Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Department of the House of Representatives
PO Box 6021, R1.109 Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: jsct@aph.gov.au

Dear Secretariat,

Please find below responses to several questions taken on notice as part of Ms Lucie Hannon's appearance before the Committee on 2 October 2025, in relation to the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Serco appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's consideration of the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

We recognise the importance of a coordinated national effort to build the skills, partnerships and industrial capacity required to deliver Australia's future submarine capability, and we thank the Committee for its work in advancing this objective.

1) **Ms Lisa Chesters MP (Chair) - Can you give us an insight into the roles that you think we don't have the skills domestically here in Australia to fulfil:**

As the Albanese Government has noted, the biggest challenge Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program faces right now is to develop the skills and workforce needed to build this sovereign capability here in Australia.
The most significant gaps are in highly specialised and regulated fields, where local experience is limited and, in some cases, not yet developed for military nuclear applications. These fields and roles include:

Nuclear engineering and stewardship – Australia has very limited national experience in naval nuclear propulsion and reactor safety.

Roles:
- Nuclear propulsion and systems engineers
- Reactor safety and radiological control technicians
- Nuclear regulators and licensing specialists

Submarine design and systems integration – We have an undersupply of submarine-qualified engineers and advanced trades.

Roles:
- Naval architects and systems engineers
- Platform integration specialists
- Nuclear-qualified welders and electrical fit-out technicians

Maintenance and sustainment – Our existing sustainment workforce (Collins Class) lacks nuclear credentials and exposure to naval reactor systems.

Roles:

- Nuclear-qualified maintainers and fitters
- Technical authority and certification specialists
- Reliability and maintenance planners

Integrated logistics and supply-chain management – We also have limited domestic experience managing nuclear-grade components and export-controlled materials.

Roles:

- Integrated logistics support (ILS) planners
- Supply-chain and quality assurance engineers
- Export-control and ITAR compliance officers

Regulatory, safety and cybersecurity frameworks – AUKUS will see an emerging need for governance, oversight, and secure systems expertise to meet allied standards.

Roles:

- Nuclear policy and safety-case specialists
- Governance and assurance advisors
- Cybersecurity and information-assurance engineers

2) **Mr Tony Zappia MP - Does Serco have a role in the construction of nuclear submarines in the UK? If so, what is that role?**

Serco does not currently have a role in the construction of nuclear submarines in the UK. In the UK, our role is focused on maritime support, in-service operations, and new vessel procurement for the Royal Navy. We provide an extensive range of maritime engineering, maintenance, logistics and in port services across HM Naval Bases including Portsmouth, Devonport and Faslane. This includes support to the Continuous at Sea Deterrent and the Royal Navy's nuclear submarine fleet.

3) **Mr Tony Zappia MP - Apart from training, do you see that Serco might have with respect to the AUKUS contract here in Australia? Would this be the case even if it were a different type of submarine.**

Under the AUKUS partnership, Serco's strengths would align most closely with the design, acquisition, integration, sustainment, and logistics activities required to establish and operate Australia's future nuclear-powered submarine capability. In particular, leveraging our global experience to help build and sustain submarines and the local sovereign workforce required.

Across allied programs, including all the U.S. Navy's submarines to include Virginia Class, Los Angeles Class, Ohio Class, SSGNs, District of Columbia class, and the UK Royal Navy's nuclear submarine fleet, Serco provides specialist expertise in program management, systems engineering, maintenance planning, supply-chain assurance, SUBSAFE, shipyard availabilities and repair, fleet operations, and technical authority certification – all of which are critical to safely delivering and sustaining a complex submarine enterprise and industrial base.

In the United States, Serco supports the design, acquisition, and sustainment of all U.S. Navy's submarine shipbuilding programs, systems, and weapons (torpedoes) including the Virginia Class nuclear-powered submarine program, with approximately 500 personnel embedded in key roles across NAVSEA, TEAM SUB, the US Naval shipyards, US Submarine Force, Pacific (SUBPAC), Maritime Industrial Base (MIB), and the Naval Undersea and Surface Warfare Centres.
These teams provide specialist expertise in program management, systems engineering, innovation, logistics, supplier development, training, advanced manufacturing, maintenance planning, workforce coaching, development, and training, shipyard process improvement and workforce development and training, and technical authority functions, ensuring the effective integration, sustainment, repair, and operations of nuclear submarine capabilities.

In Australia, Serco already delivers significant maritime capability in support of the Royal Australian Navy, managing and crewing around 270 assets across ports in Sydney, Jervis Bay, Darwin, Rockingham, and Hobart. This includes in-service maintenance, engineering, port services, logistics management and vessel procurement, as well as long-term support for Defence's auxiliary and training fleets.

These services draw on many of the same disciplines that would underpin successful submarine sustainment and operational readiness.

The skillset of Serco's highly trained and experienced workforce is diverse and transferable, and many of our capabilities are suited a supporting the acquisition and sustainment of a conventionally powered submarine fleet. Many of the skills required in engineering assurance, integrated logistics, maintenance planning, operations, training, sustainment, and safety governance remain consistent.