



## WA Quarterly Update

### March 2025

Welcome to the second edition of the WA Quarterly Update. The first edition is available at our website: [www.asa.gov.au/aukus/wa-quarterly-update-december-2024](http://www.asa.gov.au/aukus/wa-quarterly-update-december-2024)  
The Australian Submarine Agency is committed to informing our community in Western Australia about our progress towards delivering the AUKUS Optimal Pathway. To read more about our Agency, please visit our website at [www.asa.gov.au](http://www.asa.gov.au) or send your questions by email to [communityengagementasa@defence.gov.au](mailto:communityengagementasa@defence.gov.au)



Rear Admiral Tom Phillips RAN  
Head of Nuclear Submarine Capability

### Leadership Forging Ahead

A changing of the guard at the Australian Submarine Agency welcomed Rear Admiral Tom Phillips as its new Head of Nuclear Submarine Capability in December 2024. Originally from Brisbane, Tom has served in the Royal Australian Navy for 35 years, including a posting to the United Kingdom with the Royal Navy, with qualifications in oceanography and project management. Rear Admiral Phillips thanked his predecessor, Rear Admiral Matthew Buckley – who is now serving as Deputy Chief of Navy. “The Australian Submarine Agency recently celebrated the two-year anniversary since the launch of the AUKUS Optimal Pathway on 14 March, 2023, and is grateful to Rear Admiral Buckley for his years of service since the Agency’s beginning. The Australian Submarine Agency is proud of the progress that was achieved under the guidance of Rear Admiral Buckley and is keen to pursue ambitious plans for the future.” He will make his first visit to Western Australia in the coming weeks in his new capacity.



Rear Admiral Matthew Buckley AM, CSC, RAN  
Deputy Chief of Navy

### Women at the Bridge - USS *Minnesota* Docks at Fleet Base West for Training and Maintenance

US Virginia class submarine, USS *Minnesota* (SSN 783) arrived at HMAS *Stirling* on 25 February 2025 for a routine port visit. While in the West, the submarine – including a crew of seven women officers including Lieutenant Junior Grade Alexis (pictured below left) - participated in a US submarine command course, a training program for naval officers preparing to take command of a submarine. This visit is the first of several planned US SSN submarine port visits to Australia in 2025. The Chief of the Royal Australian Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond, AO, RAN proudly welcomed USS *Minnesota* to Australia. “The Australian and US Navies operate on shared behaviours, shared values, and a shared commitment to assuring the prosperity and security of the Indo-Pacific region,” Vice Admiral Hammond said. “This port visit follows the recent submarine tendered maintenance period at HMAS *Stirling*, which was the first time Australians directly participated in the maintenance of a US nuclear-powered submarine in Australia.” These visits help Australia and the US prepare for the start of Submarine Rotational-Force West (SRF-West) at HMAS *Stirling* from as early as 2027, during which one UK Astute class submarine and up to four US Virginia class submarines will have a rotational presence at the base. The start of SRF-West is part of the first phase in the AUKUS Pillar I program, ultimately resulting in Australia’s acquisition of a future fleet of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.



### Industry Engagement Seminar in Perth Attracts Strong Interest

A successful Industry Engagement Seminar was hosted in Perth in mid-February. The seminar aimed to provide WA industry with a deeper knowledge of the Defence Industry Vendor Qualification (DIVQ) Program, and current opportunities for businesses to enter the trilateral supply chain. With Western Australia at the forefront of the Optimal Pathway for Australia’s acquisition of a conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine (SSN) capability, a resilient and informed defence industry in WA is crucial to the program’s success. Commodore Fiona McNaught (pictured below) provided an update on SRF-West’s activities, followed by a panel discussion on the threat assessment and current security environment. The seminar allowed attendees to gain practical insights on how to become involved in the AUKUS program. An engaging and interactive question and answer session concluded with an opportunity to network with other professionals in the field. The seminar attracted an overwhelming response from WA industry, with close to 200 attendees, including chambers of commerce representatives who then shared their insights with hundreds more. You can register your interest to attend upcoming ASA industry engagement activities by providing your details to [ASA.industryevents@defence.gov.au](mailto:ASA.industryevents@defence.gov.au) In further strides across the industry space, the Government launched **Australia’s AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy** on 5 March 2025. The Strategy sets out the Government’s vision for the future of Australia’s submarine industrial base and articulates the uplift approach required as the program progresses.

The Strategy is available in full here: <https://www.asa.gov.au/business-industry>



### Register Your Business Now

The **Industry Capability Network (ICN)** allows businesses to stay connected with the ASA and be notified of opportunities. Please register and maintain your details with the Industry Portal.

Australian industry has opportunities to contribute right from the beginning, working with ASC Pty Ltd (ASC) as the Sovereign Submarine Partner for sustainment, as well as with the collaborative alliance and eventual Joint Venture between ASC and BAE Systems as the Sovereign Submarine Partner for the build of our SSN-AUKUS submarines.

For more information on employment and supply chain opportunities visit the ASA website at [www.asa.gov.au](http://www.asa.gov.au)



## Yarning with First Nations Defence Suppliers

On 12 February 2025, the Australian Submarine Agency's local WA representatives attended an exciting new initiative by the City of Cockburn – its first ever **Defence Supplier Yarn**. First Nations businesses joined forces with the defence sector to explore opportunities, share insights and build relationships. Brought to life through a partnership with Waalitj Foundation and the Henderson Alliance, the shared vision is to foster greater participation of First Nations businesses in defence industry. Deputy Mayor of Cockburn, Councillor Chontelle Stone (pictured left in the photo on the right) led the discussion supported by other senior leaders of First Nations communities, and later that month joined in First Nations outreach during the USS *Minnesota* visit to at Fleet Base West. These are tangible examples of the way in which the Agency is committed to meaningful engagement with First Nations, aligned with the Defence values of respect and integrity.



## AUKUS Young Leaders on Show

Rare insights were shared by young leaders and submariners of the three AUKUS partners recently at a youth outreach event organised by the Consulates General of the United States and United Kingdom with the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On Friday 28 February 2025, at "Inside AUKUS: Submariners' Perspectives and Experiences" students heard from (pictured left) Lieutenant Joseph of the Royal Australian Navy; Lieutenant Amelia of Royal Navy (UK), and Lieutenant Alison of US Navy, about life on board submarines, with all three in agreement on the challenges and rewards of their chosen professions.



From the Australian Submarine Agency, Ms Fiona McCaffrey (pictured right) inspired many as she spoke about the strategic rationale for AUKUS and the benefits for Australia and for all three AUKUS partners. The event was a joint initiative of the Consulates General of the US and UK with the Ben Franklin Club (USA) a network that brings together young people interested in foreign affairs, and The Westminster Bridge (UK) – a young leaders networking group for people aged 18-35 years. To find out more about these programs, and opportunities for young people, visit the websites of:

US Consulate General: <https://au.usembassy.gov/perth/>

UK Consulate General: <https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-consulate-perth>

Australian Submarine Agency: <https://www.asa.gov.au/jobs-careers/nuclear-graduate-program>

## Making Local Connections

From 20-22 February 2025, the Australian Submarine Agency and Royal Australian Navy's Submarine Recruiting team visited Cockburn Gateway Shopping Centre, where they engaged with hundreds of locals, answering their questions and providing information about how the community can get involved in the program. The team were visited by His Worship Logan K. Howlett, Mayor of Cockburn (pictured right) who showed his support. The sentiment expressed by visitors to the kiosk was overwhelmingly positive, with many of the City's young people (and their parents) enquiring about job opportunities and re-skilling, as well as opportunities for local business. Future engagements are planned for Melville, Fremantle and Mandurah.



## Navy Week Celebrations

The highlight of Navy Week (3-9 March 2025) celebrations this year in Western Australia was a family-friendly fun day hosted by the Royal Australian Navy at Cape Peron. The event was supported by the Australian Submarine Agency, among many other exhibitors, and visited by hundreds of locals including Her Worship Deb Hamblin, Mayor of Rockingham (pictured left). A fascinating array of displays were on show including tours of Fleet Base West, rescue vessels and torpedoes, 3-D and interactive virtual reality experiences, plus live music and food. On hand were Navy personnel from all three AUKUS nations, who shared with many curious youngsters what life is really like at sea, and no doubt inspired a future generation to pursue a life beneath (as well as above and beside) the waves and in support roles. The afternoon culminated in a fly-past in the skies overhead as a fitting crescendo to a great day enjoyed by all.

## Nuclear Graduate Program

Explore your potential and start a career of excellence with the Australian Submarine Agency's Nuclear Graduate Program. We seek high performing dedicated graduates who are resilient, adaptable, innovative and passionate about what they do.

Our Nuclear Graduate Program pathways offer graduates the opportunity to contribute to the Australian Submarine Agency and make unique and lasting impacts. Dive into your professional career!

**Apply now** and unlock a world of opportunities. Entries for this year's intake close in April 2025, with future rounds offered ongoing.

Visit our website for further information, including entry level requirements: [www.asa.gov.au/jobs-careers/nuclear-graduate-program](http://www.asa.gov.au/jobs-careers/nuclear-graduate-program)

## In the news

By The Hon Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Defence  
**Delivering a plan for continuous Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment in Australia**  
Published 20.12.2024. Full statement [here](#)  
**Supporting Australian Industry to join AUKUS submarine supply chains**  
Published 21.1.2025. Full statement [here](#)

**Delivering a New Defence TAFE Centre of Excellence**  
Published 29.1.2025. Full statement [here](#)  
**Australian defence industry reaping the benefits of AUKUS trade reforms**  
Published 10.2.2025. Full statement [here](#)

By The Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery  
**Building Australia's future STEM workforce**  
Published 18.2.2025. Full statement [here](#)  
**Australia's AUKUS Submarine Industry Strategy**  
Published 05.03.2025. Full statement [here](#)

**Australian Submarine Supplier Qualification Pilot Program**  
Published 06.03.2025. Full statement [here](#)

## In your community

The Australian Submarine Agency has permanent representatives in WA who engage directly with the community to provide timely and accurate information and updates on our progress and local opportunities.

Recently outreach was held at:

- Baldvis Shopping Centre (December 2024)
- Kwinana Market Place (January 2025)
- Cockburn Gateway Shopping Centre (Feb 2025)
- Cockburn Aboriginal Business Yarn (Feb 2025)

Future outreach is planned in Rockingham at the Defence Industry Forum in April, as well as in Mandurah, Fremantle, Melville and Kalgoorlie.

Do you have an event or activity for which you would like our support? Get in touch via email to: [communityengagementasa@defence.gov.au](mailto:communityengagementasa@defence.gov.au)