

Example of Form Letter 1

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Good morning,

I make these submissions with a deep sense of concern for the future of our nation and its standing on the global stage. The proposal for AUKUS 2.0 has sparked significant debate across Australia, and it is imperative that we critically assess its implications, both for our country and the wider international community. This is not a moment for Australia to celebrate a potentially hazardous shift in defence policy. Instead, we must approach this proposal with the seriousness it demands, recognising that the decisions made now will have long-lasting consequences. The introduction of nuclear-powered submarines and the associated military commitments under AUKUS 2.0 are not developments that align with the values of peace, diplomacy, and environmental stewardship that Australia has historically championed. As we navigate this complex issue, it is crucial to consider the broader impact on our international obligations, regional stability, economic wellbeing, and environmental responsibilities. These submissions aim to highlight the profound disadvantages of AUKUS 2.0, urging careful consideration and public accountability before proceeding with a decision of such magnitude.

****SUBMISSIONS ON AUKUS 2.0****

****1. Violation of International Treaties****

- ****Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT):**** The AUKUS 2.0 arrangement carries significant risks of undermining Australia's obligations under the NPT. The provision of nuclear-powered submarines to a non-nuclear-weapon state could set a dangerous precedent, encouraging other nations to pursue similar capabilities. Such a development could weaken the NPT framework, which has been crucial in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and promoting disarmament on a global scale.

- ****South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga):**** The introduction of nuclear-powered vessels in Australian waters under AUKUS 2.0 may conflict with the intent, if not the letter, of the Treaty of Rarotonga. The perceived nuclear deterrence these submarines represent could strain Australia's diplomatic relations with Pacific Island nations, which have long upheld a commitment to a nuclear-free region.

****2. Regional Destabilisation****

- ****Arms Race and Military Escalation:**** AUKUS 2.0 has the potential to trigger an arms race in the Indo-Pacific, as neighbouring countries may perceive the deal as a strategic threat, prompting them to enhance their own military capabilities. This could lead to increased militarisation across the region, raising the likelihood of conflict and undermining regional security and stability.

- ****Undermining ASEAN Centrality:**** The emphasis on military alliances and nuclear-powered assets within AUKUS 2.0 could marginalise ASEAN's role in maintaining regional security. ASEAN's longstanding commitment to a peaceful and rules-based order might be compromised,

weakening the region's collective security framework and encouraging divisions among member states.

****3. Economic Consequences****

- ****Diverting Resources from Essential Services:**** The significant financial commitments required by AUKUS 2.0 risk diverting crucial public funds away from key areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. In the context of ongoing post-pandemic recovery, where investment in social services is critical, this reallocation could impose further strain on Australia's economy.

- ****Impact on Trade Relations:**** The AUKUS 2.0 deal could adversely affect Australia's trade relationships, particularly with China, which has already expressed concerns over the agreement. Any economic retaliation or reduction in trade could have serious ramifications for Australia's economy, given China's status as a major trading partner.

****4. Environmental Concerns****

- ****Nuclear Waste Management:**** The deployment of nuclear-powered submarines introduces complex environmental challenges, particularly concerning the management and disposal of nuclear waste. Australia's limited experience and infrastructure for handling nuclear materials heighten the risk of environmental mishaps, with potentially severe consequences for public health and ecosystems.

- ****Impact on Marine Ecosystems:**** The operation of nuclear-powered submarines in Australian waters presents risks to marine environments, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas like the Great Barrier Reef. The possibility of accidents or radioactive leaks could pose significant threats to marine biodiversity, undermining Australia's environmental stewardship.

****5. Public and Political Backlash****

- ****Erosion of Public Trust:**** The opacity and lack of public consultation surrounding AUKUS 2.0 could lead to a significant erosion of public trust in government decision-making. The perception that such a critical shift in defence policy was made without adequate public involvement may generate widespread opposition and potentially influence future electoral outcomes.

- ****Political Polarisation:**** The AUKUS 2.0 agreement risks deepening political divides within Australia. Critics argue that the deal compromises national sovereignty and unduly aligns Australia with the United States, potentially at the expense of other strategic alliances. This polarisation could impede the development of a unified and coherent national defence strategy.

Kind Regards,

Victoria Liang

