

Foreign and Defence Secretaries visit Australia for AUKMIN

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Defence Secretary Ben Wallace will visit Australia this week, as the UK forges closer defence and security ties with the nation.

Truss begins the first leg of an official visit to Australia today, using her trip to focus on economic, security and technology interests as well as standing up against malign aggressors.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace will join the Foreign Secretary in Sydney to hold talks with their counterparts, Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Defence Minister Peter Dutton.

In the first AUKMIN since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Ministers will discuss security and defence capability, building on AUKUS, and commit to tackling state and hybrid threats and jointly supporting maritime security.

The visit comes in the face of growing aggression from Russia, which is waging to destabilise and threaten its sovereign neighbour Ukraine, and increasing threats in the Indo-Pacific. It also comes during crucial days for the Tongan relief effort, as the UK works urgently with Australian and New Zealand counterparts to support those affected.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

With malign forces threatening global peace and stability it is vital that close allies like the UK and Australia show robust vigilance in defence of freedom and democracy.

The AUKUS partnership between the UK, Australia and the United States is a clear demonstration of how we will defend our values, protect trade routes and increase stability across the Indo-Pacific.

In Australia, I will be strengthening our economic, diplomatic and security ties – making our country safer and more competitive – in order to win the battle for ideas as part of our network of liberty.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The UK and Australia share one of the oldest and strongest Defence and security alliances.

Operating and exercising side by side, we continue to work together to promote stability, and tackle our shared threats with our like-minded ally head on.

Truss will also agree to closer cooperation with Australia to boost opportunities for honest and reliable infrastructure investment for Indo-Pacific states – to end strategic dependency on malign actors in the areas of energy, investment and technology.

And on technology, the Foreign Secretary will discuss how best to strengthen global technology supply chains and tackle malign actors who disrupt cyberspace.

On the second leg of the visit, the Foreign Secretary will travel to Adelaide to build on the recently signed free trade deal, including by signing an agreement to boost UK-Australia business links for key industries including space, cyber, science and technology with the State of South Australia. This is alongside the UK's work to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Truss will also be visiting the BAE Systems shipyard to see how British business expertise is responsible for building frigates for the Australian Navy.

ENDS