

## **Example of Form Letter 2**

This example form letter was submitted by the following submitters:

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Dear Joint Standing Committee on Treaties,

As an Australian citizen and voter, I welcome this opportunity to express my concerns about the AUKUS plan for Australia to acquire eight nuclear-powered submarines to be built locally in partnership with the United States and the United Kingdom.

I am appalled by the terms of what has already become known as a 'monumental folly'. In particular:

- Making such a significant decision and investment via a deeply flawed process with minimal public input, and its subsequent recommendation of deeply flawed outcomes as a result (a few nuclear submarines delivered over forty years would pose genuine capability gap issues even if such a small fleet had any hope of offering protection or 'detering from a distance' over such a vast coastline).
- Funding \$368 billion for a handful of subs by redirecting resources from already-struggling schools, hospitals and climate action campaigns during a national housing and cost-of-living crisis (after already wasting money billions abandoning an agreement for arguably far cheaper, more suitable and deliverable submarines from France). The size of this investment would also make it nearly impossible for Australia to acquire alternative defence capabilities in the likely event a significant national security crisis arises in the interim.
- Expert's concerns about the reliability, deliverability or strategic relevance of nuclear-powered submarines, including Professor Hugh White, who notes that 'long delays and cost overruns are certain' and 'outright failure is a real possibility.'
- Provision for the US or the UK to pull out of the submarine deal with just a year's notice if either nation decides the deal weakens their own nuclear submarine programs (without Australia's \$5 billion investment being refunded).
- Australia agreeing to foot the bill for any loss or injury caused by sensitive technology and radioactive materials transferred by the United States and United Kingdom for nuclear submarines, including paying damages to the US and UK for any 'nuclear risks'.
- AUKUS further complicating Australia's relationship with China, our major trading partner.
- Deliberately 'welding Australia's military to the United States' eroding our sovereignty and capacity to act independently, and increasing the likelihood of Australia being drawn into future conflicts, including sending Australians to fight in wars that have no obvious strategic relevance to our country.
- The operation of US and UK nuclear-powered submarines from the Garden Island naval base just off the coast of Fremantle making Western Australia a nuclear target.

Former Prime Minister Paul Keating calls it 'the worst deal in all history.'

Former Foreign Minister Gareth Evans recently noted that 'Australia's no-holds-barred embrace of AUKUS is more likely than not to prove one of the worst defence and foreign policy decisions our country has made not only putting at profound risk our sovereign independence but generating more risk than reward for the very national security it promises to protect.'

And Professor Mark Beeson wrote for The Conversation this week: 'It beggars belief that a country with unparalleled geographical advantages and no obvious enemies thinks it is a good idea to spend \$368 billion on offensive military capabilities which may or may not work or be delivered.'

AUKUS will cost Australian taxpayers billions to make us less safe. We need to make better decisions about national security: decisions that centre diplomacy in the first instance (on which there is always more return on investment than defence systems - most of which are never used). And we need to make better-informed decisions about the defence capabilities we do invest in and use - rather than throw money away on deals Australians can only lose.

I absolutely do not support this and will not be voting for labor at the next election should this go ahead.

