

Labor's plan for a Strategic Fleet

An Albanese Labor Government will strengthen Australia's economic sovereignty and national security by rebuilding an independent Strategic Fleet to secure our ongoing access to fuel supplies and other essential imports.

More than most nations, Australia is dependent on seaborne trade.

Shipping accounts for 90 per cent of the international goods trade but 99 per cent of our imports and exports of goods, including fuel.

Despite this, Australia is now in a situation where less than half a per cent of our seaborne trade is carried by Australian ships, forcing us to rely on foreign governments and companies for our essential imports.

In times of conflict and crisis, our economic sovereignty and national security are dependent on Australian seafarers working on Australian ships.

Protecting and growing Australia's maritime sector and seafaring workforce is vital to our economic sovereignty and national security.

That's why an Albanese Labor Government will protect Australia and rebuild our strategic fleet.

This announcement forms a part of Labor's plan for a Future Made in Australia, creating jobs and building industries.

Other elements of this plan include the National Reconstruction Fund, the National Rail Manufacturing Plan and the Defence Industry Development Strategy.

Labor's Plan

An Albanese Labor Government will enhance Australia's economic sovereignty and national security by creating a Maritime Strategic Fleet to secure our access to fuel supplies and other critical resources, even in times of global instability.

These vessels will be Australian flagged and Australian crewed.

We expect the vessels will be privately owned and operate on a commercial basis, they will be available for requisition by the Defence Forces in times of national need, whether that be natural disaster or times of conflict.

As a first step towards establishing a strategic fleet, an incoming Albanese Labor Government will appoint a Taskforce to guide it on the establishment of the Fleet as quickly as possible. The Fleet is likely to include up to a dozen vessels including tankers, cargo, container and roll-on-roll-off vessels.

This Taskforce will include representatives from the shipping industry, major charterers, unions, Australian business representatives and the Department of Defence.

An Albanese Labor government will act immediately to close loopholes in the existing regulatory framework to help rebuild Australian shipping. The Taskforce will also advise on how best to enforce existing coastal shipping laws and what legislative or regulatory reforms are necessary to reinvigorate Australian shipping.

<https://www.alp.org.au/policies/strategic-fleet>