

What do you think this Agreement will mean for Australia's relationship with the International Atomic Energy Agency?

Australia maintains regular and transparent engagement with the IAEA on all relevant aspects of Australia's naval nuclear propulsion program, and the Agreement provides further opportunity for this engagement. This is reinforced by the IAEA Director General's statement on 15 August 2024, that noted that the Agreement reiterated the ongoing commitment of AUKUS partners to set the highest non-proliferation standard in Australia's acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

The Agreement reaffirms AUKUS partners' commitment to ensuring that the IAEA can continue to meet its technical safeguards objectives. Under the Agreement, the UK and the US cannot transfer any nuclear material to Australia prior to Australia having in place an Article 14 Arrangement with the IAEA under Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. Bilateral negotiations between Australia and the IAEA on the Article 14 Arrangement commenced in May 2023 and are ongoing.

The Agreement allows the US and UK to intervene in Australia's relations with the International Atomic Energy Agency. What is your understanding of how that will work?

The Agreement does not provide a mechanism for either the US or the UK to 'intervene in Australia's relations with the IAEA'. Ongoing negotiations between Australia and the IAEA on an Article 14 Arrangement are on a bilateral, confidential basis. However, as stated in the Agreement, Australia and its AUKUS partners are working in close consultation to ensure that Australia's Article 14 Arrangement will fulfil our shared commitment to set the highest non-proliferation standard while protecting sensitive and classified information.