15.8 million initiative to support the development of Australia's future nuclear-powered submarine workforce.
24 February 2026	The Albanese Government announced a \$310 million payment for the acquisition of long-lead items from the UK to support Australia's future sovereign conventionally-armed, NPS capability.
17 February 2026	The Albanese Government announced it will invest \$3.9 billion as a down payment to deliver the new Submarine Construction Yard in Osborne. While the design process continues, significant investment is critical to delivering Australia's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines which will create nearly 10,000 jobs across the entire program in SA alone. ANI projections show an estimated projected investment of \$30 billion over coming decades, to build the construction yard in Osborne. Enabling works and the (STA) are expected to cost approximately \$2 billion and more than \$500 million respectively.



Division: Chief Operating Officer	
PDR No: SB26-000239	
Prepared by: Timmy Lam a/Chief Financial Officer CFO Branch Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 18 May 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Marlena Davis a/Chief Operating Officer COO Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 19 May 2026
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN Director-General ASA Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

CONTRACTORS & CONSULTANTS

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Mikaela James, a/Deputy Director General Strategy
Marlena Davis, a/Chief Operating Officer

Key Messages

- The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) will continue to use specialist and technical expertise, including surge requirements or where skills and expertise are not readily available within the ASA.
- 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 30 April 2026, AusTender reported the ASA had:
 - Seven (7) active contracts with two (2) of the 'Big Four' accounting firms, Deloitte (1) and KPMG (6). The total contract value of these is \$7.3 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 Australian 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 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 30 April 2026:
 - ASA has a \$3.238 million (incl. GST) contract with one (1) company, Bechtel Management Pty Ltd for contractors with specialised technical and/or nuclear expertise. This contract is for the provision of nuclear infrastructure experts to support the ASA infrastructure program for 12 months. This contract was procured open tender on a Defence-prioritised panel.
 - ASA has a \$12.078 million (incl. GST) contract with Huntington Ingalls Australia Pty Ltd for contractors with specialised technical and/or nuclear expertise. This contract is for the provision of nuclear experts in program management and



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

nuclear engineering to support the ASA across multiple divisions for an initial term of 18 months. This contract was procured by limited tender.

- ASA has a \$2.006 million (incl. GST) contract with one (1) company, Frazer-Nash Consultancy for contractors with specialised technical and/or nuclear expertise. This contract is for the provision of nuclear experts within the nuclear regulatory environment, supporting Nuclear Regulation Branch for an initial term of 12 months. This contract was procured open tender on a Defence-prioritised panel.

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
 - ICT capability, facilities and recruitment services

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

- As at 30 April 2026, AusTender reported the ASA had \$7.3 million (incl. GST) in active contracts with two (2) of the 'Big Four' accounting firms comprising:
 - Deloitte (\$0.18 million incl. GST), one (1) current contract.
 - KPMG (\$7.1 million incl. GST), six (6) 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 30 April 2026, AusTender reported the ASA had no active contracts with any of the 'Big Three' consulting firms.

Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
17 March 2026	Adelaide based company, Advanced Manufacturer AML3D , has received \$9.9 million order for four AML3D's ARCEMY X systems by Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), a division of HII. US adopting Australian technology for the manufacture of Submarines.
24 February 2026	Albanese Government announced a \$310m payment for the acquisition of long lead items from the United Kingdom to support Australia's future sovereign conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability.



Media

- On 22 April 2026, [The Canberra Times](#) reported that the ASA's annual contract commitments to external consulting firms had increased from \$41 million to over \$98 million. The article stated that official consultancy spending was at \$40.6 million, but highlighted \$138 million in contracts under the 'management support services' category, which the article suggests may include contracts not listed as a consultancy, despite being of a strategic nature.
- 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.
- 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: SB26-000240	
Prepared by: Bradley Kane a/Assistant Director-General Commercial Virginia Delivery Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 06 May 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Marlena Davis a/Chief Operating Officer Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 15 May 2026
Consultation: Nil	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

PDR No: SB26-000241
Budget Estimates June 2026
Last updated: 19 May 2026
Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

Budget Estimates

SOCIAL LICENCE

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Mikaela James, a/Deputy Director-General Strategy

Elicia Rudnicki, a/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 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.

Talking Points

- ASA is committed to coordinating social licence effort being undertaken across the NPS Enterprise. To support this, ASA has established the AUKUS Pillar I National Social Licence Working Group (the working group). The working group will convene the Western Australian (WA) & South Australian (SA) Governments, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA), Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator (ANNPSR), ASC Pty Ltd (ASC), BAE Systems (BAE) and Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd (ANI).
 - The first meeting of this group occurred on February 5, 2026
 - The Working Group will convene three times a year respectively in WA, SA, and Canberra.

WA Engagement

Governance/government engagement

- ASA regularly engages with the local and state governments in WA, as well as local representatives of Commonwealth agencies, to enable collaboration and coordination on social licence through both formal and informal arrangements. These engagements include:
 - The Western Australian Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program Steering Group. This group last met on 19 February 2026. Its subordinate Joint Social Licence and Engagement Working Group last met on 4 December 2025
 - The AUKUS Community Taskforce, established and led by the WA Government in February 2026, with representatives from federal and state governments, community organisations, and industry to increase understanding of community



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

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sentiment towards the NPS Program in Rockingham. It will run for six months before providing its recommendations to the WA Government

- 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
 - Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation.
- In 2025-26, ASA led and participated in 11 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 in 2025-26.
- ASA hosted several Community Information Sessions in 2025 and 2026:
 - Perth CBD and Rockingham on 30 and 31 March 2026 respectively
 - Rockingham and Cockburn on 15 and 16 December 2025 respectively
 - Rockingham and Fremantle on 16 and 18 September 2025 respectively
 - The sessions provided 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 Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group), ANNPSR, ANSTO & ARWA
 - Key themes included:
 - : progress on Submarine Rotational Force-West delivery
 - : community infrastructure
 - : Henderson Defence Precinct, community safety and nuclear waste
 - ASA intends to host future community information sessions, broadening the scope to include other local government areas in the south west metropolitan region.
- Further outreach conducted (in collaboration with Navy's Submarine Recruiting team) included the following:
 - Pop up kiosks in Rockingham, Baldivis, Kwinana, Cockburn and Mandurah,
 - Outreach with future workforce at the Kwinana Future Ready Expo (August 2025); Perth Royal Show (October 2025), Mandurah Jobs and Careers Expo (October 2025), Irwin Barracks Open Day (March 2026), University of Western



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Australia Careers Fair (March 2026), Comet Bay College's Defence and Defence Industries Career Expo (March 2026), The Big Meet Careers Fair – Perth (April 2026), the Rockingham Jobs Fair (April 2026) and HMAS *Stirling* Open Day (May 2026).

Submarine Discovery Centre (Rockingham)

- ASA signed a 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.
- The Centre will be opened in Q2 2026.

South Australia (SA) Engagement

Governance/government engagement

- ASA regularly engages with local and state governments in SA 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, 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

- In 2025, the ASA undertook public consultation on the draft Strategic Impact Assessment Report for the Osborne Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard (NPSCY) from 3 February to 17 March 2025.
 - This process occurred concurrently with public consultation on an Environmental Impact Statement prepared by ANI in accordance with requirements under South Australian legislation.
- Following public consultation, the ASA prepared a Supplementary Impact Assessment Report. This document summarised public feedback and explained how the Report was revised.
- The Strategic Impact Assessment Report was finalised in December 2025 and published on the ASA website.
- An approval decision notice under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) was provided to the ASA in February 2026 for the NPSCY.

First Nations engagement in SA

- Key feedback from First Nations engagement has primarily focused on improving understanding of the NPS Program's:
 - Environmental impacts
 - First Nations career and training pathways.



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- 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.
- ASA remains committed to providing regular program updates through continued engagement with KYAC representatives.
- The ASA also engages on the NPS Program with:
 - Cultural Immersion
 - Port Adelaide Enfield Council Aboriginal Advisory Authority.

Recent community engagement activity

- ASA has conducted/planned extensive engagement with local communities in 2026, including through:
 - six SA High School careers and training pathways expos (March, April, May, June)
 - four Community Information Pop-Up kiosks (Feb, April, June, July)
 - SA's largest careers expo (May)
 - the 'Science Alive' expo (August)
 - the Royal Adelaide Show (5 to 7 September).

Media

- 22 Mar 2026 [WAMN News](#) reports the Australian Government should be investing in fuel rather than the AUKUS partnership.
- 5 Feb 2026 [Mining](#) reports the WA government is establishing the AUKUS Community Taskforce to understand local community sentiment towards the NPS program.
- 5 Feb 2026 [Crikey](#) reports US Senators are concerned Australia will not have sufficient resources to support foreign civilian and military personnel.
- 31 Dec 2025 [Financial Review](#) reports Rockingham locals are concerned the NPS Program will put a significant strain on WA infrastructure and resources.
- 28 Dec 2025 [ABC News](#) reports Rockingham's leap to major AUKUS defence hub leaves some locals trepidatious.



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

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Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

Division: Policy, Strategy and Engagement	
PDR No: SB25-000241	
Prepared by: Taylor Sutherland Acting Assistant Director-General Strategic Engagement and Policy Mob: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Ph: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Date: 19 May 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Elicia Rudnicki Acting Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement Mob: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Ph: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Date: 19 May 2026
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Budget Estimates

US PARTNERSHIP

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Mikaela James, a/Deputy Director-General Strategy

Elicia Rudnicki, a/Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Key Messages

- The US Administration has expressed strong support for AUKUS, including through President Trump's commitment that the United States (US) is moving 'full steam ahead'.
- AUKUS is on track, and is in the interest of all three nations.

[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

- The Review reaffirmed the US's support for AUKUS, consistent with President Trump's commitment in October 2025 that the US is 'full steam ahead'.
 - This was affirmed by Secretaries Rubio and Hegseth during AUSMIN 2025 on 8 December.
- AUKUS partners held a highly successful AUKUS Defence Ministers' Meeting in December 2025. (To be updated after 30 May 2026)
 - US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth hosted Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles and the UK Secretary of State for Defence John Healey, and reaffirmed their shared commitment to AUKUS.
 - All three partners recognized the critical importance of submarine cooperation under AUKUS Pillar I to ensure a robust deterrent.
- All three AUKUS partners are focussed on continuing to deliver AUKUS Pillar I at pace.
- 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 2025), Deputy Prime Minister (7 Feb, 30 May, 27 Aug, 8 Dec, 10 Dec 2025) and Foreign Minister (21 Jan, 20 Jun, 8 Dec 2025) 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 US\$3 billion.
- . To date US\$2 billion (AU\$3.092 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\$1.511 billion) was transferred in Quarter four, 2025.
- . A further US\$1 billion (adjusted for inflation) is scheduled to be transferred within 10 years from 2026.
 - The exact timing of payments is at the mutual agreement of Australia and 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 has decided to invest 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.
 - 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 will 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 bolster 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 as US investments mature.
 - There are already strong positive indicators of progress, such as the US Maritime Industrial Base office (April 2025) reporting that since 2018 the Navy has funded



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

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 US Administration, in workforce, infrastructure and manufacturing technologies, we are confident that challenges and barriers will be overcome.

If asked: Is Australia's commitment of US\$3 billion to US SIB enough to uplift US submarine production for AUKUS requirements?

- Australia's commitment of US\$3 billion to the US submarine industrial base represents our proportionate contribution to support those aspects of US sustainment and production capacity required for the nuclear-powered submarines Australia is procuring.

If asked: Was the recent US contract for US\$197 million awarded with funds from Australia's US SIB contribution?

- We welcome this announcement, which uses Foreign Military Sales arrangements to enable early design work and pave the way for future AUKUS capability development.
 - This represents further momentum and commitment by AUKUS partners to deliver on the Optimal Pathway.

Media

- On 17 May 2026, [The Guardian](#) reported that US Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Caudle, provided Congressional Testimony that Australia was "making its milestones" and he was happy with overall progress, but that there were "a couple things Australia was behind on" which he was "frustrated with".
- On 12 May 2026, [US Media](#) reported that US Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Caudle, provided Congressional Testimony that "Virginia Subs will hit a 2-a-year build rate in the 2030s..."
- On 30 Apr 2026, the [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) reported on recent AUKUS discussions, including the King's speech to US Congress being well received.
- On 22 April 2026, the [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) reported on ADM Samuel Paparo, COMINDOPACOMs, Congressional Testimony that Australia had successfully upgraded HMAS *Stirling*, and that "we could move submarines to *Stirling* today".
- On 24 March 2026, the [West Australian](#) reported US Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Caudle confirmed WA will host Australia's first sovereign nuclear-powered submarine by 2032.
- On 16 February 2026, the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) reported on plans by the US Navy to reduce the size of its SSN fleet from 66 to 54 and linked to support for US plans to transfer Virginia-class submarines to Australia under AUKUS. Noted the earliest for any public confirmation would not be until the FY27 US Navy Budget Request.



Division: Policy, Strategy and Engagement	
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Prepared by: Taylor Sutherland Acting Assistant Director-General Strategic Engagement & Policy Policy, Strategy & Engagement Division Mob: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Ph: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Date: 19 May 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Elicia Rudnicki Acting Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement Strategy Group Mob: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Ph: s47E(c) [REDACTED] Date: 19 May 2026
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Budget Estimates

UK PARTNERSHIP

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Mikaela James, a/Deputy Director-General Strategy

Elicia Rudnicki, a/Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Key Messages

- Australia's SSN-AUKUS remains on track to be delivered in the early 2040s.
- Australia maintains high confidence in both its own and the United Kingdom's (UK) ability to uplift their respective submarine industrial bases.
- In February/March 2026, Australia successfully hosted HMS *Anson* at HMAS *Stirling* for the first ever maintenance activity on a UK nuclear-powered submarine.

Talking Points

Financial contributions to the UK

- Australia agreed to a fixed contribution of GB£2.4 billion with the UK Government to be paid over ten years.
 - The exact timing of payments is at the mutual agreement of Australia and the UK.
- To date, Australia has transferred GB£469 million (AU\$908 million) to the UK for industrial uplift of Rolls-Royce Submarines and our contribution to the design costs incurred by the United Kingdom.
 - GB£149 million (AU\$285 million) was transferred in Quarter two, 2024
 - GB£80 million (AU\$167 million) was transferred in Quarter three, 2025
 - GB£240 million (AU\$456 million) was transferred in Quarter two, 2026
- Australia's arrangements with the UK will cover a broad 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.

Work to support SSN-AUKUS delivery in the UK

- 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.
- 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 GB£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



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

- 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 GB£9 billion to bolster support to the UK Royal Navy's submarine fleet.
 - The Unity contract will support the production of nuclear reactors to power UK submarines, including SSN-AUKUS
- In addition, the UK has committed:
 - GB£4 billion to continue the detailed design work of SSN-AUKUS (announced in 2024)
 - GB£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 GB£20 million per year)
 - GB£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).

UK Submarine Maintenance Period (SMP)

- In February/March 2026, Australia successfully hosted UK HMS *Anson* at HMAS *Stirling* for a period of maintenance works and joint training.
 - The success of this UK SMP reflects considerable progress in Australia's ability to operate, maintain, and safely steward our future SSNs under AUKUS.
- Importantly, the UK SMP marked the first ever maintenance activity on a UK nuclear-powered submarine in Australia.
 - Building on previous work completed on United States (US) Virginia class submarines, USS *Hawaii* in 2024 and USS *Vermont* in 2025.
- Knowledge of both UK and US approaches is essential as Australia develops the infrastructure, workforce and industrial capabilities required to support UK and US SSNs through SRF-West from 2027, and to sustain sovereign Australian SSNs into the future.
- During the UK SMP, Australian personnel worked with our AUKUS partners on maintenance and familiarisation activities, strengthening the skills, systems and supply chains required for routine maintenance of nuclear-powered submarines.
 - The UK SMP involved a trilateral AUKUS workforce comprising around 100 personnel from the Royal Australian Navy; Royal Navy; UK industry (including Babcock UK); US Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard; and Australian industry (including ASC).
- All nuclear maintenance elements of the UK SMP were demonstrations only; no radiological material was transferred ashore during this maintenance period.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Agreement (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 an 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)
 - 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.

UK House of Commons Defence Committee inquiry

- We are aware the UK Parliamentary House of Commons Defence Committee has concluded its inquiry on AUKUS and has provided its report to the UK Government (report released on 28 April 2026).
 - The inquiry was an independent and self-initiated activity focused on exploring how AUKUS is progressing against existing milestones, and how the UK can best support delivery.
- Committee members visited Australia in October 2025 to observe progress on AUKUS delivery 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 Australian Government provided a written submission outlining the progress made to date
 - Pillar 1 is on track to deliver Australia's fleet of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
- The Committee's report highlights the UK's enduring, bipartisan commitment to delivering AUKUS and the importance of the UK contribution to AUKUS.
 - We look forward to working with the UK Government as it considers its response to the report.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

- . Note that AUKUS has also undergone several review processes within Australia over the last five years.
 - The Australian Parliament has also considered AUKUS a number of times, including through the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' (JSCOT) reviews of the ENNPIA in 2021, ANNPA in 2024 and the Geelong Treaty in 2025.
 - : For the Geelong Treaty and the ENNPIA, JSCOT's only recommendation was that binding treaty action be taken
 - : For the ANNPA, JSCOT recommended binding treaty action be taken, and made a number of other recommendations relating to social licence, community engagement and consultation, workforce and skills development, partnerships with State and Local Governments and the Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator, and continued appropriate parliamentary scrutiny. The Government's response to the Report was tabled in the Senate in March 2026.
- . Each of the AUKUS partners have undertaken review into the AUKUS endeavour. Now is the time that we get on with delivery.
- . *If asked: HCDC recommendations on the steps that the UK can take to improve AUKUS*
 - These matters are best addressed by the UK Government.
- . *If pressed*
 - The UK recognises the challenges highlighted by the HCDC and welcomes the report as a constructive input.
 - : It reflects issues already identified and being actively addressed across the UK's nuclear-powered submarine enterprise.

Background

- . On 23 February 2026, the Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry met with Luke Pollard MP UK Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry for the Australia UK Defence Industry Dialogue (AUKDID). The Joint Statement welcomed the expansion of Australian industrial personnel embedded in the UK submarine industrial base, noting progress in manufacturing reactors for both nations SSN-AUKUS submarines. It also noted that all work by Australian personnel in the US or the UK will remain consistent with Australia's domestic and international legal obligations, including its non-proliferation obligations and commitments.
- . In April 2025 the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC) launched an inquiry into AUKUS to establish whether the partnership is on track and the progress made against both pillars. The HCDC released its findings on 28 April 2026. The report reaffirmed strong cross-party support and described the partnership as strategically vital to UK security and credibility with Australia and the United States.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
23 February 2026	Australia and the UK, as part of the Australia-UK Defence Industry Dialogue (AUKDID) joint statement, reinforced their commitment to the AUKUS partnership.
22 February 2026	HMS Anson arrived at HMAS Stirling for the first UK Submarine Maintenance Period (SMP).

Media

- On 28 April 2026, various media reporting following the UK House of Commons Defence Committee report including:
 - [ABC News](#) – Riley Stuart & Elias Clure
 - [The Nightly](#) – Andrew Greene
 - [Australian Financial Review](#) – Andrew Tillett
 - [The Australian](#) – Ben Packham
 - [Sydney Morning Herald](#) – David Crowe
 - [The West Australian](#) – Christopher McKeon
 - [NewsWire](#) – Joseph Olbrycht-Palmer
 - [9 News](#) – Richard Wood
 - [The Guardian](#) – Ben Doherty
- On 24 March 2026, Marcus Hellyer and Michael Shoebridge at [Strategic Analysis Australia](#) reported that when Australia in 2056 has eight SSNs, it would only have two deployable submarines consistently available. This analysis was based Australia's experience with Collins and the US and UK's current SSN maintenance experiences.

Division: Policy, Strategy and Engagement	
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Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

RADIOACTIVE WASTE & SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Tim Hodgson, Deputy Director-General Technical

Belinda McNamara, Head Stewardship Division

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 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. This 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 been identified to dispose of radioactive waste 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 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 accordance with Australia's domestic regulatory requirements and in a manner that prioritises safety and security 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 Power Safety Act 2024* (ANNPS Act) and the *Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulations 2025*, and the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998*.
- No decisions have been made on where operational low-level radioactive waste from nuclear-powered submarines will be permanently disposed.
 - The Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA) is exploring pathways to store and dispose of Australia's low-level radioactive waste. The Government will continue to engage extensively with industry, experts and local communities.

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 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

- Spent nuclear fuel will be stored and disposed on the current or future Defence estate.



- No sites have been identified to dispose of spent nuclear fuel or intermediate-level radioactive waste as a result of Australia's Nuclear Powered Submarine (NPS) Program.
- A facility to store or dispose of spent nuclear fuel will not be required until the 2050s when the first Australian 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 storage and disposal solution.
- Determining suitable locations and methods for safe and secure storage and 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 spent nuclear fuel from US and UK submarines.
 - To put the matter beyond doubt, Government amended the 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 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. The naval nuclear propulsion (NNP) technology the UK and US use today is the result of decades of research, development, and experience.
- 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.

- The reactor unit in Australia's submarines will be delivered in complete, welded power units that will not have to be opened over the entire life of the submarine.
- 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.
- The ASA will define the 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 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, published by the ARWA, for the first time included a reference to future waste from Australia's NPS Program in addition to existing Department of Defence and other radioactive waste holders.
 - 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 operation, the operational waste generated from 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 and intermediate level waste (such as reactor pressure vessel) generated during the decommissioning and dismantling 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, 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 3,700 cubic metres of low-level radioactive waste and expects this amount to continue to grow into around 11,000 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 (m ³)			
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 (m ³)			
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
30 & 31 March 2026	The ASA held Community Information Sessions in Western Australia (WA) – in Perth CBD on 30 March and in Rockingham on 31 March.
15 & 16 December 2025	The ASA held Community Information Sessions in WA – 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	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). 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.
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 WA – in Rockingham on 16 September and Fremantle on 18 September.
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 16 February 2026, Rex Patrick of [Michael West Media](#) reported concerns about the Commonwealth's transparency of plans for managing and disposing of nuclear waste associated with Australia's future nuclear-powered submarines.
- 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: SB26-000244	
Prepared by: Amanda Roberts Acting Assistant Director-General Stewardship Policy Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 19 May 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Kim Arthur Acting Head Stewardship Division Ph: s47E(c) Date: 19 May 2026
Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

INDUSTRY

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Mikaela James, a/Deputy Director-General Strategy

Kylie Wright, Head Workforce, Industry and Supply Chain

Key Messages

- On 5 March 2025, the Australian Government launched *Australia's AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy* (Strategy) which outlines the ambitious plan to uplift Australia's military and industrial capability, under the timeframes of the Optimal Pathway.
- 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.
- On 19 November 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, announced that HIFraser was the first Australian company qualified through the Defence Industry Vendor Qualification (DIVQ) Program to supply parts for US Virginia class submarines.
- HII Australia is delivering the Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification (AUSSQ) Program, providing additional avenues for qualification for Australian suppliers into the United States Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) Newport News Shipbuilding (NSS) supply chain. In April 2026, the Government announced expansion of the AUSSQ Program to include the qualification of UK sustainment services.

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 Hon Pat Conroy MP.
- 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 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 and territory 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 Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) has progressed a range of uplift initiatives, including the provision of grants funding via existing programs, progress through qualification activities, and facilitating a range of public engagements in order to communicate contemporary program priorities with the industrial base.

AUSSQ Program

- The ASA has engaged HII Australia to deliver the 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, and again on 24 December 2025 to contract a further three work packages, all focused on the United States HII Newport News Shipbuilding Supply Chain.
- AUSSQ was further expanded in January 2026 to qualify Australian businesses to provide UK sustainment services.
- As at April 2026, 49 unique suppliers are progressing towards qualification. Twelve 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 and Century Engineering becoming the first Australian company to secure an export contract for crank components for US aircraft carriers.

DIVQ Program

- Launched in January 2024, DIVQ incorporates nearly 20 product families across multiple waves, targeting the qualification of Australian suppliers into the US Virginia Class Submarine (VCS) supply chain established by General Dynamics Electric Boat (GDEB) and HII NNS.
- As at April 2026, 96 unique suppliers are progressing through the qualification pathway (some against multiple product families), with two businesses having passed the final quality audit and ready to enter the US supply chain.
- EOIs have been reopened for all DIVQ Wave product families in mid-March 2026 in order to promote further participation, with the program focus increasingly shifting to sustainment-related capability uplift.

Domestic Industry Uplift Costs

- 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 \$262 million over three years from 2024–25 to enhance domestic industry capacity, expanding the DIVQ Program to increase Australian



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

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 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) and NPS related work (60 trainees over life of initiative)
 - : The Defence Industry Pathways Program (DIPP), a 12-month, South Australian (SA)-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 four-year, SA-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 six years to establish the NPS Student Support Scholarships Program, delivering 3,000 scholarships for students studying undergraduate STEM courses relevant to the NPS enterprise.

ASA-funded Nuclear-Powered Submarine Grants

- To facilitate investment for eligible Australian businesses intending to participate in the AUKUS submarine supply chain, the 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 included eight NPS funded grants valued at \$2.9 million, to support the uplift of Australia's submarine industrial base.



Timeline of Major Events and Ministerial Announcements

Date	Event
17 March 2026	ASA hosted the inaugural AUKUS National Supply Chain Conference in partnership with Australia's Sovereign Submarine Partners for build, BAE Systems and ASC.
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.

Media

- On 08 May 2026, a [media release](#) highlighted Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency's joint presence at Sea-Air-Space 2026, showcasing Australia's sovereign defence capabilities and supporting over 70 companies to strengthen export pathways and integration with allied supply chains.
- On 23 April 2026, the Australian Financial Review published an [article](#) on AUKUS submarine delays worsening despite taxpayer investment.
- On 13 April 2026, the ASA posted a [media release](#) highlighting a series of national AUKUS industry engagement events in Perth and Adelaide, providing over 230 participants with detailed guidance on submarine supply chain opportunities, sustainment requirements, and the capabilities needed to support Australia's future nuclear-powered submarine program.
- On 10 April 2026, a [media release](#) Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Richard Marles MP announced the expansion of AUKUS-related industry programs, including AUSSQ and a new ASC-BAE Systems initiative, to strengthen Australian businesses' access to US and UK submarine supply chains.
- On 23 January 2026, a [media release](#) from Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon. Pat Conroy MP announced more than \$17 million in Defence Industry Development Grants has been awarded to 44 Australian businesses.
- On 19 November 2025, a joint [press conference](#) Prime Minister, the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Richard Marles MP, Minister for Defence Industry, the Hon. Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Resources, the Hon. Madeleine King MP, Premier of Western Australia, the Hon. Roger Cook, MLA, Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, AO, RAN, and Director General of the Australian Submarine Agency Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead, AO, RAN announced milestone for Australian businesses new accessing opportunities through AUKUS.
- On 14 November 2025, ASA hosted a [Technical Data Sharing Industry Day](#), allowing Australian businesses direct access to United States submarine technical data for the first time.
- On November 04 2025, a [media release](#) announced that H&B defence and the Victorian Government signed an MOU to strengthen the state's defence workforce, uplift supply chains, and expand industry participation in AUKUS-related opportunities.
- On 17 October 2025, H&B Defence [announced](#) the ASA has expanded the AUSSQ Program with 12 new suppliers and additional capabilities, strengthening Australia's integration into the US nuclear shipbuilding supply chain.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Mikaela James

- On 23 September 2025, ASA launched the [Industry Front Door](#), a dedicated platform hosting information and opportunities for Australian businesses to contribute to Australia's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability.
- On 19 September 2025, H&B defence [announced](#) that Dobbie and VEEM Ltd have achieved Level 1 accreditation within HII's Newport News Shipyard supply chain, marking a significant milestone for Australian manufacturers entering the US defence market.
- On 20 August 2025, H&B Defence [announced](#) the first company under the AUSSQ program to receive a Request for Quotation from HII's Newport News Shipbuilding division in the United States.
- On 19 August 2025, H&B Defence hosted a [forum](#) where Australian businesses gained insights on how to join the Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification (AUSSQ) program.

Division: Workforce Industry and Supply Chain	
PDR No: SB26-000245	
Prepared by: Samantha Ring a/ADG Industry and Supply Chain Workforce Industry and Supply Chain Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 30 March 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Kylie Wright Head Workforce, Industry and Supply Chain Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 19 May 2026
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 20 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

PHASE I: SRF-WEST

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead, AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Dave Johnson, Deputy Director-General Nuclear Submarine Acquisition and Sustainment

RADM David Mann AM CSC RAN, Head Virginia Delivery

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).
- The UK Astute class SSN HMS *Anson* successfully completed a Submarine Maintenance Period (SMP) in March 2026 at HMAS *Stirling*.
- 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 Periods at HMAS Stirling

- 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 commencement of SRF-West in 2027.

As at 19 May 2026, three Phase 1 Submarine Maintenance Period (SMP) activities have occurred at HMAS *Stirling*:

- Submarine Tendered Maintenance Period (STMP) involving USS *Hawaii* (SSN-776) and USS *Emory S. Land* (AS-39), September 2024
- SMP 25 - USS *Vermont* (SSN -792), November 2025



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

PDR No: SB26-000246
Budget Estimates June 2026
Last updated: 20 May 2026

Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Dave Johnson

- SMP 26 - HMS *Anson* (UK Astute Class SSN), February-March 2026
- Planning for US SMP 26 (Quarter 4 2026) commenced in May 2026.

UK SMP2026 - HMS Anson

- The HMS Anson SMP was successful with significant work undertaken by Australian industry and tri-lateral uniformed staff (including RAN and technical diving support). The activity also supported the completion of UK Initial Operating Support milestones for SRF-West, including several progressed by the US Pearl Harbor Naval Ship Yard Lead Maintenance Activity
- Major maintenance support included temporary pier services, fin scaffolding, diving activities, defect rectification and oil/water sampling
- Australian businesses directly contributed to the SMP, providing shore support and additive manufacturing services

The maintenance enterprise involvement comprised:

- SRF-W Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) Maintenance Support staff
- UK uniformed personnel (Submarine Delivery Agency, Engineering Support Group and Royal Navy Submarine Headquarters staff)
- UK industry members (Babcock UK, Rolls Royce) RAN Fleet Support Unit
- RAN Clearance Dive Team 4 divers (achieving full UK accreditation)
- Pearl Harbor Naval Ship Yard Lead Maintenance Activity staff (including divers supervision)

SRF-West Sustainment Workforce

- Since July 2024, Australian sustainment personnel, the majority from ASC, have been conducting training for 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. ASC has over 200 personnel training in Pearl Harbor.
- As 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 ASA and Defence will be providing or facilitating a range of family and personnel support services at or in the vicinity of HMAS *Stirling* to support quality of life for US and UK military, civilian and contractor personnel, and accompanying dependents.
- The ASA and Defence will deliver a suite of options to provide housing for US and UK personnel and their families.
 - The primary method of housing service delivery will be through Defence Housing Australia (DHA). The 2025 amendments to the DHA legislation support broader application of Defence housing to AUKUS partners.



Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Dave Johnson

- 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 Security and Estate Group (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;
 - 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.]

SRF-West Priority Works

- Defence continues to work at pace to meet Government's directed timeframe of 2027, and is on track to deliver over \$400 million of infrastructure work this financial year.
- The primary effort for the SRF-West Priority Works project has shifted from design to construction this year. This is occurring alongside the planning and development of the future tranches of HMAS *Stirling* works.
- The Government initially approved around \$1.56 billion (excluding Contingency) to upgrade and enhance HMAS *Stirling* to enable the safe and secure Initial Operating Support of SRF-West.



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

PDR No: SB26-000246
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Last updated: 20 May 2026

Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Dave Johnson

- . In August 2025, the Australian Government approved a \$595 million increase in the budget for priority works to approximately \$2.15 billion.
 - The budget increase reflects the scope and complexity of delivering priority infrastructure to ensure the safe and secure operation of nuclear-powered submarines from HMAS *Stirling*.
- . Infrastructure works completed by April 2026 include:
 - New Living-in Accommodation at HMAS *Stirling* (124 cabins); and
 - Base entrance upgrades.
- . Infrastructure works currently underway or planned to commence in 2026 include:
 - The Submariner Training Centre
 - The Emergency Preparedness and Response Complex
 - Maritime works, including pier and wharf improvements, vessel pontoons and piling
 - The Controlled Industrial Facility
 - Logistics and maintenance facilities
 - Additional ammunition storage
 - Office working accommodation.

[Handling note: Defer to Department of Defence SEG representative for questions on the SRF-West Priority Works or impacts on local communities]



Media

- On 24 April 2026, the Australian and a range of other media outlets reported on [US Indo-Pacific Command chief](#) Admiral Sam Paparo's comments on 22 April to the US House Armed Services Committee underscoring the importance of the US having a rotational submarine presence in the Indo-Pacific and the value of the AUKUS security partnership. He informed the committee that SRF-West was on track to support the rotational force from 2027 and could be "ready today" to host a US Submarine Squadron out of Australia.

On 24 March 2026, [The West Australian reported that Admiral Daryl Caudle reaffirmed](#) the US commitment to rotating four submarines through HMAS *Stirling* and praised Australia's infrastructure upgrades and long-standing strategic partnership. The report confirmed that the US Navy has confidence that submarine production rates will increase sufficiently to enable the transfer of Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, with Western Australia expected to host its first sovereign submarine by 2032 under AUKUS.

- On 16 March 2026, Cr Peter Hudson, City of Rockingham, [tendered a motion in Council regarding the Garden Island Highway](#), which directs an urgent update on the status of the Garden Island Highway feasibility studies announced in December 2024; and the status of any planned road infrastructure upgrades to alleviate traffic congestion to the HMAS *Stirling* naval base and any associated government funding.
- On 22 February 2026, The West [Australian reported HMS Anson's arrival in Western Australia for joint maintenance marking Australia's first hands-on sustainment of a UK nuclear-powered submarine](#), underscoring that AUKUS is shifting from policy to practical capability building ahead of regular rotational deployments from 2027.
- On 05 February 2026, Pilbara News reported on the UK Astute-class nuclear-powered submarine, HMS *Anson*, upcoming visit to [HMAS Stirling in Western Australia for a month-long maintenance period](#) as part of the AUKUS pathway to build Australia's future nuclear submarine capability. While UK officials say the deployment strengthens trilateral cooperation and skills transfer, analysts have raised concerns about committing one of the Royal Navy's few available nuclear submarines amid heightened security pressures in Europe.

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Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

PDR No: SB26-000246
Budget Estimates: May/June 2026
Last updated: 20 May 2026
Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Dave Johnson

Division: Virginia Delivery Division	
PDR No: SB25-000246	
Prepared by: CDRE Fiona McNaught, RAN Assistant Director-General SRF-West Delivery Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 18 May 2026	Cleared by Division Head: RADM David Mann, AM, CSC Head Virginia Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 20 May 2026
Consultation: Policy Strategy & Engagement Division Navy Shipbuilding and Sustainment Group Security and Estate Group	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

PHASE II: VIRGINIA CLASS SUBMARINES

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: David Johnson, Deputy Director-General Nuclear Submarines Delivery

RADM David Mann AM CSC RAN, Head Virginia Delivery

Key Messages

- Australia will acquire three Virginia class submarines from the United States (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.
- On 15 May 2026, Government announced the selection of Lockheed Martin Australia (LMA) as the preferred Combat System Integrator (CSI) for Australia's future fleet of sovereign Virginia class submarines.

[Handling note: Defence (NSSG) has lead for Henderson, SSN sustainment, and submarine combat system aspects as identified.]

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, 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.
- 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.

US Government Contract with General Dynamics Electric Boat (GDEB)

- On 24 April 2026 the US Government (USG) announced a contract with General Dynamics Electric Boat (GDEB) to support engineering, technical, design agent and design transfer activities for nuclear submarine capabilities and their sustainment, in support of foreign military sales requirements.
- This is a new contract that allows the USG to have GDEB provide them program and engineering support across the trilateral AUKUS program.
- GDEB have been providing program and engineering support to Australia via the USG since 2023. This was through extant USG arrangements at the time. GDEB have been supporting the Collins Class Submarines (CCSM) program for many years.
- This remains a contract between the USG and GDEB. Australia provides funding for activities in the US direct to the USG through Foreign Military Sales.
- This contract is not related to expenditure for Australia's contribution to the US SIB.
- This contract is not related to the purchase of the first sovereign Virginia Class Submarine.

Virginia class submarine sustainment

- The Government is investing in 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.
 - Also occurring through Defence's Collins class arrangements, 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.
- . Periodic nuclear-powered submarine visits to Western Australia across 2024-2026 have and will continue to provide opportunities for ASA, Defence and ASC's workforce to exercise their developing nuclear-powered submarine sustainment capacity and competence.

Virginia Class Submarine Combat System Integrator

- . The Government's selection of LMA as the preferred CSI complements the long-standing submarine combat system Armament Cooperative Programs between the Australian and USG to integrate and sustain the combat capability of the submarines.
 - The Combat System Integration Partner is pivotal to the effectiveness of Australia's future Virginia class submarines – including through the implementation and testing of combat systems improvements, and supporting crews in conducting maintenance and repair on the combat system.
- . The ASA is working with LMA to developing an initial services contract, with an estimated two-year contract term. The initial services contract will set the course for establishment of the CSI, by building the workforce and capabilities necessary to ensure Australia's future combat systems incorporate the latest in technology and maintain advantage in the undersea domain.
- . This partnership will provide extensive opportunities for Australian industry and workers and build the breadth of technical skill and knowledge in Australia.
 - It is expected that an additional 100 jobs will be created at Lockheed Martin Australia in support of the Combat System Integration Partner program, with initial work to be undertaken in WA.
- . Media reporting in The West Australian made several misleading comments on the announcement linked to where the work will be undertaken.
 - The delivery of combat system integration for Australia's Virginia Class Submarine is subject to contract arrangements with LMA.



- Therefore the ASA is limited in providing details on delivery at this time. This is due to commercial sensitivities, and some decisions being for LMA to make.

[Handling note: Defence (NSSG) is the lead for submarine combat system and heavyweight torpedo Armaments Cooperative Programs, including for NPS.]

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 that 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 confirm the facility and operational requirements which will then in turn inform regulatory requirements that will need to be met prior to the conduct of both Depot Level Maintenance and contingency dockings at Henderson, WA.

[Handling note: Defence (NSSG) is the lead for all aspects of the Henderson Defence Precinct, and on details of early SSN sustainment preparations]

Virginia Class and SSN sustainment workforce size in Western Australia

- ASC's 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.
 - Depot Level Maintenance will be conducted in Henderson which will support a peak of 3,000 personnel.

School-based and early career programs

- The Schools Pathways Program informs young Australians about the varied pathways and career opportunities within the defence industry and encourages engagement in STEM.
 - An intergovernmental agreement with the Western Australian Department of Education and the South Australian Department for Education with funding valued at over \$5 million for the financial years 2023–24 and 2025–26.
- The Defence Industry Pathways Program (DIPP) provides a 12-month traineeship in which participants gain an understanding of defence industry and obtain a nationally recognised Certificate III in Defence Industry Pathways.
 - DIPP started as a pilot in WA in 2021 and was developed in partnership with WA's South Metropolitan TAFE and the local maritime defence industry. In 2025 the program was expanded in South Australia with the initial cohort graduating 20 March 2026. The program is currently funded for up to 144 participants.



ASC Jobs for Subs Graduate Apprenticeship and Traineeship

- On 2 September 2024, the Prime Minister announced a new Jobs for Subs program to grow the workforce required to deliver SRF-West.
- This program will enable ASC to recruit around 200 additional entry-level personnel over two years across high priority disciplines and trades essential to the NPS enterprise, building the workforce we need in the west to sustain and maintain Australia's future nuclear-powered submarines.
- On April 2026, ASC Pty Ltd reported that they had completed recruitment of 163 of the 200 Graduate, Apprenticeship and Trainee (GAT) positions, with the remaining 37 positions to be completed in the latter half of 2026.

Higher Education and Technical Skilling

- Education and skilling pathways underpin a strong, inclusive and sustainable labour market and Australia's world-class education system will be strengthened as we create more educational opportunities across our nation.
- Since 2022, a range of programs have supported more than 130 Australians to undertake undergraduate and postgraduate studies at universities in the United Kingdom (UK), US, and in Australia. Two of the included programs are APS International Posting Program and the NPS Nuclear Education Postgraduate Program.
- Another important AUKUS milestone has also recently been achieved, with the Royal Navy delivering professional and nuclear training for more than 700 Australian personnel in Canberra, with the support of the ASA during 2024 and 2025.
 - The delivery of the Royal Navy's Nuclear Introductory Course (NIC) and other courses in Australia is a clear demonstration of the commitment of our AUKUS partners to help Australia develop its knowledge and implement a best-practice safety culture that protects our people, the public and the environment.
- Over 100 Australians from across the NPS enterprise have completed Nuclear Executive courses in the US, the UK and domestically to develop an understanding of nuclear principles in decision-making, along with an enhanced understanding of the technical and policy challenges of being stewards of nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear technologies.
- Over 50 personnel from ASA have been supported to undertake submarine design and foundational nuclear-submarine courses, to assist in the development of whole-of-platform Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel (SQEP), as well as supporting the transition of personnel into the NPS enterprise from adjacent fields.

Growth of STEM Skills Needed to Support the ASA

- The Australian Government committed \$128.5m over 4 years to establish the Nuclear Submarine Student Pathways Program (NPS Student Pathways): a targeted national competitive program providing an additional 4,001 Commonwealth Supported Places in STEM related courses.
- The Australian Government committed \$15.8m for an Australian Submarine Scholarship program known as 'Propel' (NPS Technical Scholarships) to support the development of Australia's future nuclear-powered submarine workforce by offering



up to 3,000 scholarships to students studying in priority science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields at Australian universities.

- The Defence Industry Internship Program provides Engineering and Technology university students with direct connections to the Defence Industry by facilitating a 12-week paid internship in small to medium defence industry businesses across Australia. Currently 120 places have been funded.

Skills and Training Academy pilot initiatives in WA

- Train the Trainer pilot initiative is progressing well with six (6) trainers from South Metro (SM) TAFE completing their six (6) week in-service training activity on Advanced Training in Defence Manufacturing (ATDM) at the Institute for Accelerated Learning and Research, Danville, US in March 2025. The second iteration of this initiative is planned to commence in October 2026 and aims to send five (5) welding trainers from the shipbuilder to the BAE (UK) Submarine Academy for Skills and Knowledge, Barrow-in-Furness for a six (6) week in-service upskilling activity. Planning has commenced on a third iteration to occur from May 2027.
- The Nuclear Unit of Competency (UoC 52929WA Course in Nuclear Awareness) is now on the Scope of Registration for SM TAFE with the WA Training Accreditation Council and TAFE SA with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), and Defence is in the process of adding the UoC to their Scope of Registration with ASQA. The UoC has now been successfully delivered to Western Australia's DIPP, the South Australia's DIPP, and stakeholders from ASA, TAFE SA, ASC and BAE.

WA TAFE Centres of Excellence

- On 29 January 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Skills and Training, the Premier of Western Australia, and the Western Australian Minister for Training and Workforce Development announced the launch of TAFE Centres of Excellence in Western Australia.
- This is a joint Commonwealth and Western Australian Government funded initiative under the National Skills Agreement to build the workforce skills needed to build and maintain critical Australian defence capabilities.

Other national workforce initiatives

- We are already building Australia's future NPS workforce through a range of workforce development, education and skilling initiatives, nationally, including:
 - Defence STEM Cadetship Program
 - Defence Graduate Programs
 - Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) Nuclear Graduate Program
 - ASA Postgraduate Nuclear Education Program
 - NPS Industry Master's Pilot Program



Media

- On 16 May 2026 [The West Australian](#) made several misleading comments on the announcement linked to where the work will be undertaken.
- On 15 May 2026 [Australian Government](#) announced the selection of Lockheed Martin Australia as the preferred Combat System Integration Partner for Australia's future fleet of sovereign Virginia class submarines. It is expected that an additional 100 jobs will be created at Lockheed Martin Australia in support of the Combat System Integration Partner program, with initial work to be undertaken in WA.
- On 24 Apr 2026 [ABC News](#) The US Department of Defense has awarded a \$US197 million (\$276 million) contract to support Australia's nuclear-submarine acquisition plans. The contract is specifically to support the AUKUS security pact between Australia, the US and the UK.
- On 24 March 2026 [Defence Connect](#) reported the federal government's launch of the \$15.8 million initiative called Propel: Australian Submarine Scholarship program to support the development of Australia's future nuclear-powered submarine workforce. Propel will offer up to 3,000 scholarships to students studying in priority science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields at Australian universities.
- On 24 March 2026 [The Mid West Times](#) reported that US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Daryl Caudle confirms WA will house first nuclear-powered submarine by 2032. In a visit to Perth's HMAS Stirling base to meet with local authorities and strengthen the AUKUS trilateral partnership, Admiral Daryl Caudle expressed confidence the ambitious hurdle can be met.
- On 26 February 2026 [the America's Navy Press Office](#) reported that HMAS Stirling conducted its first-ever maintenance period a without the support of a US submarine tender of a US Virginia-class submarine, USS Vermont. The availability marked a decisive step in turning the AUKUS security partnership into an operational reality, reinforcing the Department of War's peace through strength approach to security in the Indo-Pacific.
- On 22 February 2026 [The ASA](#) announced the arrival of HMS Anson at HMAS Stirling for the first-ever maintenance activity on a UK nuclear-powered submarine in Australia. Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said, 'Australia's acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine capability will create jobs, strengthen our local industry and help keep Australians safe. This Submarine Maintenance Period is the latest demonstration of the continued momentum across all three partners to deliver AUKUS.'



Division: Virginia Delivery Division	
PDR No: SB25-000247	
Prepared by: CDRE Carl Holmes Assistant Director-General Virginia Acquisition Virginia Delivery Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 1 April 2026	Cleared by Group Head: Dave Johnson Deputy Director-General Nuclear Submarines Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 18 May 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: 21 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

PHASE III: SSN AUKUS

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Dave Johnson, Deputy Director-General Nuclear Submarines Delivery

Key Messages

- Australia's nuclear-powered attack submarine (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 Pty Ltd (ASC) and BAE Systems (BAE) have been working collaboratively to mobilise the SSN-AUKUS build program as the Australian Shipbuilder.
- Enabling works, design, and construction continues at pace for the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard and Skills and Training Academy Campus.
- Australia continues to cooperate and participate with the United Kingdom (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 milestones.

Talking Points

SSN-AUKUS Build Program

- SSN-AUKUS is a trilaterally developed nuclear-powered submarine based on a UK next-generation design, integrating technology from the UK, Australia and the United States (US), and to be built at Osborne, South Australia, from the end of this decade with delivery in the early 2040s.
- Around 5,500⁽¹⁾ direct jobs are expected to be created to build the SSN-AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines in South Australia when the program reaches its peak.
- Work to deliver Australia's SSN-AUKUS capability is well underway, with progress across contracting, supply chain development, early acquisition activities, workforce mobilisation, and infrastructure and design participation.
 - Continued progress on Australian Shipbuilder mobilisation, establishment of program foundations, and commencement of Production Demonstration activities
 - Supply chain qualification activities continue to advance
 - Acquisition of UK nuclear propulsion system long-lead items is progressing to support Australia's future sovereign SSN capability
 - International industry placements for Australian Shipbuilder personnel at the BAE Systems Barrow-in-Furness shipyard are progressing, with further commencements underway
 - Infrastructure works are underway and progressing.

(1) '5,500' should read '4,000 to 5,500'.



Australian Shipbuilder Mobilisation

- BAE and ASC, working together as the Australian Shipbuilder, have met all contractual requirements to date, with excellent levels of collaboration with the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) at the management and working level.
- To minimise risk to Australia's SSN-AUKUS build program, the Australian Shipbuilder and Commonwealth have commenced Production Demonstration activities to test systems, tools, processes and workforce readiness.

ASC and BAE Joint Venture

- The Incorporated Joint Venture between ASC and BAE will establish a substantive, sovereign Australian entity to deliver the build of Australia's SSN-AUKUS fleet.
- ASA is working with ASC and BAE 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.

Acquisition of UK Long-Lead Items

- Australia has committed \$310 million to acquire long-lead items from the UK, including nuclear propulsion systems for the first two SSN-AUKUS submarines.
- Under this arrangement, the UK will deliver complete, welded, nuclear propulsion systems for Australian-built SSN-AUKUS boats.

Australian Shipbuilder Personnel Undertaking International Industry Placements

- International industry placements continue to strengthen Australia's workforce through targeted upskilling across critical engineering, design, quality, supply chain, and supervisory capability areas.
- BAE continues to welcome Australian Shipbuilder personnel at the Barrow-in-Furness submarine yard to support the SSN-AUKUS build program. As at 1 April 2026, 27 Australian Shipbuilder personnel have participated in placements at Barrow-in-Furness (16 from ASC and 11 from BAE), with a further four planned to commence in Q2 2026.

Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard

- ASA is working closely with the Australian Government's appointed design and delivery partner, Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd (ANI), to progress the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard.
- Design of the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard is being informed by BAE and ASC.



- . Enabling works are progressing with ongoing design development for the utilities relocation. The Grade Separated Road, now officially Eurimbla Way, which provides the primary access into the site, opened to traffic on 9 February 2026.
- . Construction of the production demonstration facilities is progressing well 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.
- . ASA and ANI continue to progress the necessary federal and state planning, environmental and regulatory approvals for the Submarine Construction Yard.
 - ANI received South Australian State Planning Consent, under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2026* (SA) on 24 November 2025
 - The ASA received Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* Strategic Assessment Approval in February 2026
 - ANI submitted an application for a licence to prepare a site for an NNP facility under the *Australian Naval Nuclear Safety Act 2024* (Cth) in December 2025. The assessment is currently underway.
- . ASA continue to engage with the South Australian Government, Local Council, interested stakeholders, and First Nations people.
- . The most recent cost advice from ANI projects a cost of more than \$30 billion over the coming decades:
 - Approximately \$5 billion on Area 1 (Fabrication)
 - Approximately \$8 billion on Area 2 (Outfitting)
 - More than \$15 billion on Area 3 (Consolidation, Launch and Commissioning)
 - Approximately \$2 billion on Enabling Works.
- . This cost estimate is based on the current shipyard concept design. The total construction costs associated with the infrastructure program will depend on the details of design and commercial delivery arrangements, to be negotiated by ANI.
 - On 15 February 2026, the Prime Minister announced with the South Australian Government would invest \$3.9 billion as a down payment for Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard.

Skills and Training Academy Campus

- . The Skills and Training Academy Campus will support the delivery of the workforce for the build of Australia's SSN-AUKUS and will further bolster the workforce in direct support of future Naval Shipbuilding Projects.
- . 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 consent on 17 July 2025 under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (SA).
- . Ground improvement works for the Skills and Training Academy Campus, delivered by ANI's Civil Earthworks Contractor, McMahons Services Australia, were successfully completed in 2025.

**Australian Government****Australian Submarine Agency**

PDR No: SB26-000248

Budget Estimates June 2026

Last updated: 18 May 2026

Key witnesses: Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Dave Johnson

- As at 1 April 2026, approximately 900 piles have been driven onsite, with all pile casting works completed by late March 2026.
- From mid-April 2026, pouring of concrete floor slabs will commence and the erection of structural steel and precast walls for the Trade Halls, Learning and Teaching facilities will progressively follow the completion of the substructural works.

SSN-AUKUS Design

- Early design work commenced in 2021 on the UK's next generation submarine, 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.
- 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. Australian personnel continue to take part in design reviews, including those design review activities currently underway in the UK.
 - 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 in South Australia.
- The schedule for the design of SSN-AUKUS is focused on major manufacturing work starting towards the end of this decade with the first UK-built SSN-AUKUS boat due to be delivered in the late 2030s and Australia's in the early 2040s.
 - 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
24 March 2026	The Minister for Defence and Albanese Government launched the \$15.8 million Propel: Australian Submarine Scholarship program to offer up to 3,000 scholarships in priority STEM fields, supporting nuclear-powered submarine workforce under AUKUS.
24 February 2026	The Minister for Defence and Industry announced a \$310 million payment for the acquisition of long-lead items from the United Kingdom to support Australia's future sovereign conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability.
22 February 2026	Minister for Defence and Industry announced the arrival of UK submarine HMS Anson at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia to commence maintenance, nuclear stewardship trials, and unscrewed underwater vehicle tests for AUKUS Pillar I.
21 February 2026	Minister for Defence Industry announced his travel to the United Kingdom to visit SSN-AUKUS sites, engage industry partners, and attend the Australia-UK Defence Industry Dialogue for nuclear workforce and supply chain development.
15 February 2026	The Prime Minister announced the Government will invest \$3.9 billion as a down payment to deliver the new Submarine Construction Yard in Osborne.

Media

- On 22 February 2026, [ASA News](#) published '*AUKUS enters new era with the arrival of UK submarine in Western Australia*' covering HMS Anson's arrival at Stirling as a milestone for trilateral cooperation and Submarine Rotational Force-West readiness.
- On 15 February 2026, [ABC News](#) published '*Down payment towards \$30b Adelaide submarine shipyard*' reporting Prime Minister Albanese's announcement of a \$3.9 billion federal 'down payment' toward a \$30 billion Nuclear Powered Submarine Construction Yard at Osborne, including fabrication facilities and a skills academy for SSN-AUKUS builds.



Division: SSN-AUKUS	
PDR No: SB26-000248	
Prepared by: Hugh Passmore Assistant Director-General SSN-AUKUS Program Integration Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 02 April 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Dave Johnson Deputy Director-General Nuclear Submarines Delivery Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 18 May 2026
Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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Budget Estimates

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Tim Hodgson, Deputy Director-General Technical

Belinda McNamara, Head Stewardship

Key Messages

- The Government's commitment to the highest levels of nuclear stewardship continues to be reflected in the steady maturation of Emergency Preparedness and Response arrangements, with a particular focus on protecting the health and safety of people and the environment.
- In partnership with the state governments, emergency and health services, existing radiological response plans are being reviewed to ensure they remain robust, interoperable and fit-for-purpose for conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines.
- The Australian Submarine Agency's Emergency Preparedness and Response effort is currently prioritising targeted capability uplift at HMAS *Stirling*. This aligns with Initial Operating Support for Submarine Rotational Force – West, with planning and implementation activities progressing as scheduled.

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 nuclear powered submarines and radiological facilities 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.

Actions undertaken to date in Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning (EPR)

- HMAS *Stirling* has standing emergency preparedness and response capabilities appropriate for the current operational tempo and requirements of that base.
- The commencement of a rotational presence of US and UK nuclear-powered submarines offers an opportunity for Australia to build its EPR capability in anticipation



of operating and maintaining our own conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines.

- We are working closely with trilateral partners and Defence support services to develop an EPR capability appropriate for supporting nuclear-powered submarines and our radiological control capabilities at HMAS *Stirling*.
- Five EPR Planner positions have been established at HMAS *Stirling* to develop on site procedures and conduct training for the Nuclear Emergency Response Organisation (NERO).
- Functional requirements for EPR have been developed and endorsed, including uplift to firefighting and paramedical services at HMAS *Stirling*.
- The construction of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Complex (EPRC) at HMAS *Stirling* commenced as part of the priority works program. The EPRC will support an enhanced base emergency service to meet SRF-West requirements and contain a purpose built Emergency Control Centre (ECC) as well as housing the enhanced firefighting capability and the Australian Federal Police.

Division: Stewardship and Security	
PDR No: SB26-000249	
Prepared by: Commodore Sean Bowers Assistant Director-General Stewardship Enablers, Stewardship Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 31 March 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Belinda McNamara Head Stewardship Division Mob: s47E(c) Ph: s47E(c) Date: 9 April 2026
Consultation: N/A	
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 14 April 2026	
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Budget Estimates

SECURITY

Lead: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN, Director-General ASA

Supporting: Tim Hodgson, Deputy Director-General Technical

Belinda McNamara, Head Stewardship Division

Key Messages

- The Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program is underpinned by a strong commitment to security to protect critical systems, infrastructure, personnel and sensitive information.
- Nuclear-powered submarines and their associated technologies require enhanced security controls, above those already applied to defence industry and the naval shipbuilding and sustainment enterprise.
- The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that critical United States and United Kingdom information and technology is protected from compromise.
- There is no singular fixed set of security requirements for the protection of nuclear-powered submarines. A layered approach ensures protective security is optimised for our challenging threat environment.
- There are enhanced personnel security requirements for those accessing sensitive Program information or technologies – these requirements align with Australia's domestic security requirements, partner expectations and treaty obligations.

Talking Points

- ASA maintains strong protections for sensitive military technology and information, consistent with long-standing national security arrangements.
- The sensitivity of the nuclear-powered submarine capability necessitates the application of and assured adherence to relevant security standards across all aspects of the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program.
- Australia is making a range of security uplift investments – to secure our people, places and information to ensure the uncompromised delivery of a nuclear-powered submarine capability.

ASA Security Settings

- As a non-corporate Commonwealth entity within the Defence Portfolio, the ASA adheres to the Protective Security Policy Framework, and the Defence Security Principles Framework.
- All security incident reporting received by the ASA is managed and protected in accordance with the requirements of the Defence Security Principles Framework and the Australian Privacy Principles.
- Due to security and privacy reasons, ASA cannot comment on specific security investigations or actions.



Personnel Security Requirements

- Robust personnel security is an essential pre-requisite to the uncompromised delivery of a nuclear-powered submarine capability.
 - Individuals working for, or with, the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Enterprise are entrusted with privileged access to sensitive Enterprise resources including people, information, places and assets.
- The 2025 AUKUS Agreement for cooperation on naval nuclear propulsion (known as ANNPA) obliges Australia to ensure that Nuclear-Powered Submarine Enterprise personnel, including relevant industry personnel meet pre-determined eligibility, security clearance and suitability requirements.
 - These requirements apply regardless of whether personnel hold dual citizenships or are solely Australian citizens and are in line with Australia's current security policy settings
 - The process of applying these requirements may include assessments of linkages back to foreign countries.
- The ASA does not disclose specific information on screening processes, including refusal or denial rates, to avoid undermining the integrity and effectiveness of these processes.

Online disclosure of ASA employment

- In line with the Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework Direction 003-2025, on 15 December 2025, the ASA Chief Security Officer re-affirmed the direction that ASA personnel, including contractors, not disclose their security clearance online.
- The ASA is aware that hostile intelligence services use online platforms such as LinkedIn to target personnel in sensitive programs such as the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Enterprise.
 - In accordance with the PSPF Directive the ASA is developing policy to establish mandatory requirements for managing security risks online; including disclosure of security clearance information and indicators of access to classified information and resources.

Media

- On 16 November 2025, the [Australian](#) reported that around one in 10 applicants to the AUKUS nuclear submarine project were being rejected on security grounds.



Australian Government
Australian Submarine Agency

PDR No: SB26-000250
Budget Estimates June 2026
Last updated: 18 May 2026

Key witnesses: VADM Jonathan Mead AO RAN and Tim Hodgson

Division: Stewardship	
PDR No: SB26-000250	
Prepared by: Joe Gyngell A/ADG Enterprise Security Stewardship Division Ph: s47E(c) Date: 18 May 2026	Cleared by Division Head: Kim Arthur A/Head Stewardship Division Ph: s47E(c) Mob: s47E(c) Date: 18 May 2026
Cleared by Director-General: VADM Jonathan Mead Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Date: 21 May 2026	
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