



**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE**

Ref No: MB23-000855

Ms Susan Templeman MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Templeman

Susan

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 December 2023 concerning Ministerial Petition EN5543.

The Australia-United States (US) Alliance fundamentally strengthens Australia's sovereignty, affording us access to capability, technology and intelligence we could not generate on our own. It expands Australia's strategic options, makes us less vulnerable to coercive action and enables our pursuit of national security interests.

The Force Posture Agreement (FPA) with the US recognises the mutual benefits to Australia and the US through access to facilities and areas in Australia by US forces. All activities under the FPA occur on a rotational basis and are mutually determined between Australia and the US, with full respect for Australia's sovereignty, domestic law and international commitments. The FPA is consistent with Australia's longstanding, bipartisan policies of no foreign military bases on Australian soil and of full knowledge and concurrence.

For over ten years, our force posture cooperation with the US has made a practical contribution to Australia's security and capability, as well as regional stability. A strong and active US military presence in the Indo-Pacific is vital for deterring actions that would threaten the stability and prosperity of the region, and the rules-based order on which we rely.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

RICHARD MARLES

6/2/24

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