

69th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference

Australia's national statement

**Delivered by H.E Ambassador Ian Biggs, Head of Delegation and Resident
Representative of Australia to the IAEA**

17 September 2025

President, it is a great privilege for me to address this General Conference today.

First, Australia congratulates the Republic of Maldives on becoming a member of the IAEA. This reflects the Agency's vital role as the international centre for cooperation in the nuclear field.

Australia recognises the **broader benefits that the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology** can provide to our communities, our nations, and our environment.

In Australia, nuclear science and technology underpins nuclear medicine and cancer care, health, food and environmental research, and to benefit and grow our industries.

Through Australia's nuclear agencies, we deploy our leading nuclear science and technology expertise and world-class nuclear science infrastructure to address global challenges. And we continue to provide significant in-kind support to the IAEA across the full remit of its activities, including through SAGSI and SAGNA.

We continue to partner with the Agency to support the continued expansion of nuclear science cooperation in our region, the Indo-Pacific, and beyond. So far this year Australia has convened nine IAEA training courses and meetings in support of Member States in our region, and expects to host over 30 scientific visitors and fellows in several Australian institutions by the end of 2025. Moreover, numerous Australian experts have contributed their expertise in over 50 IAEA technical meetings and events in Vienna and further afield.

We are proud to partner with the Agency to share our **world-class expertise in cancer care** through the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, newly designated as an IAEA Anchor Centre this week. It opens pathways for access to radiation medicine and training for Member States in our region. And it complements our commitment to facilitating regional access to our landmark nuclear science and research infrastructure through the longstanding IAEA-ANSTO Collaboration Centre partnership which commenced in 2010.

We recognise that some countries may choose to use **nuclear energy**, depending on national circumstances. In Australia, we have chosen not to use nuclear energy for electricity generation, given our abundance of renewable energy resources.

President,

Australia is pleased to continue to work with the Agency to bolster capacity and capability in the Indo-Pacific. This includes through our newly established **IAEA JPO program**, supporting early career women scientists, and hosting the Lise Meitner Fellowship in 2026 in Sydney. **Diversity, equality and inclusion** are central to establishing and maintaining

international peace and security. In the nuclear field, the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women will lead to better, and more sustainable, outcomes for our collective work.

We are deeply honoured to have been nominated by the Southeast Asia and the Pacific Group to assume the **Chair of the Board of Governors** for 2025-2026. If elected, we look forward to continuing to work collegiately and constructively with all Board Members and observers, to ensure our work is effective and our discussions productive in the year ahead.

Australia commits to undertake the role with fairness and professionalism and to honour the expectations of the Board of Governors and of the IAEA for impartiality and respect for the IAEA Statute, the Rules of Procedure, the membership and our SEAP colleagues.

Harnessing the benefits of nuclear science and technology is not possible without the concerted efforts that go into making that technology **safe and secure**. We recognise and support the Agency in this work.

Australia remains fully committed to **improving nuclear safety and radiation protection** in our region and worldwide, and delivering on the objectives of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention.

Ensuring nuclear material is safe, secure and safeguarded can be the most difficult – and at times hazardous – work of the Agency. Australia commends the IAEA's commitment to monitoring the situation at **Ukraine's** nuclear facilities, including at Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, despite the challenging circumstances.

Australia continues to condemn in the strongest terms **Russia's** illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine, and we reiterate our call on Russia to

immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw all its forces from within the internationally recognised borders of Ukraine.

Australia will co-sponsor the resolution on Ukraine proposed by Canada and urges all member states to do likewise.

We remain deeply concerned by the **Islamic Republic of Iran's** failure to resolve outstanding safeguards issues in a full and technically credible manner. It has produced and accumulated a growing stockpile of uranium enriched up to 60% - for which there is no credible civilian justification. The Agency's current lack of access to verify the location of this material is alarming.

It is essential that Iran promptly resume implementation of, and full compliance with, its legally binding safeguards obligations. Australia notes the Director General's 9 September announcement with Iran on practical steps to resume full verification in accordance with Iran's CSA, and looks forward to immediate implementation. We thank Egypt for facilitating this development.

We continue to call on Iran to engage urgently and in good faith to reach an acceptable diplomatic solution to concerns about its nuclear program – one which provides assurance that Iran can never develop a nuclear weapon.

Australia continues to condemn in the strongest terms the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea's** ongoing pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems in flagrant violation of its obligations under multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

We are deeply troubled by indications that the DPRK continues to develop an illicit nuclear program, including the construction of an additional facility to support its expanded enrichment activities, the continued operation of the five-megawatt reactor and the Light Water Reactor, Kim Jong Un's recent inspection of a factory housing nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the preparedness of the Punggye-ri test site to support a nuclear test.

Australia appreciates the Agency's preparedness to play a central role in verifying the DPRK's nuclear program. We commend the IAEA's activities to maintain this capability and to provide comprehensive and timely technical analysis of developments.

We will again co-sponsor the resolution on the DPRK at this Conference. We call on all Member States of the IAEA to continue to send a strong, united message to the DPRK through supporting adoption of this resolution by consensus.

The full benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology can only be realised when the international community resists the misuse of nuclear material or technology. We welcome the IAEA's continued progress, in cooperation with Member States, on measures to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of **IAEA safeguards**.

Australia continues to progress work with the IAEA to support Australia's acquisition of **conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS partnership**. Bilateral technical consultations between Australia and the IAEA on a safeguards and verification approach are ongoing. Australia's program will be subject to a robust package of measures that will enable the IAEA to continue to meet its technical

objectives for Australia at all stages of the submarines' lifecycle. We remain committed to keeping the international community updated on relevant developments, and support the Director General's ongoing commitment to report to the Board on naval nuclear propulsion programs as he judges appropriate.

On 17 January 2025, the treaty-level AUKUS Agreement for Cooperation Related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion entered into force. Under the Agreement, the United Kingdom and the United States cannot transfer any nuclear material to Australia for use in conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines prior to Australia having an Article 14 arrangement in place with the IAEA. On 26 July 2025, Australia and the United Kingdom signed the bilateral Nuclear-Powered Submarine Partnership and Collaboration Agreement, also known as the 'Geelong Treaty'. This treaty will provide the framework for bilateral cooperation between Australia and the UK on a future class of trilaterally-developed, conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines, known as the SSN-AUKUS. The Treaty reaffirms the Parties' respective nuclear non-proliferation obligations, including under the NPT and the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and its Protocols.

To conclude, I reiterate Australia's unwavering support for the independence, mandate and technical authority of the IAEA. Under the leadership of Director General Grossi, the Agency's staff work diligently, professionally and impartially. You have our full confidence and support.