

## **Australian Government Brochures**

2021-2022

The Australian Department of Defence published three two-page glossary papers on AUKUS as part of its public communications efforts.

**AUKUS: Trilateral Security Partnership** – Explains that AUKUS is a partnership aimed at deepening defence capability and technology cooperation between the three countries. It explains the strategic context and highlights the first major initiative for nuclear-powered submarines.

**Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information** – Explains the specific agreement on naval nuclear propulsion and reaffirms the obligations of AUKUS partners under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

**Nuclear Stewardship and Non-Proliferation** – Explains Australia's policy and the AUKUS commitment to abide by the NPT.



Australian Government  
Department of Defence

# AUKUS: TRILATERAL SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

## A STEP-CHANGE IN OUR APPROACH TO 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 is deepening defence capability and technological cooperation between Australia, the UK and the US. Through our AUKUS partnership Australia will acquire conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines at the earliest possible date, while upholding the highest non-proliferation standards. AUKUS will also develop and provide joint advanced military capabilities to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

For Australia, AUKUS is a step-change that complements 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 had deteriorated more rapidly than anticipated. The Indo-Pacific is now at the centre of strategic competition. Technological disruption and military modernisation is 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 are strengthening 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.

## 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. Australia has no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons and will remain a non-nuclear weapons state. Australia 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.





# EXCHANGE OF NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION INFORMATION

## DEEPENING TRILATERAL COOPERATION



The Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (the Agreement) enables the United Kingdom and the United States to transfer naval nuclear propulsion information to Australia. This information is critical for determining the optimal pathway to deliver a nuclear-powered submarine capability for Australia, the first initiative of the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS).

The Agreement supports the current 18-month consultation period as Australia, the UK and the US examine the full suite of requirements that underpin the delivery of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia.

Australia can leverage decades of technology, capability and design expertise from the UK and the US. The Agreement also provides a mechanism to enable Australian personnel to access invaluable training and education from their UK and US counterparts, necessary for learning how to safely and effectively operate nuclear-powered submarines.



## WHAT DOES THIS AGREEMENT COVER?



The Agreement relates only to the sharing of information related to naval nuclear propulsion. Australia is not seeking nuclear weapons and the Agreement does not allow for the sharing of any information related to nuclear weapons.

Importantly, the Agreement reaffirms the respective obligations of the AUKUS partners under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Agreement includes obligations regarding the secure and safe handling, storage and sharing of information, as is usual for information-sharing agreements between States.

The Agreement is not a new defence alliance.





# NUCLEAR STEWARDSHIP AND NON-PROLIFERATION

**RESPONSIBLE NUCLEAR STEWARDSHIP IS FUNDAMENTAL TO AUSTRALIA  
OPERATING AND SUSTAINING NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES**

## NUCLEAR STEWARDSHIP



‘Stewardship’ refers to the responsible planning, operation, application and management of nuclear material, technology and facilities. Australia will be an effective steward by implementing international best practice controls and meeting the highest levels of safety, security and environmental protections.

The United States and United Kingdom are outstanding stewards of nuclear propulsion technology, with exemplary safety records. Australia is leveraging this experience to implement international best practice controls and meet the highest levels of safety, security and environmental protections.

Australia is not seeking nuclear weapons and remains a non-nuclear weapon state committed to its obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The NPT provides enduring security benefits to all states by preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and committing nuclear weapon states to work towards disarmament.





## NON-PROLIFERATION

The NPT does not prohibit naval nuclear propulsion and Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines is in line with our long-standing commitment to the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is charged with the verification of States' commitments under the NPT and related agreements. Australia, UK and US have informed the IAEA of their plans and will continue to engage with the IAEA throughout the examination of the full suite of requirements that underpin nuclear stewardship.

Australia is committed to upholding the highest possible standards for safeguards, transparency and verification, to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear material.

Our record on nuclear non-proliferation is exemplary and we stand by our non-proliferation obligations and commitments.

### **Australia will not:**

- acquire nuclear weapons or have nuclear weapons on the submarines
- undertake uranium enrichment or reprocessing
- be required to refuel the submarines during their lifetime
- undertake uranium enrichment or reprocessing in support of this initiative.

### **Australia will:**

- maintain its exemplary nuclear non-proliferation credentials and continue to meet its international obligations, including under the NPT
- implement the highest possible standards to maintain the strength of the nuclear non-proliferation regime
- continue its longstanding history of safety and regulatory capability
- engage regularly with international and national nuclear regulators.



For more info: [www.defence.gov.au/NPSTF](http://www.defence.gov.au/NPSTF)