



# National Security Election Snapshot

## Defence

National security has been prominent in Australia's 2022 Federal Election campaign. This document is part of a series that intends to provide a snapshot of some priorities and targets from the different political parties in the lead-up to the election.

Many candidates and parties advocate a more capable and better-funded Australian Defence Force (ADF) to protect Australia's interests in a deteriorating security environment. Sovereign capabilities and a growing defence industry have become common themes. The two major parties, and some of the minor ones, support the AUKUS agreement for nuclear-powered submarines and advanced capabilities. There are some key points of distinction, however, in how best to strengthen Australia's defences. A major point of difference is the Greens' policy to reduce defence spending.

## The Australian Liberal and Australian National Party Coalition (the Coalition)

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 76 and Senate – 36

- **Raised** defence spending to slightly above 2% of Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This will amount to \$48 billion in 2022-23.
- **Established** the AUKUS agreement with the US and UK in September 2021, involving a commitment to develop a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines over the next two decades, and other strategically important technologies. The Coalition has announced further **plans** to expand the range of advanced military technologies under the pact to include hypersonic weapons.
- **Committed** to building a new submarine base on the east coast of Australia, location to be determined. [Note: Australia's existing submarine base is on the **west coast** at *HMAS Stirling*, near Rockingham, WA.]
- **Pledged** to increase the size of the ADF to almost 80,000 personnel by 2040, an increase of roughly 30%, at an estimated cost of \$38 billion.
- **Allocated** funds to upgrade Henderson in WA shipyards through construction of a new dock which could build bigger warships and service and maintain visiting US Navy ships. The upgrades would allow US and UK submarines to visit Australia on a more regular basis.
- **Plans** to make Australia a top 10 global arms exporter.
- \$9.9 billion investment over the next 10 years in "**REDSPICE**" – Resilience – Effects – Defence – Space – Intelligence – Cyber – Enablers – within the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD). This will result in 1,900 new positions within ASD over the decade.
- **Cancelled** the \$1.3 billion SkyGuardian armed drone program in the 2022 Federal Budget and redirected funding into the cybersecurity initiative Project **REDSPICE**.
- **Established** the Defence Space Command and committed \$7 billion over the current decade to further develop Australian capabilities in the space domain.

# The Australian Labor Party

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 68 and Senate – 26

- **Committed** to undertaking a Defence Force Posture Review to assess whether Australia’s future defence posture is aligned with its strategic requirements in the region and evaluate whether the ADF is fit for purpose.
- **Supportive** of increasing the size of the ADF, with 2% of GDP as a floor for defence spending. Acknowledges acquiring nuclear submarines will likely drive defence spending above 2% of GDP.
- **Prioritise** local defence manufacturing through the Defence Industry Development Strategy, primarily in **South Australia**, which has a significant existing defence industry.
- **Announced** the creation of an Advanced Strategic Research Agency (ASRA) at the Department of Defence to implement the AUKUS agreement. ASRA would fund research in future technologies for national security and increase technology sharing and development through the AUKUS partnership with UK and US counterparts in industry and the university sector.
- **Review** the future frigates project and explore whether naval power can be bolstered through upgraded weapons.
- Shadow Defence Minister Brendan O’Connor **advised** that Labor would consider reinstating the SkyGuardian armed drone program after its recent cancellation.
- **Committed** to establishing an Australia-Pacific Defence School to provide further defence and security training to the region.

# The Australian Greens Party

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 1 and Senate – 9

- **Would** revoke the AUKUS agreement
- **Reduce** defence spending to 1.5% of GDP by 2026 and reduce the size of the ADF to reallocate funds to social programs, such as housing.
- **Increase** oversight of defence procurement by establishing a Parliamentary Defence Office to provide independent advice to Members of Parliament.
- **Pass** ‘war powers’ legislation currently before the Senate to require Parliamentary approval for decisions that commit Australia to war. [Note: The decision to go to war is currently an executive decision-making power.]
- Drop the ambition for Australia to become a major global arms exporter.
- **Ban** military advertising and end proactive public recruitment advertising campaigns by the ADF, in particular those which target children and school leavers.

# Centre Alliance

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 1 and Senate – 1

- Would **re-distribute** defence’s procurement model to focus on local manufacturing to support South Australia’s significant defence industry.

# Katter’s Australia Party

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 1 and Senate – 0

- **Considers** acquiring nuclear submarines under AUKUS and missile investment important but insufficient and wants a defence focus on fuel security.
- **Supports** improvements to the ADF. This includes statements to the effect that Australia’s military needed “about 200,000 missiles” and that “every kid in Australia should have a rifle in the school armoury.”

## The United Australia Party

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 1 and Senate – 0

- [Supports](#) purchasing nuclear submarines from the United States under the AUKUS agreement. [Note: An AUKUS working group is currently engaged in an 18-month [consultation period](#) to determine the most effective method of achieving an Australian nuclear submarine fleet.]

## Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 0 and Senate – 2

- [Supports](#) the switch to nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS, labelling it as “common sense”.

## Jacque Lambie Network

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 0 and Senate – 1

- [Claims](#) that the announcement of a new submarine base on the east coast of Australia would do little to help Australia's struggling submarine program.

## Rex Patrick Team

Seats in Parliament (as of April 2022): House of Representatives – 0 and Senate – 1

- [Supports](#) an increase in ADF forces and developing a more resilient ADF.
- [Described](#) the government's plan to build a new submarine base at the three shortlisted locations as “pork barrelling”, due to identified [deficiencies](#) with some of the shortlisted bases.

**Disclaimer:** The information presented in this document is sourced from public and readily-available sources. The parties mentioned in this document are formally recognised Australian political parties, with an established voting history. Any contextual and explanatory information on policy stances has been researched by ANU National Security College staff.

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