

AUKUS: Trilateral security partnership

A step-change in our approach in regional security

'AUKUS' is an enhanced trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. AUKUS is based on our enduring ideals and a shared commitment of our three countries to a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

AUKUS will deepen diplomatic, security and defence cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States with a focus on joint capabilities and interoperability - initially focusing on cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and additional undersea capabilities.

For Australia, AUKUS is a step-change that will complement our efforts to build a network of international partnerships—such as with ASEAN, our Pacific family, Five Eyes partners and like-minded partners in the region, like the Quad.



Change in our strategic environment

The *2020 Defence Strategic Update* noted the strategic environment has deteriorated more rapidly than anticipated. The Indo-Pacific is now at the centre of strategic competition. We are seeing technological disruption and military modernisation occurring at an unprecedented rate.

This is a pivotal moment for Australia to become a more capable power in the 21st century, in line with our commitment to a global rules-based order. Through AUKUS, we will strengthen our ability to support shared security and defence interests. AUKUS will also foster deeper integration of defence-related science, technology, industrial bases and supply chains. It will enable us to deepen cooperation on a range of security and defence capabilities.

Nuclear-powered submarines

The first major initiative under AUKUS is a trilateral program to support Australia in acquiring at least eight nuclear-powered submarines for operation by the Royal Australian Navy. A submarine capability is essential to safeguard our maritime approaches, sea-lines of communication and to support a range of strategic effects that contribute to our national security.

Nuclear-powered submarines have superior characteristics of stealth, speed, manoeuvrability, survivability, and almost limitless endurance, when compared to conventional submarines. They can operate in contested areas with a lower risk of detection and deter actions against Australia's interests.

This is about nuclear-powered submarines. The Government has no intention to acquire nuclear weapons. Australia will remain a non-nuclear weapons state and will continue to meet its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other relevant agreements, including with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Government intends to build Australia's nuclear-powered submarine fleet in South Australia, and we will actively work with industry to maximise Australian industry opportunities in this endeavour.