

**Statement to the 2024 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee
July 23rd 2024**

Delivered by: Thomas Huckans, Youth Activist from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF) and its youth initiative, Reverse The Trend (RTT), USA on behalf of 125 endorsing groups.

Coordinated by: The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Australia.

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Honourable Chair and Distinguished Delegates,

We gather today in uncertain and dangerous times. All nine nuclear-armed states are investing in modernising their arsenals, none are winding back policies for their use. The number of available deployed nuclear weapons is increasing. We do not have the luxuries of time or inaction.

Against this background where the proliferation of nuclear weapons is an ongoing concern, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America continue to further develop AUKUS, an expanded trilateral security partnership between these three governments.

AUKUS has two pillars. Pillar One was first announced in September 2021 and relates to information, training and technologies being shared by the US and UK to Australia to deliver eight nuclear-powered submarines to Australia. Vessels which, if they eventuate, will utilise significant quantities of highly enriched uranium (HEU). It also allows Australia to purchase existing US nuclear submarines. Currently, Australia is committing billions of dollars to both US and UK submarine industry facilities as part of the AUKUS agreement, potentially enabling the further development of nuclear-armed capability in these programs.

Distinguished delegates, two years ago, during the 2022 NPT Review Conference, many governments expressed concern that the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal would undermine the NPT, increase regional tensions, lead to proliferation, and threaten nuclear accidents in the ocean. There remains an urgent need to critique the nuclear proliferation risks posed by AUKUS.

The Australian decision to enter into agreements around nuclear-powered submarines was made on the assumption that it would be permitted to divert nuclear material for a non-prescribed military purpose, by utilising Paragraph 14 of the IAEA's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA). The 'loophole' of Paragraph 14 potentially allows non-nuclear-armed states to acquire nuclear material, which would be removed from IAEA safeguards.

Australia's proposed acquisition of large quantities of HEU outside of usual IAEA safeguards and scrutiny jeopardises non-proliferation efforts and fissile material security. This conference has the mandate to prepare recommendations for the upcoming Review Conference to strengthen rather than weaken the global non-proliferation regime by moving to close the

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Paragraph 14 loophole. States represented here today should negotiate the closure of the Paragraph 14 loophole in the NPT.

To eliminate the risk of non-nuclear weapons states acquiring nuclear weapons grade HEU, all states, including AUKUS members, should refrain from sharing the technology and materials that will be transferred if Australia and others acquire nuclear-powered submarines. The paragraph 14 loophole undermines the NPT and needs to be closed.

Pillar Two of AUKUS plans to enhance the joint capabilities and interoperability between the partners, and may draw in other countries to AUKUS. This move is vastly out of step with a strong sense of Pacific regionalism and the long-standing commitment to a nuclear free Pacific. The South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga) is being put under strain by AUKUS, and the related agreement to deploy US nuclear-capable B-52 bombers to Australia poses an extraordinary threat to the Treaty's integrity. It is of grave concern that currently Japan, Canada and New Zealand are actively considering their engagement with AUKUS Pillar 2.

We are concerned that the AUKUS trilateral partnership, and any further expansions will exacerbate regional tensions, fuel an arms race and increase risks of war in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly involving China and the United States, and will increase the danger of nuclear escalation in any such conflict.

Within Australia, First Nations communities have expressed deep concern about the imposition of new military and radioactive waste facilities on their lands. First Nations and broader communities across Australia and throughout the Pacific have noted that AUKUS is part of a rapid militarisation of the region, and raises the ever-present threat of nuclear conflict. Recognising the disproportionate impacts of previous nuclear activities on First Nations or Indigenous Peoples, and the on-going legacies of nuclear weapons testing and activities in the region, there is deep concern for what AUKUS will mean for sovereignty of Small Island States and its impacts on Indigenous lands and Peoples.

Distinguished delegates, the fuel for HEU naval propulsion reactors is weapons-grade, and the spent fuel is weapons-usable. HEU is the most suitable material for ready and rapid conversion into a nuclear bomb. While removing HEU from a submarine would not be an easy process, the possibility of diverting such material for weapons purposes cannot be ruled out. Meaningful safeguards are extremely limited when the material is on a stealth platform that can disappear for 6 months at a time.

With the entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), there is a mandate to strengthen existing non-proliferation mechanisms. By joining the TPNW, governments can legally confirm that they will not acquire or host nuclear weapons, nor assist with their use or threat of use. AUKUS members should make firm their commitments to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament by joining the TPNW as a matter of urgency.

Thank you.

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Endorsed by:

1. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
2. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Australia (Australia)
3. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, France (France)
4. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Norway (Norway)
5. LABRATS (United Kingdom)
6. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Aotearoa New Zealand (Aotearoa New Zealand)
7. Peace Movement Aotearoa (Aotearoa New Zealand)
8. Vrede vzw (Belgium)
9. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (International)
10. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Australia)
11. Peace Action Wisconsin (USA)
12. Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (Ireland)
13. PEOPLES FEDERATION FOR NATIONAL PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT (PEFENAP)
14. The Green Institute (Australia)
15. Independent & Peaceful Australia Network (Australia)
16. Friends of the Earth, Australia (Australia)
17. Stop AUKUS WA (Australia)
18. Nuclear Truth Project (USA/Australia)
19. Top End Peace Alliance (Australia)
20. AidWatch (Australia)
21. Environment Victoria (Australia)
22. Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church (Australia)
23. The Human Survival Project (Australia)
24. People for Nuclear Disarmament (Australia)
25. Fukushima Fallout Awareness Network (USA)
26. TerraBiome
27. Marshall Islands Students Association - Fiji
28. Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG)
29. CODEPINK
30. Beyond Nuclear International
31. Abolition 2000 Nuclear Risk Reduction Working Group
32. Fiji Women's Rights Movement
33. The Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD)
34. SEARCH Foundation (Australia)
35. Marrickville Peace Group (Australia)
36. Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition (Australia)
37. Climate Justice Union (Australia)
38. Justice and Peace Office, Sydney Archdiocese (Australia)
39. Queensland Conservation Council (Australia)
40. Wage Peace (Australia)
41. RightsNow Foundation (Pakistan)
42. Vikas Adhyayan Kendra (VAK) (India)

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43. Quakers Australia
44. CND Cymru
45. The Communist Party of Australia, CPA
46. Together Against Sizewell C (TASC) (United Kingdom)
47. Communist Party of Australia (Marxist–Leninist)
48. Australian Anti-AUKUS Coalition (AAAC)
49. Christians for Peace Newcastle (Australia)
50. HOPE Inc (Australia)
51. Hunter Peace Group (Australia)
52. The Pacific Conference of Churches
53. International Volunteers for Peace Australia.
54. Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
55. Alianza por el Desarme Nuclear (Spain)
56. Nuclear Free West Australia (Australia)
57. FundiPau (Foundation for Peace)(Spain)
58. Group of Scientists and Engineers for a Non Nuclear Future (Catalonia)
59. Peace Boat
60. Australian Nuclear Free Alliance (ANFA) (Australia)
61. Nuclear Hotseat Podcast
62. Shepparton Interfaith Network (Australia)
63. Youth Arts New York/Hibakusha Stories
64. International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)
65. Peace and Conflict Studies Institute Australia
66. Australian Education Union (AEU) Australia
67. Nillumbik Climate Action Team (Australia)
68. Conservation Council of WA (Australia)
69. JA! Justica Ambiental!, (Mozambique)
70. Urani? Naamik (Greenland)
71. NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark, (Denmark)
72. Lawyers for Peace (Australia)
73. Medact U.K
74. Marshallese Educational Initiative
75. World Without Wars and Violence, Greece.
76. UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities
77. New York Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons NYCAN
78. World BEYOND War
79. International Women's Development Agency (Australia)
80. Australian Graduate Women.
81. Reverse The Trend: Save Our People, Save Our Planet
82. Wollongong Against War and Nukes
83. Pax Christi International
84. Greens NSW (Australia)
85. Religions for Peace Australia (RfPA)
86. yDISARM (Aotearoa New Zealand)
87. Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)
88. Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (CNIC) (Japan)
89. Poros Muda untuk Aksi Bersama (POMANARA) (Indonesia)

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90. Red de Acción por los Derechos Ambientales (RADA) (Chile)
91. Kanaky-Aotearoa Solidarity (Aotearoa New Zealand)
92. Green Koroï Vanuatu (Vanuatu)
93. Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition (Vanuatu)
94. Vatu Mauri Consortium (Vanuatu)
95. Vanuatu Young Women for Change (Vanuatu)
96. Anne's Community Health School and Nursing Services (Vanuatu)
97. Global Climate Smart Food Security (Vanuatu)
98. Vanuatu National Farmers Association (Vanuatu)
99. Nakor Alam Youth Association (Vanuatu)
100. BlueDalian (China)
101. People's Climate Assembly (Australia)
102. Buddhist Council of NSW (Australia)
103. IPAN Geelong & Vic Southwest (Australia)
104. Institute of International Studies (IIS), Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia)
105. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US
106. Australian Conservation Foundation
107. UnionsNT (Australia)
108. Solidarity (Australia)
109. Youth for TPNW
110. Asia Pacific Network of Environmental Defenders (APNED)
111. Blue Mountains Peace Collective (Australia)
112. Quit Nukes (Australia)
113. Reverse The Trend (RTT) Pacific
114. San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace
115. Western States Legal Foundation (USA)
116. Alice Springs Peace Action (Australia)
117. Mobilise Against AUKUS and War (MAAW) (Australia)
118. Green Music Australia
119. Sydney Peace Foundation (Australia)
120. Bob Brown Foundation (Australia)
121. The Australia Institute (Australia)
122. Pax Christi Victoria (Australia)
123. Vote Earth Now (Australia)
124. Doctors for the Environment Australia (Australia)
125. Norwegian Physicians against Nuclear Weapons (Norway)

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