

Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)

PO Box 573 Coorparoo Brisbane Qld Australia 4151

ipan.australia@gmail.com

www.ipan.org.au



IPAN's Vision: An Independent and Peaceful Australia

25 November 2021

**Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding the
'Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (ENNPPIA)'**

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE: US UK Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (ENNPPIA)

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) opposes this Agreement on the following grounds:

1. Such an important Agreement has been thrust on Parliament and the people of Australia with totally inadequate time for proper public and parliamentary consideration to be given to the implications of the Agreement. Four days to respond to such a critical agreement is an extremely inadequate response time.
2. Australian governments and people have for many years expressed ambitions for a world free of nuclear weapons. Adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has been seen by previous and current governments as a step towards such an ambition. However much the NPT has fallen short of such a goal, this Exchange Agreement takes us much further away from both these ambitions and from modern international standards, which has seen the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) become law in January 2021 making concrete the standard that nuclear weapons are illegal and illegitimate for all states. The best way for Australia to move forward in the direction of a world free of nuclear weapons would be signing and ratifying and then subsequently adhering to the TPNW. This Exchange Agreement would be completely at variance with the spirit of the TPNW.
3. This Exchange Agreement is a step towards locking in place the decision for Australia to acquire nuclear powered submarines when the government has advised that there will be an 18 month period to consider the way forward on new submarine acquisitions. This Agreement assumes that the decision has already been made, thus making the government's promise of an 18 month's period for substantial discussion to take place, an empty promise if not a duplicitous one.
4. Locking Australia into the acquisition of nuclear powered submarines raises an issue of great concern to IPAN, such as that alluded to in the Defence Brief Editorial of 22 November, 2021, of which the following is an extract:
"The agreement will also provide a mechanism for Australian personnel to access training and education from their UK and US counterparts, necessary for learning how to safely and effectively build, operate and support nuclear-powered submarines."

Building, operating and supporting (maintenance) of nuclear propelled submarines may lead to the establishment of a nuclear industry in Australia with the handling and danger issues associated with highly enriched, weapons-grade uranium and the disposal of associated radioactive waste. IPAN along with a large number of Australians oppose the development of a nuclear industry and nuclear reactors in Australia because of the dangers to the community which such an industry poses. These matters have not been discussed in the Australian community or Parliament before this Agreement was signed yet basic democratic principles demand that the opportunity to do so when there is such a large proportion of the community opposed to nuclearisation of Australia.

IPAN strongly supports keeping Australia nuclear free and indeed the Pacific area, of which we are a part, also nuclear-free.

5. Locking Australia into the acquisition of nuclear -powered attack class submarines will have serious implications for Australia's relations with its neighbours. Indonesia and Malaysia have already raised alarm bells about such acquisitions. Political commentators have warned that such a decision will stimulate an arms race involved nuclear powered submarines in our region, de-stabilising the region and it has certainly raised the ire of China our largest trading partner.

There is also a high level of community concern in relation to AUKUS, reflected in a national petition which received over 24,000 signatures - No Nuclear-Submarines; End U.S. dominance; Healthcare not warfare <https://www.change.org/p/the-australian-government-no-nuclear-submarines-end-u-s-dominance-healthcare-not-warfare>

IPAN urges that this Exchange Agreement not be ratified by Parliament and that the 18-month period for consideration of the path forward in submarine acquisition be honoured before any such Agreement is given consideration, to allow proper democratic debate in the public and parliamentary domains.

Thank you for considering the matters that we have raised in this submission.



Annette Brownlie
Chairperson IPAN
Chair IPAN
0431 597 256
ipan.australia@gmail.com