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***Developing the industrial based for Nuclear Powered Submarines – lessons from the U.S.***

The challenges confronting Australia when establishing and sustaining Nuclear Powered Submarines have been well documented, especially from a capability, infrastructure and delivery perspective. Regardless of how and when these are manifest, Australia will need a sovereign supply chain that can meet the rigours of these vessels. To be competitive in this environment, suppliers need to entrench disciplined rigorous technical configuration controls that met the exacting standards these submarine require. This is a significant step up from even those required for conventional submarines.

Australia is not alone in confronting these challenges. The U.S. is continually developing and evolving its vendor space to ensure it has sufficient supply. This has not always been successful or effective – indeed it explains some of the reasons behind the delays in U.S. Nuclear Submarine construction and sustainment programs, especially the challenges facing the start-up of Columbia Class Nuclear Strategic Submarine Class.

Focussing on the vendors-base, we will discuss some of the challenges faced within the U.S. system and what lesson Australia can learn. This will inform the measures small and medium sized businesses can take to be ready to be part of the SSN supply chain by establishing and maintaining necessary vendor certifications.