



Independent and Peaceful Australia Network Inc. (IPAN)

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Inquiry into the Department of Defence Annual Report 2024–25

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About IPAN

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) is a national grassroots network of community, faith and peace groups, trade unions, and concerned individuals aiming to build public dialogue and pressure for change to a truly independent foreign policy for Australia. IPAN's vision is an independent and peaceful Australia, free of foreign military bases and free of interventions by foreign governments, corporations, or vested interests that would diminish Australia's sovereignty.

Executive Summary

IPAN welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence's inquiry into the Department of Defence Annual Report 2024–25. This submission addresses the Committee's specific areas of focus, particularly the strategic and capability rationale for AUKUS Pillar 1, the delivery of AUKUS Pillar 2, and the uplift of the sovereign defence industry.

IPAN and many of its member organisations have been closely monitoring the developments related to the AUKUS nuclear submarine plan. IPAN has regularly contributed submissions to national inquiries and consultations related to peace, defence and foreign policy matters, in particular raising concerns around nuclear energy, nuclear waste and nuclear weapons in relation to the AUKUS pact.

IPAN asserts that the Department of Defence's current strategic trajectory, as reflected in the 2024–25 Annual Report and the AUKUS agreement, represents a profound vulnerability rather than a strength for Australia. We believe that the current approach compromises Australian sovereignty, risks entangling the nation in foreign conflicts, and diverts unprecedented resources away from the genuine security challenges of our time.

IPAN argues that true national security must be redefined around the principles of human security, common security, and a self-reliant, non-aligned foreign policy that prioritises diplomacy over militarisation and maximises regional cooperation directed at exclusion of militarising trends from our part of the Asia-Pacific region.

Background: Department of Defence Annual Report 2024–25 on AUKUS

The Department of Defence Annual Report 2024–25 lists seven Sovereign Defence Industrial Priorities (SDIPs) identified by the Department of Defence. They are the industrial capabilities Defence states it requires in Australia to support the deployment and sustainment of Defence capability as directed by the Government. [1]

1. Maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade of Australian Defence Force aircraft;
2. Continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment, including the capability and capacity to maintain, sustain and upgrade naval vessels and capabilities, including nuclear-powered submarines;

3. Sustainment and enhancement of the combined-arms land system, including an integrated amphibious-capable land system;
4. Domestic manufacture of guided weapons, explosive ordnance and munitions;
5. Development and integration of autonomous systems across physical and cyber-physical domains;
6. Integration and enhancement of battlespace awareness and management systems across air, maritime, land, space and cyber domains, and the electromagnetic spectrum; and
7. Test and evaluation, certification and systems assurance to establish that capabilities are safe and operationally viable.

The Annual Report 2024–25 also records AUKUS-related activity across Defence’s mission, outcome statements, key activities and the immediate priorities of the 2024 National Defence Strategy. Advancing Australia’s conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability is identified as one of the Strategy’s six immediate priorities. [1]

The Annual Report also records that implementation includes submarine infrastructure at Henderson, priority works at HMAS Stirling for Submarine Rotational Force–West, and AUKUS Pillar II work on autonomous systems, artificial intelligence and hypersonic technologies. Taken together, these matters show that AUKUS is being implemented across Defence policy, capability, industry, infrastructure and technology. [1]

IPAN submits that this direction raises substantial questions about Australian sovereignty, public accountability, environmental protection, regional stability and the development of advanced military capabilities.

1. Strategic and Capability Rationale for AUKUS Pillar 1

The strategic rationale offered by the Department of Defence for AUKUS Pillar 1—that nuclear-powered submarines are necessary to and will be effective in deterring adversaries and maintain regional stability is fundamentally flawed.

Increasing the Risk of Conflict

AUKUS locks Australia into a cycle of military build-up that increases the risk of catastrophic conflict. The rotational presence of US and UK nuclear-powered submarines at HMAS Stirling under Submarine Rotational Force – West (SRF-West) makes Australia a direct military target [2]. As former Foreign Affairs Minister Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC has stated, ‘Australia is spending an eye-watering amount to build a capability to defend us from a military threat which in fact is most likely to arise because we have that capability’ [3].

Naval nuclear reactors and radioactive waste facilities comprise legitimate targets in any serious conflict, inviting catastrophic radioactive pollution of the oceans and directly threatening Australian coastal communities [2].

The conflict in Ukraine has demonstrated the real-world danger of the weaponisation of nuclear facilities [4].

In addition, many of the Gulf countries have been targeted for hosting US military bases which has devastated their economies.

Alienation from Rising powers

Australia continues to align itself with a declining power in the Asia Pacific and globally which actually alienates us from the rising powers, which is another point of vulnerability in the Government’s current strategy.

Loss of Sovereign Independence

The AUKUS arrangements reinforce Australia’s subservience to the USA and the UK. By integrating Australian defence forces for ‘interoperability’ in US-led offensive operations, Australia forsakes its independence and increases its exposure to great-power conflict, particularly with China, our largest trading partner.

As Major General Michael G Smith AO (Ret'd) has noted, 'AUKUS represents the worst defence decision since we relied on Britain to protect us in World War II' [3].

The US policy of 'neither confirm nor deny' regarding the presence of nuclear weapons on its military assets means that Australian officials cannot confirm or deny whether US military vessels in Australian territory carry nuclear weapons [5]. This cedes sovereign control over what enters Australian territory and creates profound unease among Pacific and ASEAN neighbours, which only serves to destabilise the region.

Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction

It is critical to recognise and name nuclear weapons as weapons of mass destruction, designed for destruction of cities and populations; much has been made in the past of the evils of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) yet now Australia is allowing the potential for their deployment through and from Australian lands and waters.

The Nuclear Waste Crisis

A critical failure of the AUKUS Pillar 1 rationale is the absence of any viable plan for the long-term management of nuclear waste. No country in the world has an operating repository for high-level nuclear waste [6].

The countries most advanced in addressing this challenge — Finland and Sweden — illustrate just how intractable the problem remains. Finland's nuclear waste management program was initiated in 1983, and forty-one years later the Finnish radioactive waste management company Posiva Oy has only recently applied for an operating licence for its used fuel encapsulation and final disposal facility [7].

In Sweden, the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company (SKB) was established following the Waste Legislation (Stipulation Act) in 1977 and, forty-seven years later, hopes merely to commence a ten-year construction phase for a deep underground repository in the mid-2020s [8].

All other countries operating nuclear power plants, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and South Korea, have not even established a site for a high-level nuclear waste repository, let alone commenced construction or demonstrated safe operation over any length of time.

The failed attempt to establish a repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada stands as a cautionary example: it was abandoned in 2009 after more than twenty years of work and well over A\$10 billion expended, and was mired in controversy including the falsification of safety data in relation to groundwater modelling [9].

The one operating deep underground repository for nuclear waste — the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico, which accepts long-lived intermediate-level waste rather than high-level waste — provides little reassurance. On 14 February 2014, a chemical explosion ruptured a barrel stored underground, followed by a failure of the filtration system, exposing twenty-two workers to radiation. WIPP was closed for three years. Direct and indirect costs associated with the accident are estimated at over US\$2 billion (A\$3.1 billion) [10]. A US government investigation attributed the accident to the operator and regulator's 'failure to fully understand, characterise, and control the radiological hazard ... compounded by degradation of key safety management programs and safety culture' [10]. A safety analysis conducted before WIPP opened had predicted that one radiation release accident might occur every 200,000 years [10].

Under Article IV(D) of the AUKUS Naval Nuclear Propulsion Agreement, Australia is responsible for the management, disposition, storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste resulting from the operation of naval nuclear propulsion plants transferred under the Agreement, including waste generated through submarine operations, maintenance, decommissioning and disposal [11]. This obligation falls upon a country that has repeatedly failed to establish even a national repository for low-level waste.

Section 8A of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024 prevents the regulator from licensing the storage or disposal in Australia of spent nuclear fuel that is not from an Australian submarine. The provision does not expressly prohibit the management, storage or disposal of other radioactive components from United Kingdom or United States submarines. It therefore does not explicitly preclude the possibility that highly radioactive non-fuel components, such as used reactor components, could be managed in Australia. [12]

Since the 1990s, successive federal governments have tried and failed to impose radioactive waste facilities on unwilling communities in South Australia (Woomera, 1998–2004), the Northern Territory (Muckaty, 2005–2014), South Australia again (Flinders Ranges, 2016–19), and South Australia yet again (Kimba, 2017–23) [13]. As former federal Resources Minister Matt Canavan acknowledged in 2019:

'We have been trying for 40 years to find a long-term repository for radioactive waste that is produced at Lucas Heights and some legacy waste we have from other activities. If we can't find a permanent home for low-level radioactive waste associated with nuclear medicines, we've got a pretty big challenge dealing with the high-level waste that would be produced by any energy facilities.' [14]

Former Liberal Party Senator Nick Minchin has made a similar observation:

'My experience with dealing with just low-level radioactive waste from our research reactor tells me it would be impossible to get any sort of consensus in this country around the management of the high level waste a nuclear reactor would produce.' [15]

IPAN is also concerned about the Federal Government's intention to store low-level nuclear waste at HMAS Stirling and Osborne Naval Shipyard and its attempts to override State and Territory laws prohibiting nuclear waste storage, demonstrate a profound disregard for democratic processes and community safety [16].

The Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) and the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) have admitted that part of the low-level waste (LLW) at Stirling will require storage for up to 300 years; and that the Controlled Industrial Facility (CIF) only has a life span of max 50 years. The intention is 'to transfer it to a long-term facility' once established.

While the Government has maintained that the permanent facility for the high-enriched uranium (HEU)/high level waste and possibly the LLW and any intermediate level waste (ILW) won't be needed before 2050's, the critical issue is that a permanent facility has not yet been determined or at least publicly announced.

2. Delivery of and Opportunities for AUKUS Pillar 2

AUKUS Pillar 2 covers advanced capabilities including artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, quantum technologies, and cyber capabilities. IPAN contends that the delivery of these technological advancements should not be tethered to a military alliance that subordinates Australian foreign policy to US strategic objectives.

Australia possesses strong research institutions, universities, and industry partnerships capable of developing advanced technologies through civilian and multilateral frameworks. Investment in these sectors through independent research programs, partnerships with ASEAN and Pacific nations, and engagement with multilateral technology governance bodies deliver technological advancement without the strategic costs of AUKUS.

The billions currently committed to AUKUS Pillar 2 could instead fund sovereign Australian research and development capacity that serves Australia's own national interests, rather than functioning as a subsidiary research arm for foreign defence industries.

AUKUS also poses limitations on a well established foreign student input into research and development, and as highlighted by Wanning Sun and others the broader security environment and China-threat framing associated with AUKUS and related policy settings are affecting research collaboration and researcher mobility, contributing to an exodus back to China and other foreign universities. Professor Sun has previously stated that "the brain drain is happening right now", though the scale of the brain drain was not quantified.[28]

The wider securitisation of Australia–China relations also affects the research ecosystem on which Australian innovation has long relied. Professors Wanning Sun and James Laurenceson report that research-security settings can discourage China-linked grant applications, co-authorship and academic visits. They also report

that visa delays can prevent well-qualified Chinese PhD candidates from joining Australian research teams, and that some elite researchers, including Australian Research Council-funded Laureate Professors, have left Australian institutions for positions in mainland China, Hong Kong and Europe.[29]

3. Uplift of Sovereign Defence Industry

The Department of Defence frequently cites the “uplift of sovereign defence industry” as a primary benefit of AUKUS and current procurement strategies. However, IPAN submits that the current approach achieves the opposite: it deepens Australia’s reliance on foreign defence corporations and drains resources from genuine sovereign capabilities.

The Illusion of Sovereignty

The Parliamentary Budget Office now estimates that the AUKUS Pillar I submarine pathway will cost up to \$375 billion over approximately 30 years. The estimate includes submarine acquisition and construction, Australian workforce and industrial development, infrastructure in South Australia and Western Australia, operations, sustainment, weapons and a 50 per cent contingency. [30] [31]

Australia has also committed to propping up US shipyards and Rolls Royce’s production of naval nuclear reactors in the UK to the non-refundable tune of approximately US\$3billion each [31]

It is intended that Australia will operate its own submarines. However, the pathway depends on United States and United Kingdom decisions and capacity: the transfer of Virginia-class submarines, reactor supply, technology access, specialist maintenance arrangements and approved supply chains. This limits Australia’s independence in procurement, nuclear technology, operations and sustainment.

Workforce and Opportunity Costs

The workforce opportunity cost of the current defence industry strategy is acute. Diverting skilled workers to defence represents a critical misallocation of human capital when Australia faces severe labour shortages in sectors essential to genuine security and prosperity, such as housing construction, healthcare, aged care, and renewable energy industries [19]. The pursuit of a nuclear-capable workforce under AUKUS risks slowing Australia’s transition to renewable energy at a critical time.

4. Uncrewed and Autonomous Systems & Hypersonic Propulsion

The Department of Defence’s focus on the development of uncrewed and autonomous systems, as well as hypersonic propulsion systems, reflects a concerning trend toward the rapid militarisation of emerging technologies without adequate ethical, legal, or strategic debate.

IPAN urges the Joint Committee to consider the destabilising effects of these technologies. The proliferation of autonomous weapons systems and hypersonic missiles compresses decision-making timeframes in crisis scenarios, increasing the risk of accidental escalation and conflict. Australia should be leading international diplomatic efforts to regulate and restrict the deployment of lethal autonomous weapons and hypersonic glide vehicles, rather than accelerating an arms race in our region.

5. Environmental reporting

5.1 Non-compliance with a statutory content requirement

Section 516A of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) requires that the annual report of every Commonwealth entity (Department of Defence included) contain five things, namely [20]:

- (a) a report on how the entity’s activities, and its administration of legislation, accorded with the principles of ecologically sustainable development;

- (b) how the outcomes specified for it in an Appropriations Act contribute to ecologically sustainable development;
- (c) documentation of the effect of its activities on the environment;
- (d) the measures it is taking to minimise that impact; and
- (e) the mechanisms for reviewing and increasing the effectiveness of those measures.

‘Activities’ is defined to include ‘developing and implementing policies, plans, programs and legislation’ and ‘the operations of a department’ [20].

The Parliament, in 1999, legislated an annual answer to a structural question: ‘Does the whole of what Defence does - its programs, its posture, its operations - accord with ecologically sustainable development?’

The Annual Report 2024–25 does not contain the words ‘ecologically sustainable development.’ It does not contain a reference to section 516A. Chapter 8 (‘Environmental performance’) names every reporting framework it answers to - the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, the APS Net Zero Emissions Reporting Framework, the National Waste Policy Action Plan, the Commonwealth climate risk program - except the one Parliament put in the EPBC Act.

This is not a claim that Defence publishes nothing about the environment. Chapter 8 contains real material, including an emissions inventory totalling 2,130,846 tonnes CO₂-e; waste and remediation data; and a substantial account of mitigation programs. Measured against the five statutory paragraphs, that content substantially answers paragraph (d), partially answers paragraph (c) and paragraph (e), and does not answer paragraphs (a) and (b) at all.

The environmental effects of operations - the exercises, training and platforms that are the point of the Department - are almost wholly undocumented. The Report describes a water quality monitoring program at 89 locations designed ‘to detect whether current or historical Defence activities may negatively impact the environment,’ but reports none of its results.

What is included, actually appears in the wrong place. Section 17AH(2) of the PGPA Rule requires information mandated by another Act to appear in appendices to the annual report [21]. The 2024–25 Report has no environmental appendix, and its compliance index does not specify where the section 516A material sits.

5.2 Auditing AUKUS

This section addresses the second term of reference: the strategic and capability rationale for AUKUS Pillar I. Defence’s 2024–25 Annual Report identifies one action referred to the Environment Minister under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act): priority infrastructure works for Submarine Rotational Force–West, approved on 27 May 2025 [1].

On the face of the Annual Report, this referral is the only disclosed environmental-law action connected with an AUKUS Pillar I facility during 2024–25. The Report provides no corresponding environmental account of testing infrastructure, autonomous-systems programs or wider capability expansion within the Committee’s areas of inquiry. This is a material gap in the public account of AUKUS-related activity. Term of reference (c), read with the statutory definition of ‘activities’, makes those matters directly relevant to the Committee’s examination; the submission should cite the precise provision on which it relies.

One significant example is the Controlled Industrial Facility (CIF) proposed at HMAS Stirling, Garden Island. The Australian Submarine Agency states that the CIF will provide radiological repair and waste-management functions, including the acceptance, categorisation, treatment, packaging and temporary storage of low-level radioactive waste from submarine operations. The Agency states that there will be no disposal of low-level radioactive waste at HMAS Stirling. Waste will be stored temporarily at the CIF before disposal at an authorised national waste-management repository. [32]

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency describes the CIF as a facility for low-level radiological waste management and maintenance support to Submarine Rotational Force–West. It states that the CIF will not be permitted to accept or manage intermediate-level radioactive waste, high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel. [33] [34]

Although the Controlled Industrial Facility forms part of the Submarine Rotational Force–West project and will manage low-level radioactive waste, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act decision did not identify the project as a “nuclear action” under section 21. The controlling provisions identified in the decision were listed threatened species and communities, and Commonwealth action. The project was therefore assessed without the Act’s separate nuclear-action trigger. [36]

IPAN contends that the exclusion of the Controlled Industrial Facility from the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act’s nuclear-action trigger is contested. The EPBC decision nevertheless identified listed threatened species and communities, and Commonwealth action, as the controlling provisions. [36]

Evidence from Ms Mia Pepper of the Conservation Council of Western Australia to the AUKUS public inquiry at the Fremantle hearing [24] indicates that the CIF should not be considered in isolation from the broader development of HMAS Stirling. The evidence also contends that the staged ARPANSA process addressed the siting and construction of the CIF, rather than its future operation and acceptance of radioactive waste, and involved limited published material and opportunities for public participation.

The same evidence states that the Commonwealth environmental referral for port and site works did not include the nuclear components of the proposal, while a referral to the WA Environmental Protection Authority did not proceed on jurisdictional grounds.

The likely scale and character of radioactive waste that could arise if the [Defence] Precinct becomes an onshore dry-dock maintenance hub for nuclear-powered submarines remain unclear, including whether future waste streams may require more substantial long-term management.

Taken together, these matters point to the need for a full cumulative-impact assessment of the interrelated developments at HMAS Stirling and Henderson, including radioactive-waste management, nuclear-support activities, port and dry-dock infrastructure, and effects on surrounding communities and waters.

5.3 Defence used to do its reporting better

The Australian National Audit Office audited section 516A reporting quality across the Commonwealth in 2002–03 (Audit Report No. 41). Defence was one of the four best-performing agencies - in an audit that noted Defence alone accounted for almost half of total Commonwealth energy use [22].

As late as 2013–14, the Defence Annual Report carried a dedicated appendix that named section 516A in its first sentence, tracked the statutory paragraphs as headings, and reported the environmental dimension of operations - the Afghanistan redeployment, Exercise Talisman Sabre, and the EPBC assessment of F-35 flying operations by environmental impact statement [23].

The practice then died in stages.

The 2014–15 report kept the compliance-index row naming section 516A but stripped the section of any statutory identification; from 2015–16 the citation vanished altogether; and from 2020–21 to 2024–25 - five consecutive annual reports - the words ‘ecologically sustainable development’ do not appear at all [23].

This is not part of a whole-of-government drift which Defence merely followed. Other departments still publish section 516A reports naming the section [25] [26]. It is of concern that the Department of Defence is an outlier. The Commonwealth’s largest environmental footprint, holding over three million hectares, is the reporter that stopped.

5.4 The missing ‘limbs’ matter

Paragraphs (a) and (b) are not paperwork. They are where Parliament located scrutiny of the structural environmental consequences of defence policy: whether the programs and posture Defence is implementing (and the tens of billions appropriated to its outcomes each year) accord with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Among these is the principle of inter-generational equity: that the present generation maintain or enhance the health, diversity and productivity of the environment for the benefit of future generations [27].

The environmental effects of operations, exercises, training and platforms are not separately or comprehensively documented. While the Report’s own words note that scope 1 emissions rise and fall with ‘the conduct and scale of military exercises’ [1], it fails to assess the broader, localized ecological impacts of these activities. The strategic build-up described in sections 1–4 of this submission is precisely the kind of long-lived, resource-intensive, environmentally consequential program the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles exist to test.

The Committee need not adopt IPAN’s assessment of that build-up to insist that Defence answer the statutory question. For ten years, Parliament has not been given the analysis its own Act requires.

5.5 The Auditor-General is the named remedy

The note to section 516A(6) states: “The Auditor-General Act 1997 lets the Auditor-General audit a reporter’s compliance with these requirements” [20]. The ANAO has audited this once - 23 years ago. Its central finding, that agencies were ‘yet to come to terms with the broader implications of ESD,’ describes the current Annual Report exactly [22]. A five-item statutory checklist, a documented fourteen-year compliance record, and a named statutory auditor make this the rare finding a committee can act on cheaply and verifiably. The compliance question resolves every year, against the same test, from the face of the tabled report.

6. Alternative Approaches to National Security

IPAN advocates for a comprehensive alternative defence and security policy based on the following principles:

- **A Self-Reliant, Non-Offensive Defence Posture:** Australia needs a defence force capable of defending our territory and maritime approaches, not one designed for interoperability in US-led offensive operations [35].
- **Prioritising Diplomacy and Conflict Prevention:** In 1996–97, defence spending stood at approximately \$20 billion against \$3 billion on diplomacy. By 2022–23, defence spending had risen to approximately \$50 billion while diplomacy stagnated at around \$5 billion [19].
- **Institutionalising Peace:** IPAN supports structural reforms including expanding the Minister for International Development role to include Peacebuilding, and increasing resourcing for conflict prevention.

The hundreds of billions committed to AUKUS could instead fund both a comprehensive diplomatic and peace-building program plus many elements of a non-nuclear defence capability that does not risk a regional arms race or make Australia a target.”

IPAN’s Self-Defence Policy Summary

IPAN advocates for a self-reliant Australian defence strategy focused on territorial defence, independence from foreign military influence, and prioritizing peace and diplomacy. IPAN’s [Alternative Self-Defence Policy](#) emphasises that Australia’s security should be based on its own sovereign decisions, rather than obligations to foreign powers or alliances such as the US.

IPAN calls for a self-reliant defence force centred on safeguarding Australian territory and its approach waters. Central to this would be retaining Australia’s capacity to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping and

humanitarian operations. This approach is intended to safeguard national sovereignty while promoting regional and global peace.

IPAN is critical of Australia's reliance on the US, noting that alliances can be unreliable and may pressure Australia into military spending or conflicts that do not align with national interests. We argue that true independence is not measured by military expenditure but by the ability to make autonomous decisions in foreign and defence policy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The strategic trajectory outlined in the Department of Defence Annual Report 2024–25, driven by the AUKUS agreement, is financially irresponsible, environmentally dangerous, and strategically flawed. IPAN recommends to the Joint Committee:

1. A critical reassessment of the strategic rationale for AUKUS Pillar 1, acknowledging that it decreases rather than enhances Australian security.
2. Immediate suspension of the AUKUS nuclear submarine program pending a comprehensive, independent Parliamentary inquiry into the entire agreement.
3. Redirection of funding from AUKUS Pillar 2 toward, university and civilian-led research and development in advanced technologies.
4. Reorientation of defence industry policy away from subsidising foreign Military Industrial Complex (MIC) contractors and toward building genuine, self-reliant capabilities for territorial defence.
5. A significant reallocation of resources from military procurement to diplomatic engagement, conflict prevention, and addressing urgent domestic crises in housing, healthcare, and climate change.
6. That the Committee note that the Department of Defence Annual Report 2024–25 does not comply with section 516A(6) of the EPBC Act, and seek an explanation from the Department for the discontinuation of its former reporting practice.
7. That the Committee recommend Defence restore, from the 2025–26 report, a dedicated appendix in the form required by section 7AH(2) of the PGPA Rule, with sections tracking each of the paragraphs 516A(6)(a)–(e), including documentation of the environmental effects of operations, exercises and capability programs, and publication of the results of its environmental monitoring programs. [20] [21]
8. That the Committee recommend the Auditor-General consider a performance audit of compliance with section 516A across the Defence portfolio, updating ANAO Audit Report No. 41 of 2002–03. [22]

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