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# Ben Wallace confirms that Barrow workforce will grow

31st January 2023

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A BAE Systems worker celebrates the formal commissioning of the HMS Anson into the Royal Navy. Simon Fell MP (left), Ben Wallace, secretary of state for defence (right) (*Image: Newsquest, PA*)

THE secretary of state for defence has revealed the BAE Systems shipyard will grow to 17,000 workers.

Ben Wallace called Barrow a 'centre of excellence' for delivering Astute, Dreadnought, and Submersible Ship Nuclear (Replacement) submarines during Defence Questions.

There is currently a workforce of around 10,000 people, according to Mr Wallace.

In 2021 the AUKUS pact was drawn up, which is a trilateral security pact between Australia, the UK and the US to protect waters in the Indo-Pacific region.

As part of this, Australia committed to buying the first of its nuclear-powered submarines from either the US or the UK, but the US currently has a long production line.

Even if a submarine is not bought from the UK, the AUKUS agreement means that the UK and the US will supply Australian submariners with the skillset and expertise needed to run a nuclear submarine.

Mr Wallace said: "I think given the amount of money that Australia will be spending on this enterprise the need for international collaboration, and the fact that in Barrow-in-Furness and Faslane we have one of the centres of excellence globally that will help deliver it, I'm confident that all those statements will turn out to be exactly as they were made (Australia's commitment to AUKUS).

"And just to give some indication, we are increasing the number of jobs in Barrow already from 10,000 to 17,000 people in order to fulfil both the Dreadnought program, the nuclear deterrent and indeed the next generation of Britain's attack submarines."

Simon Fell, the MP for Barrow and Furness, thanked Mr Wallace for the 'considerable effort' that his department, the Government, and the Navy have put into securing a pact with Australia and for continuing to invest in the shipyard.

Mr Wallace responded that Australia recognised entering into the agreement that there are 'only about five countries that can do this.'

He also said that the facilities at Barrow and Faslane 'can almost not be replicated around the world.'

In August 2022 the latest Astute class submarine to be built by BAE Systems, HMS Anson, was officially commissioned into the Royal Navy during a ceremony in Barrow.