



https://www.actu.org.au/get-involved/retired_unionists_network

RETIRED UNIONISTS OPPOSE NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES

The ACTU Retired Unionists' Network (RUN) views with alarm the recent Morrison government decision to replace conventionally-powered submarines (from France) with nuclear-powered submarines (from the USA / UK).

We are especially concerned that USA / UK nuclear-powered submarines utilise HEU (highly enriched uranium), where U-235 is refined from its natural concentration (around 0.72%) to between 20% to 85%. This is far beyond the LEU (low enriched uranium) of 3% to 5% needed for nuclear reactors. Either outcome relies on the establishment of a domestic nuclear industry (where U-235 may be refined to either LEU or HEU levels) firstly to install the nuclear propulsion system in these submarines and later to maintain / repair this system . A key omission from the announcement was any plan for the safe storage of spent nuclear fuel rods from these submarines.

The union movement in Australia has long been opposed to a nuclear industry in all its forms and accordingly retired unionists have no hesitation in opposing it now. There is no guarantee that the USA / UK nuclear submarines will be available to Australia more quickly than the French conventional submarines and our vessels will be unable to visit NZ ports. All that this decision has achieved is to upset a loyal ally - France.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rodger Smith', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Rodger Smith
National Chair
ACTU Retired Unionists' Network

31 March 2022