



# HMAS Stirling welcomes USS North Carolina

4 AUGUST 2023



1 of 4 Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead AO, RAN watches United States Navy Virginia-class submarine USS North

The USS North Carolina Virginia-class submarine and crew were welcomed to HMAS Stirling, Western Australia, by Director-General Australian Submarine Agency Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead on 4 August 2023.

The USS North Carolina is the first Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarine (SSN) to visit Australia since the Pathway for Australia to acquire SSNs was announced in March this year.

VADM Mead said increased port visits from our AUKUS partners, following by the Submarine Rotational Force – West initiative, play a crucial role in ensuring Australia is sovereign ready for our own conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines in the early 2030s.

“Through increased UK and US port visits and the Submarine Rotational Force –West initiative, Australia will progressively develop the skills, knowledge and expertise to operate, maintain and steward nuclear-powered submarines,” VADM Mead said.

“Australia is leveraging the more than 70 years’ of naval nuclear propulsion experience of our AUKUS partners as we become sovereign ready to take ownership of our own Virginia-class submarines from the early 2030s.”

Commanding Officer USS North Carolina Commander Tad Robbins said he valued the opportunity to strengthen the alliance.

"It's an exciting time for our sailors to work alongside each other to not only ensure the Indo-Pacific region remains open and free, but to also build personal connections," Commander Robbins said.

UK Royal Navy Director Submarines Rear Admiral Simon Asquith, joined his colleagues in Australia and said the visit was a sign of things to come.

"This visit demonstrates the remarkable progress being made by our three nations to develop Australia's own SSN capability," Rear Admiral Asquith said.

"The Royal Navy looks forward to conducting similar visits in support of training of Australian personnel to safely operate nuclear submarine technology."

## Details

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Australian Submarine Agency acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to traditional lands and waters and would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

