

## Australia's Labor, Coalition Push Toxic AUKUS Nuclear Waste Law Through

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*Labor and the Coalition teamed up on October 10 to push through another law to facilitate its controversial AUKUS nuclear submarine plan.*

NSW Green **Senator David Shoebridge** said the [Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Act 2024](#) will allow high-level naval nuclear waste to be dumped anywhere in Australia.

The law creates a new naval nuclear regulator, as part of the military agreement with Britain and the United States.

Initially, it allowed for all waste from British and US nuclear submarines to be dumped in Australia, but a public outcry led to Labor amending its bill to prevent the dumping of “spent nuclear fuel”.

However, it still allows the intermediate nuclear waste and other high-level nuclear waste from their nuclear submarines, Shoebridge said.

The Greens tried to move amendments to explicitly prevent this but the major parties voted them, and other amendments, down.

The bill creates two nuclear dump zones: one at Garden Island, off the coast of Western Australia and one at Port Adelaide. There has been no community consultation, and there is no local support.

It also allows nuclear dumps to be declared anywhere that defence minister Richard Marles decides, with no consultation or agreement from First Nations peoples.

“To be clear, exposure to even intermediate-level waste is lethal to humans, and the risk lasts for hundreds of years,” Shoebridge said.

[Australia has still not signed](#) on to the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)*, despite it being adopted policy, reiterated by Anthony Albanese in 2021 before he became Prime Minister.

**Melissa Parkes**, executive director of International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons said in February that there are “[no obstacles](#)” to Australia signing the *TPNW*. She said

“AUKUS does not conflict with TPNW — as long as nuclear-powered submarines never

carry weapons or contribute to the making of such weapons”.

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*Featured image: Prime Minister Anthony Albanese spruiking the AUKUS military alliance in 2023 in San Diego. Photo: Australian Submarine Agency*

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