



**PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP**

**TRANSCRIPT**

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**Joint press conference with Prime Minister of France  
Prime Minister's Courtyard, Canberra**

E&OE...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Prime Minister Valls welcome to Canberra. We had a great discussion reflecting on the shared values and history of France and Australia. A hundred years ago the diggers of Australia and the Poilu of France were battling together on French and Belgium soil to defend the liberty of France. And we have - our Governor-General has just been in France as we remember the Centenary of those great battles, Fromelles and Pozières and enormous struggle.

We have shared those values and stood together ever since and the proposed future submarine partnership will be another opportunity for France and Australia creating unprecedented opportunities to strengthen and expand, deepen our already strong relationship.

We both agree, as does the President of the Republic, that this partnership will frame a 50-year alliance of collaboration which will transform our strategic relationship. The entire submarine fleet will be built in South Australia by Australian workers and with Australian steel.

The success of the project will draw upon the expertise and technology and resources of our two great countries. It is a, it is going to be a vitally important economic alliance as well.

Both the Prime Minister and I agree, both our Governments understand, that for us to ensure that France and Australia continue to succeed in the 21st century economy we must draw upon the opportunities of technology and innovation and the Defence industries, particularly here with regionally superior submarines.

These are at the cutting edge of technology and the work on these submarines in the years ahead will provide substantial spin-off benefits in Australia for our technology businesses, for our high-tech businesses, for all of the industries, the applications, that come from the innovation, the ingenuity that the cutting-edge Defence sector demands.

Beyond the matter of submarines we work closely together in freedom's cause. We are working closely together as part of the global coalition to counter the activities of Daesh or ISIL in the Middle East and of course we have expressed our deepest sympathy to the people of France, consequent upon the

shocking terrorist attacks in Paris last year. They were an attack on all humanity and we stand today, as we stood then, shoulder to shoulder with the people of France.

Our cooperation and collaboration in the battle against terrorism is as close as it could be. It will become closer still in the years ahead. Can I say also that our trade links become stronger all the time and we want to - I want to acknowledge and thank President Hollande and Prime Minister Valls support for the Australia EU free trade agreement and the joint commitment by me and EU leaders on the 15 November last year to start the process towards a comprehensive and high-quality free trade agreement.

The support of France has been absolutely critical in moving that agreement, the negotiation of agreement, higher up the agenda.

So, Prime Minister, there's a lot to celebrate between France and Australia today. It's been a long alliance, a long relationship. It will with become stronger still in the 50 years of partnership we have ahead of us on the submarines.

#### **PRIME MINISTER VALLS:**

Thank you very much, Mr Prime Minister, for changing your agenda at the very last minute to meet with me.

Last time Malcolm and I saw each other was during Cop21 in Paris and it is with even a greater pleasure that I get to see him now that the strategic relationship between France and Australia has just reached another level.

We share a common story which binds together our people and our destiny. We have been brothers in arms since the First World War. And we do not forget the sacrifice of the Australians who came to fight on French soil to defend our values.

And we share these values in the fight against terrorism and in the values that we have around the world.

And Australia has taken a very important decision recently, the decision to have French accompany Australia in the development of its program for submarines. It is a partnership that binds us for a very long time, 50 years at least.

Your Government has taken a long assessment process looking at different bids. A very difficult decision, one that was very complex and one that commits your country for numerous decades.

It is a decision which honours France, which is also a tribute to our technology, our abilities, our companies and thinking in particular about DCNS, also to the very numerous contractors that will be involved in this major contract.

It is also a decision that comes with responsibility, we want to be up to the task and for the trust that Australia put in us. After decision comes a time of the implementation. In the next coming month we'll be working with the Australian authorities and will fix all the details of our partnership on the issue of the submarines. We do mean to conclude as soon as possible this contract. We will now deliver on all of our commitments, our industrial commitments of course, with job creations in Australia, with technology and know-how transfers and we will meet our commitments, be it on the timeline, on the financial commitments, the performances of the future submarines.

And under the authority of the President of the Republic, I will supervise, myself, the implementation of our commitments with the Minister of Defence who will be coming shortly in Australia.

It is an industrial and economic partnership. It is also a partnership that binds us for a very long time on other issues; security, Defence. We can work closely together in all sectors at the economic level, on technologies and innovation, on culture, human relations.

Australia benefits from a great image in France. Many young French people want to come to Australia. We share a common region, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, where France is very present.

Thank you very much. We are very proud, as well, and you can count on the support of my Government for the success of this partnership.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister Turnbull, is part of the reason for going with the French design the potential to transition to a nuclear-powered sub at some point in the future. And to you, Prime Minister Valls, would it make more sense to you to build the first one or two submarines in France? Would it be cheaper or quicker?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Can I deal with the question you've asked me? That issue of nuclear propulsion did not form any part of our considerations.

**PRIME MINISTER VALLS:**

We said right from the beginning it was supposed to be a partnership that would create jobs right from the beginning, so it is a win-win partnership.

**JOURNALIST:**

Excuse me, to the French Prime Minister, welcome to Australia. There seems to be some confusion in Australia as to how much of the build will be done in Australia. We're hearing that the subs contract will produce 4,000 jobs in France and a lot of economic activity and economic value. How much of the work in building the submarines will be done in Australia?

**PRIME MINISTER VALLS:**

There's no confusion. The choice of the Australian Government was to have the 12 submarines built in Australia and this was the basis of our agreement.

It is great news for Australia, great news for France. And everyone has something to win in this partnership, like I just said. And France will honour its commitment in terms of transfer of technology, as I just said, in terms of infrastructure and job creation in Australia. This contract represents also a lot of work for the DCNS staff, both in France and across the world.

It is a great adventure that starts for our two countries at every level. We will now finalise the contracts, be patient but be sure that we will meet our commitments. And we are very grateful of the decision taken by Australia.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Hang on, just, Tori, yes, please.

**JOURNALIST:**

South Australia is pretty chuffed. Some of the other states, not so much. How much of the work do you have to ensure goes outside of South Australia to keep everyone on side?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

There is an enormous industrial supply chain right throughout Australia and there will be contractors here in Canberra and around Canberra who'll be intermittently involved, as you know, and of course right around the country. This is a - the submarines, however, will be built, they'll be physically built, constructed in South Australia, in the shipyard there at Osborne, but there will be contractors and suppliers from right across the country. This is above all, let me just make this very important point, above all, the choice that we have made is because we need to secure the submarines with the best capabilities for our unique needs - the best capabilities for our unique needs.

These submarines are the best. They offer us the opportunity to have, to develop, to build a regionally - 12 regionally superior submarines. We are an island nation and we need to ensure that we have the best defences. Now, that is the primary objective. That's what we're talking about.

As part of that - as we build up those defences, as we give those capabilities to our Navy, we do so building the submarines in Australia. We partner with our French partners to ensure that we have the best technology and we work together to develop the supply chain here in Australia right from the shipyard to every person, every firm that is contributing to this effort.

This is a great national enterprise and it will drive our economic plan, our economic plan for jobs and growth in the 21st century and the 21st-century economy. That is our commitment.

**JOURNALIST:**

Mr Prime Minister, your team has developed a lot of energy in organising this private trip, this very short trip in Australia. There is no announcement on the details of the contracts so what is the point of this visit?

**PRIME MINISTER VALLS:**

It's an essential question! I was to come to Australia in March. Unfortunately, local events in France prevented me from doing this trip both in New Caledonia and in Australia and I truly regretted it. The political life in Australia meant that unfortunately we could not post-pone this meeting. But from the moment of the announcement that Australia had chosen France to build these 12 submarines, then as I was already in New Zealand, it was only normal that I would come here in Australia. And the decision was taken Monday evening with the President of the Republic. And we prepared, together with the Prime Minister, this visit. And it's not because you had very late notice of it, that it was not planned. And what's important here is to say that we will keep up our promises and our commitments.

Our values, this strategic partnership and our commitment deserved that I would come here. And we talked about the timeline, about the strategic partnership, about the job creation and the details of this agreement.

And human relations are important and this was also the opportunity for us to meet and is important for the relationship of our two countries.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you, just perhaps one more question.

**JOURNALIST:**

There's been some protests yesterday night in Paris and some members of the Left parties have been criticising this, even Jean-Luc Mélenchon has been criticising this and saying this might be one person dead. What is your opinion of this?

**PRIME MINISTER VALLS:**

Does this have to do with the contract on submarines? 34 billion Euros? Million jobs created - 1,000 jobs created in Australia? A lot of work for DCNS in France? This is also the inference of France in this region across the globe. A shared vision that we have, not only on defence but also on security and, against terrorism. I will be tomorrow at the National Assembly and will be able to answer the questions both of the majority and Opposition parties. The new labour law brings more flexibility, it is good for the employees, we will start discussing it tomorrow. But I do want to respect my host and I will not commence French politics here.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well thank you, Prime Minister. You will be answering questions in your parliament tomorrow, I'll be answering questions in my parliament in 37 minutes so thank you all very much.