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Igniting the Reactor Rulebook: Turbo-Charging Australia's Nuclear Law for the SSN-AUKUS Era

Australia is diving into uncharted, uranium-fuelled waters. Since the AUKUS announcement in September 2021, Australia's nuclear legislation has moved from cold iron to full steam, forging the legal infrastructure for conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines in just four years. This session is your fast-tracked, warp-speed tour of that transformation

We will examine:

- Keel-laying the rulebook – launch of the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator and key amendments to the ARPANS Act and the lifting of nuclear prohibitions, plus a tiered licensing system for shipyards, reactors and radiation workers.
- Safeguards in focus – unprecedented negotiations with the IAEA to craft the world's first naval-propulsion safeguards arrangement that is watertight on non-proliferation yet operationally discreet.
- Liability shielding – plans to weld international nuclear-liability conventions onto bespoke domestic provisions, ensuring compensation pathways can withstand nuclear accidents.
- Closing the fuel cycle loop – secure transport, interim storage and final disposal strategies for spent fuel and radioactive waste.
- Social-licence gauges – transparency initiatives, Indigenous engagement and lessons from Australian radioactive waste management.
- Workforce enrichment – new credentials, university curricula and industry upskilling to reach weapons-grade expertise before Australia's first SSN takes to the water.

Attendees will leave armed with a reactor-grade briefing that shows which reforms have already achieved first criticality and which still need fuelling, providing mission-ready intelligence for anyone tasked with building, regulating or defending Australia's SSN-AUKUS capability.