



20 June 2024

Dear federal representatives

AUSTRALIAN NAVAL NUCLEAR POWER SAFETY BILL –
REQUEST TO ENSURE NON-ACCEPTANCE OF HIGH-LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE

Quakers Australia write regarding the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Bill. We are concerned about the fundamental nature of this legislation and believe it would be prudent to ensure all handling of nuclear waste to be managed by either a better resourced civil regulator or, at least, a regulator with comparable transparency, reporting and public access standards to the existing civil regime.

Notwithstanding this larger concern, we particularly ask you to support the recommendation by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee inquiry to ensure that a distinction is made between Australia's acceptance of low-level nuclear waste from AUKUS partners, but non-acceptance of high-level nuclear waste.

The Bill in its current form would allow for the possible management and hosting of foreign origin military radioactive waste, particularly high-level waste, in Australia. We urge you to amend the Bill to preclude any such possibility - now and into the future.

Australian Quakers have much broader concerns regarding the defence policies developed as part of the AUKUS agreements. We have been deeply disappointed about the lack of public consultation before adopting such a significant policy. Money spent on the AUKUS agreement could be better spent on responding to major global threats such as climate change, as well as domestic issues such as the housing crisis, and improving health, aged care and education services. The AUKUS initiative is unhelpful to good relations with our Pacific neighbours. We believe the purpose of the AUKUS agreement is too closely linked to US global military strategy, limiting our sovereignty, and reducing our capacity for independent approaches to resolving conflict. The trend towards greater war preparation is of great concern, with insufficient emphasis to continue building multilateral relationships for non-military initiatives to prevent war.

Quakers have a strong tradition of opposing war and seeking to remove its causes. We will continue to work for non-violent approaches to conflict including through dialogue, people-to-people exchanges on language and culture. War should be avoided at all costs. We reaffirm commitment to the United Nations system and its many conventions and treaties.

Yours sincerely

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Henry", with a horizontal line underneath.

Bruce Henry
Presiding Clerk
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia