

YM23 Share and Tell Report

Name of Session:	QPLC - Exploring AUKUS
Date/Time	Wednesday 5 July, 2023, 11:45am- 1:15pm AEST
Person submitting report	Margaret Clark
Clerk/Convenor/Facilitator/s	Harold Wilkinson
Summary (400 words or less)	<p>Thirty-four people attended this session (including the Elder, zoom host, five committee members and the Silver Wattle Hub). The session commenced with a presentation, followed by small group discussion and a Q&A period. The group reached agreement of a draft public statement to go onto the YM website for comment before going to a formal session for consideration. The session was recorded and will be available on the Australia Quaker website.</p> <p>Allan Behm, Director, International & Security Affairs Program, The Australia Institute was the guest speaker and covered six key areas of concern:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The secrecy and lack of consultation among Parliamentarians, let alone a national conversation around the decision to join AUKUS, is an <u>attack on democracy</u> and sign of creeping autocracy.2. There are many <u>risks</u> in the operationalizing of AUKUS. The technological, engineering and integration risks are greater than anything undertaken by Australia. The financial risks for something that is effectively already obsolete are significant. The strategic risks in acquiring apex killer submarines, rather than investing in deep diplomacy, to combat a perceived threat by China is not in Australia's or the region's interests. The capability risk is significant, as the proposed submarines leave large heat and noise signatures which are detectable in Australia's shallow waters.3. The <u>costs</u> of building, operating and maintaining the military hardware and crew training are only going to increase, diminishing funds for other domestic and regional needs.4. <u>Australia's sovereignty is in jeopardy</u>. These submarines are intended to attack adversaries of the US and the UK – not necessarily our adversaries. Our sovereignty must be aimed at Australia's interests, not those of other governments.5. <u>Nuclear waste</u> is already an issue in Australia for which no satisfactory long-term solution has been found.6. <u>Our Pacific neighbours</u> think that we've entered into an agreement which is offensive to the peaceful priorities of the region. <p>Allan encouraged people to get active however they can – lobby the federal government, talk with politicians, join protests – raise your voice loudly. 'The peace movement can really do something about this.'</p> <p>QPLC is releasing a relevant Action Alert following YM23.</p>

