

Scott Morrison warns France to meet multi-billion-dollar submarine deal deadline

By defence correspondent [Andrew Greene](#)

Posted Wed 16 Jun 2021 at 11:35am, updated Wed 16 Jun 2021 at 4:48pm



The Prime Minister and French President met during Scott Morrison's trip to Paris.

(AP: Rafael Yaghobzadeh)

The French company building Australia's \$90 billion future submarine fleet has been warned it must meet a September deadline to submit its design work plans for the next two years.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he held "candid talks" with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris over the troubled project, as well as with the state-owned Naval Group company.

In 2016 Naval Group, then known as DCNS, was awarded Australia's largest ever defence contract to design and build 12 "regionally superior submarines" to replace the Collins Class fleet.

The Prime Minister raised his dissatisfaction with progress on the Attack Class submarines during a working dinner with Mr Macron, just days after the [Defence Department revealed it was looking at possible alternatives](#).

Mr Morrison said he had been "discussing these issues for some time" with Mr Macron but warned "there is still a long way to go".

Key points:

- Scott Morrison says he expects the company building the submarines to deliver on its contract
- French President Emmanuel Macron has reaffirmed his commitment to the deal
- The Defence Department had revealed it was looking at alternatives to the French deal



Emmanuel Macron says 12 new submarines represents unity between Australia and France.

Naval Group has been given until September to revise its design work plans for the next two years of the project, after a plan it submitted in February was rejected by Defence for being too expensive.

"It's their contract — that is Naval group — and like with any contract I would expect them to be able to deliver on that," Mr Morrison said.

"I appreciate the direct role that [Mr Macron] has played in ensuring that we've seen a much-improved position come forward from Naval Group over the past six months.

"I leave knowing that we have properly raised the challenges that we need to address, and so it is now for us to work forward on that basis."



The government has a \$90 billion deal with French company Naval Group to deliver the submarines. (AFP: DCNS)

Earlier in the day [Mr Macron declared "full and complete" commitment to the huge but much-delayed submarine deal](#), promising to go "further and faster if possible".

"The whole French government is committed to live up to our common ambitions and possibly to go even further and to go even faster because I know how interested you are in this, Prime Minister, and to be able to meet the needs of Australia."

"[The Attack Class submarines are] a pillar of our partnership and the relationship of confidence between our countries," Mr Macron said.

Earlier this month, Defence Secretary Greg Moriarty was quizzed in Senate estimates whether the department had any "plan B" in case the French deal collapsed.

"Of course you do reasonably prudent thinking about what one of those options might be or what you might be able to if you are unable to proceed," Mr Moriarty told the committee.