

Press release

UK and Australia celebrate closer ties with AUKUS progress and new defence treaty

UK and Australia ties are stronger than ever following a successful defence and foreign policy summit in Canberra.

From: [Ministry of Defence \(/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence\)](#), [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office \(/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office\)](#), [The Rt Hon Lord Cameron \(/government/people/david-cameron\)](#), and [The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP \(/government/people/grant-shapps\)](#)

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AUKMIN Ministerial Meeting. Credit: Australian Department of Defence

- UK and Australian Foreign and Defence Ministers met in Adelaide to discuss shared security issues
- new Defence and Security Cooperation Agreement signed, laying foundations for even closer collaboration and making Australia one of the UK's closest partners
- meeting comes as Australia appoint UK firm BAE Systems as a partner to build AUKUS submarines

UK and Australia ties are stronger than ever following a successful defence and foreign policy summit in Canberra, attended by the Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary.

Over 2 days of meetings and engagements with their counterparts which take place annually – dubbed AUKMIN – David Cameron and Grant Shapps discussed shared priorities, challenges and cooperation on issues including Ukraine, the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific.

Meeting in Canberra on Thursday, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps and Australia Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles setting out closer collaboration including science and technology, information exchange and working together to maintain an open and stable Indo-Pacific.

The agreement will also make it easier for our forces to operate in each other's nations, facilitating current activity like Operation Interflex and future deployments including the Navy's Carrier Strike Group in 2025, and the RAF's Exercise Pitch Black this summer.

Foreign Secretary David Cameron said:

“ We are facing a daunting set of challenges in a dangerous and uncertain world. That is why cementing our relationship with friends such as Australia is so important.

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“ Our strong ties give us a platform to come even closer together in defence of our values. Our work in Australia has reaffirmed to me that close cooperation between our nations is the best way to face up to global threats.”

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said:

“ Our international partnerships and friendships with likeminded nations such as Australia are more important than ever in an increasingly dangerous and contested world.

“ Through our joint support to Ukraine, AUKUS partnership and Armed Forces exercises, our is a relationship that is proving the value of cooperation in delivering security and prosperity.”

During a day of meetings on shared priorities and challenges, the UK and Australia’s continued commitment to Ukraine was on the agenda, with UK and Australian troops working together to train over 35,000 Ukrainian recruits in the UK to date. Grant Shapps welcomed Australia’s £25 million contribution to the [UK-administered International Fund for Ukraine](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/international-fund-for-ukraine-ifu) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/international-fund-for-ukraine-ifu>) which seeks to provide Ukraine with the capabilities they need, procuring direct from industry, and announced a new package of multipurpose drones and air defence capability that will be delivered to Ukraine in the coming months through the fund.

The £60 million package will be rapidly procured in the coming months in a further boost for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. £40 million will be spent on more than 150 surveillance drones, and a further £20 million will be spent on additional air defence systems, including radars to detect incoming missiles and drones targeted at Ukraine’s cities and military positions, as well as mobile workshops to help quickly repair equipment near the frontline.

The package will be procured from industry using supply chains already providing capability for Ukraine, including from leading manufacturers such as British company Malloy Aeronautics and Tekever, and demonstrates the continued commitment from nations around the world – including the UK and Australia – to support Ukraine.

Ahead of the meetings, the Foreign Secretary and Foreign Minister Wong signed a memorandum of understanding to tackle gender-based violence in the Pacific, a region in which rates of this crime are among the highest in the world.

Discussions went beyond ensuring regional and global security to advancing prosperity. The Foreign Secretary continued to drive forward plans to ratify the [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership \(CPTPP\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-uks-accession-to-the-comprehensive-and-progressive-agreement-for-trans-pacific-partnership-cptpp) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-uks-accession-to-the-comprehensive-and-progressive-agreement-for-trans-pacific-partnership-cptpp>). The Indo-Pacific is set to account for half of global growth by 2050 and the UK is actively pushing to enhance our economic engagement and promote prosperity in the region.

The Foreign Secretary also met with Australian business leaders to highlight the importance of Australian capital to the UK economy and encouraged investors to diversify and support energy transition and HM Government’s key priorities. This engagement with both the Australian and Indo-Pacific economies brings benefits to Britons and Australians alike, creating jobs and growth in both countries. Meanwhile, the Defence Secretary met with defence industry leaders to discuss cooperation.

All 4 ministers visited Osborne shipyard on Friday morning, where BAE Systems are constructing Hunter ships, based on the UK’s Type 26 design, in another win for UK defence industry. Australia is also investing in Rolls-Royce, Derby, where the nuclear propulsion plants will be manufactured. The [AUKUS programme, first announced in 2021](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-us-and-australia-launch-new-security-partnership) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-us-and-australia-launch-new-security-partnership>), will support over 21,000 jobs in the UK at its peak – concentrated in Barrow-in-Furness and Derby.

View the [Australia-UK 2024 ministerial consultations joint statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-statement-australia-uk-ministerial-consultations-aukmin-22-march-2024) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-statement-australia-uk-ministerial-consultations-aukmin-22-march-2024>)

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