

Australian Government Response to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Report on the Defence Legislation Amendment (Naval Nuclear Propulsion) Bill 2023

July 2023

Introduction

On 10 May 2023, the Defence Legislation Amendment (Naval Nuclear Propulsion) Bill 2023 (the Bill) was introduced into the House of Representatives by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP.

On 11 May 2023, the Senate referred the provisions of the Bill to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee (the Committee) for inquiry and report by 9 June 2023. The Committee published 117 submissions, including those made by the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and ARPANSA.

The Bill was passed by Parliament on 22 June 2023 and received Royal Assent on 3 July 2023 as the *Defence Legislation Amendment (Naval Nuclear Propulsion) Act 2023*.

Australian Government Response to the Report

The Australian Government thanks the Committee for its work. The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation that the Bill be passed without delay, which subsequently occurred on 22 June 2023.

Response to additional comments by Coalition Senators

The Government welcomes the bipartisan support from Coalition Senators in relation to the passage of the Bill, but does not support lifting the moratorium on civil nuclear power. The removal of prohibitions on the use of nuclear energy is not necessary to support Australia's acquisition of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

Response to the Dissenting Report by the Australian Greens

The Government does not agree with the Australian Greens' Dissenting Report and notes that accepting high level radioactive waste from other countries is not under consideration as part of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program. No decision has been made regarding Australia joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) but the Government shares the Treaty's ambition of a world without nuclear weapons.

Contributing Departments and Agencies to the Government Response

Australian Submarine Agency

Department of Defence

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade