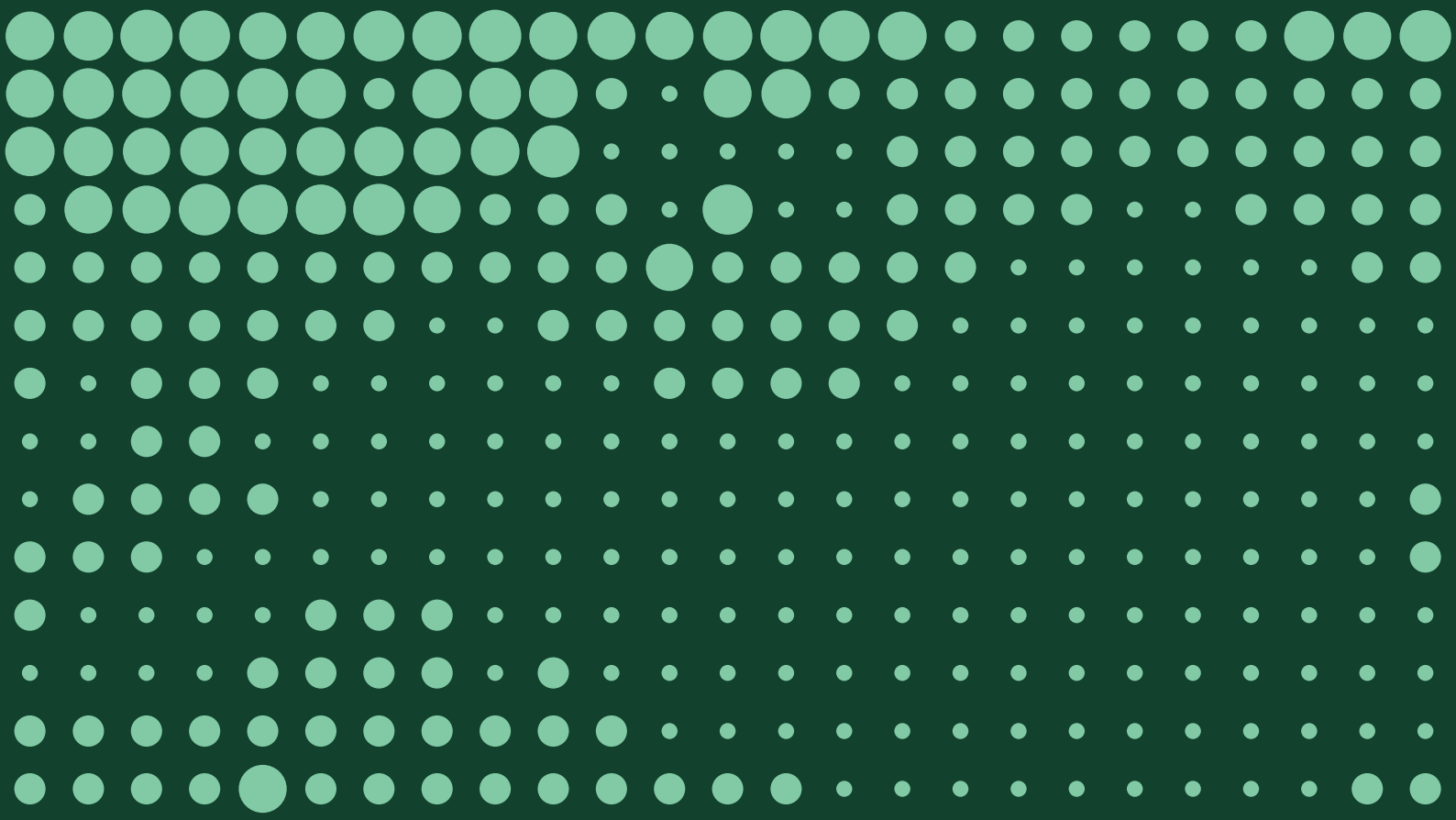
ASPI DEFENCE CONFERENCE 2026

PROGRAM

Securing the Region for Uncertainty

25 June 2026, Canberra



WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE 2026 ASPI DEFENCE CONFERENCE.

On behalf of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, I am pleased to welcome you to this year's conference, *Securing the Region for Uncertainty*.

Australia and our partners face a more complex and challenging strategic environment than at any time in recent decades. The risks are becoming more apparent, the pace of change is increasing, and the decisions governments make today will shape our security for years to come. Meeting these challenges will require more than military capability alone. It will require sustained effort across government, industry and society, together with close cooperation among allies and partners.

That is the purpose of this conference.

This year's conference is bringing together more than 400 participants from across government, defence, industry, academia and the international community, representing more than 20 countries to discuss the practical steps required to strengthen Australia's security and contribute to regional stability. Across the day, our speakers will examine how Australia can build credible deterrence, accelerate the delivery of capability, strengthen preparedness, enhance industrial resilience and deepen cooperation with allies and partners.

What makes the ASPI Defence Conference distinctive is its focus on moving beyond diagnosing problems to advancing practical solutions. Discussions focus on implementation: how strategy is translated into operational readiness, how new capabilities are fielded at pace and how partnerships are turned into practical advantage.

Since its establishment in 2001, ASPI has sought to contribute to informed public debate and provide independent analysis on the strategic and defence issues shaping Australia's future. The Defence Conference is one of the Institute's flagship events and reflects that commitment by bringing together diverse perspectives to address shared national security challenges.

I would like to thank our speakers, sponsors and attendees for their contribution to this year's conference. Your participation helps ensure that the discussion remains informed, constructive and focused on the choices that will shape Australia's security in the years ahead.

I hope you find the discussions valuable and provide new insights, new connections and a renewed sense of the challenges and opportunities ahead.



Justin Bassi
Executive Director
Australian Strategic Policy Institute

PROGRAM

6:30 – 8:00 REGISTRATION AND NETWORKING

Tea, coffee & pastries provided

7:15 – 7:50 SUNRISE SESSION: NATIONAL DEFENCE AS A NATIONAL ENDEAVOUR

This opening conversation will examine what it takes to deliver the concept of National Defence in practice; how governments, industry and Defence can work together to strengthen Australia's industrial base, preparedness and self-reliance; and the role that initiatives underway in South Australia play in supporting the nation's long-term security objectives.

CHAIR: Stephen Dziedzic, Foreign Affairs (Asia Pacific) Reporter, ABC News

The Honourable Peter Malinauskas MP, Premier of South Australia

8:00 – 8:10 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Aunty Violet Sheridan, Ngunnawal Elder

8:10 – 8:15 WELCOME FROM THE AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICY INSTITUTE

The Honourable Dr David Feeney, ASPI Council Member

8:15 – 8:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

CHAIR: Justin Bassi, Executive Director, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

The Honourable Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence

8:45 – 9:15 SPOTLIGHT DISCUSSION WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STRATEGY POLICY AND INDUSTRY

The National Defence Strategy sets out an ambitious agenda to strengthen deterrence, accelerate capability delivery, enhance preparedness and build a more integrated approach to national defence. In this discussion, the Deputy Secretary will examine how Defence is translating strategic objectives into practical action, the key challenges in implementing the National Defence Strategy, and how Australia is preparing to meet the demands of a more contested and uncertain regional environment.

CHAIR: David Wroe, Resident Senior Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Hugh Jeffrey, Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Policy, and Industry, Department of Defence

9:15 – 9:45 MORNING TEA

9:45 – 10:15 REMARKS BY THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND MINISTER FOR PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS

CHAIR: Mike Hughes AIM, Director, Defence Strategy Program, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

The Honourable Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry and Minister for Pacific Island Affairs

10:15 – 11:00 WHAT ARE WE DETERRING – AND IS IT CREDIBLE?

The 2026 National Defence Strategy places deterrence at the centre of Australia's defence policy, yet fundamental questions remain about what Australia and its allies are seeking to deter and whether current approaches are credible in the eyes of potential adversaries. This session will examine the strategy of denial, the threats and behaviours Australia seeks to shape and deter, and the role of sovereign and collective efforts in building a credible deterrence posture.

CHAIR: Courtney Stewart, Deputy Director, Defence Strategy Program, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Professor Peter J. Dean PhD SFHEA, General Sir Francis Hassett Chair of Military Studies, Australian War College and Professor of Strategic Studies, Australian National University

Markus Garlauskas, Director, Indo-Pacific Security Initiative, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Atlantic Council

Dr Lavina Lee, Director, Foreign Policy and Defence Program, United States Studies Centre

11:00 – 11:10 MOVEMENT BREAK

11:10 – 12:10 SIMULTANEOUS LANEWAY SESSIONS

Laneway Session 1A – The Role of Middle Powers in Securing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific

While the United States remains central to the regional balance of power, middle powers are playing a growing role in upholding the rules and norms underpinning a free and open Indo-Pacific. This panel will assess whether middle powers have a common perception of threats to the regional order, and how cooperation among them can reinforce stability and shape a favourable strategic environment.

CHAIR: Professor Maria Rost Rublee, Professor of International Relations, University of Melbourne

Professor Renato Cruz De Castro, Distinguished Professor, Department of International Studies, De La Salle University

Raquel Garbers, Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Professor Bec Strating FAIIA, Director, La Trobe Centre for Global Security and Professor of International Relations, La Trobe University

His Excellency Ambassador Kazuhiro Suzuki, Ambassador of Japan to Australia

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Laneway Session 1B – Mass Without Mass: Scaling Military Effect in the Future Force

Generating operational mass in the Indo-Pacific requires new approaches to projecting, sustaining and employing military power across vast distances and contested environments. This panel will examine how Australia and its partners can build a more asymmetric and resilient future force through semi-autonomous systems, AI-enabled operations, distributed capabilities and deeper industry integration.

CHAIR: Dr Shannon Zimmerman, Senior Lecturer in Strategic Studies, Centre for Future Defence and National Security, Deakin University

Air Vice-Marshal Nicholas Hogan CSC, Head of Air Force Capability, Royal Australian Air Force

His Excellency Vasyl Myroshnychenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to Australia

Mark Palmer, Vice President, Vision Systems, Shield AI

Presented by Shield AI

Laneway Session 1C – Industrial Resilience and Australia's Freedom to Act

Australia's ability to act in its own interests during crisis depends not only on military capability, but on the resilience of the industrial base, supply chains and sustainment systems that underpin it. This panel will consider how domestic procurement, industrial resilience and sustainment capacity contribute to operational endurance, sovereign decision-making and Australia's ability to preserve strategic choice in times of disruption.

CHAIR: Dr Marigold Black, Senior Lecturer in War Studies, UNSW Canberra

Matt Opie, Chief Executive, Defence SA

Jennifer Parker, Adjunct Professor of Practice, Defence and Security Institute, University of Western Australia and Principal and Founder, Barrier Strategic Advisory

Steven Thorpe, DSM, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Omni Executive

Presented by the Sovereign Australian Prime Alliance (SAPA)

12:10 – 12:50 NETWORKING LUNCH

12:50 – 1:50 SIMULTANEOUS LANEWAY SESSIONS

Laneway Session 2A – Allied Industrial Power: Securing Supply Chains and Delivering Capability at Speed

Allied industrial cooperation can deliver strategic advantage when it translates into capability at the speed and scale required. This session will examine how allies and partners can overcome practical barriers to industrial integration, strengthen supply-chain resilience and accelerate capability delivery through more effective defence industrial cooperation.

CHAIR: Kate Louis, Head of Defence and National Security, Australian Industry Group and Executive Director, Australian Industry Group Defence Council

Dr Jennifer Moroney, Senior Political Scientist, RAND Corporation

Dr Osamu Nishiwaki, Director-General for Trade and Economic Security, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

Dr Kristijonas Vizbaras, Co-founder, BROLIS Defence

Laneway Session 2B – The Social Licence for National Defence: The Role of Media and Public Debate

As Australia's strategic circumstances become more challenging, National Defence will require greater public understanding of the risks, trade-offs and commitments that underpin security. This panel will explore whether Australia's media and public debate are helping to build the social licence required for national defence, or whether a gap remains between strategic reality and public awareness.

CHAIR: Stephen Dziedzic, Foreign Affairs (Asia Pacific) Reporter, ABC News

Peter Hartcher, Political and International Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age

Samantha Maiden, Political Editor, news.com.au

Nicola Smith, Canberra Bureau Chief, Australian Financial Review

Laneway Session 2C – Space as a Warfighting Domain: Resilience, Access and Coalition Operations

Space underpins modern military operations, but as the domain becomes increasingly contested, assured access and resilient architecture can no longer be assumed. This panel will discuss how Australia, Japan and their partners are strengthening cooperation across the space domain to enhance resilience, support coalition operations and ensure assured access.

CHAIR: Dr Malcolm Davis, Senior Analyst, Defence Strategy Program, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Motoya Nakamura, Head of Satellite Constellation Project Group, IHI Corporation

Major General Greg Novak AM, Commander, Defence Space Command, Department of Defence

Professor Melissa De Zwart, Deputy Director, ARC Centre of Excellence in Plants for Space and Professor, Space Law and Governance, Andy Thomas Centre for Space Resources, Adelaide University

Presented by IHI Corporation

1:50 – 2:00 MOVEMENT BREAK

2:00 – 3:00 ENABLING MULTI-DOMAIN DETERRENCE NOW

Effective deterrence by denial depends on the Australian Defence Force's ability to generate credible multi-domain effects across a vast and dynamic security environment. This session will examine how Defence is integrating maritime, land, air, space and cyber capabilities today, the critical gaps and practical constraints that remain, and the joint and combined approaches needed to credibly shape adversary risk calculations.

CHAIR: Courtney Stewart, Deputy Director, Defence Strategy Program, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Air Marshal Stephen Chappell DSC CSC OAM, Chief of Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force

Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO RAN, Chief of Navy, Royal Australian Navy

Vice Admiral Justin Jones AO CSC RAN, Chief of Joint Operations, Australian Defence Force

Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC, Chief of Army, Royal Australian Army

3:00 – 3:45 SPOTLIGHT DISCUSSION WITH THE CHIEF OF JOINT CAPABILITIES ON DELIVERING AN OBJECTIVE INTEGRATED FORCE

Australia's defence strategy and Integrated Investment Program set clear priorities for delivering capability effects across all domains. For the Australian Defence Force, how is the Objective Integrated Force accelerating not just the delivery of new capabilities, but their integration through warfighting networks, joint command and control, and operational concepts so they can generate coordinated effects in competition and conflict? In this spotlight discussion, Lieutenant General Susan Coyle will reflect on how Joint Capabilities Group has advanced this effort—operationalising cyber and space, strengthening logistics and national support, and building the digital and workforce foundations needed to deliver a more integrated, ready and resilient force.

CHAIR: The Honourable Joel Fitzgibbon, Former Minister for Defence and Member for Hunter

Lieutenant General Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM, Chief of Joint Capabilities, Australian Defence Force

3:45 – 4:05 AFTERNOON TEA

4:05 – 4:30

SPOTLIGHT DISCUSSION WITH AUSTRALIA'S SHADOW DEFENCE MINISTER ON THE GREATEST RISKS TO DELIVERING THE DEFENCE AGENDA

Delivering Australia's defence agenda will require difficult choices amid growing strategic challenges, fiscal pressures and competing priorities. This discussion will examine the greatest risks to implementing the National Defence Strategy and what Defence, government and industry must do to ensure Australia can deliver the capabilities, preparedness and resilience that national defence demands.

CHAIR: The Honourable Joel Fitzgibbon, Former Minister for Defence and Member for Hunter

Senator James Paterson, Shadow Minister for Defence and Liberal Senator for Victoria

4:30 – 5:00

SPECIAL ADDRESS AND Q&A WITH THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE

CHAIR: Justin Bassi, Executive Director, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Admiral David Johnston AC RAN, Chief of the Defence Force

5:00 – 5:10

CLOSING REMARKS

Justin Bassi, Executive Director, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

5:10 – 7:15

EVENING RECEPTION

GOLD PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE
IS SPONSORED BY:

SOVEREIGN AUSTRALIAN PRIME ALLIANCE

The Sovereign Australian Prime Alliance (SAPA) is an affiliation of Australian majority owned companies operating at scale and providing home grown capabilities in support of Australia's defence and national security interests. SAPA companies include Aspen Medical, AUSTAL, Gilmoure Space, Macquarie Technology Group, NIOA Group, Nova Systems and Omni Executive.

DIGITAL PLATFORM PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE IS SPONSORED BY:

ACCENTURE

Accenture helps the world's leading enterprises reinvent by building their digital core and unleashing the power of AI to create value at speed for organizations across industries. Our strategy is to be the reinvention partner of choice for our clients and lead in the safe, widespread adoption of AI, and to be the most client-focused, AI-enabled, great place to work in the world. We bring together the talent of our approximately 786,000 people with proprietary assets and platforms, deep process and industry expertise, and leading ecosystem relationships to deliver end-to-end solutions and measurable outcomes at scale. Through our Reinvention Services, we offer broad expertise across Cybersecurity, Digital Core, Finance, Industry and Enterprise, Song, Supply Chain and Engineering, and Talent, with advanced capabilities in AI and Data, Industry and Process, and Technology. We serve approximately 9,000 clients and generated approximately $70 billion in FY25 revenue.

BRONZE PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE IS SPONSORED BY:

FUJITSU

Fujitsu's purpose is to make the world more sustainable by building trust in society through innovation. As the digital transformation partner of choice for customers in over 100 countries, our 124,000 employees work to resolve some of the greatest challenges facing humanity. Our range of services and solutions draw on five key technologies: Computing, Networks, AI, Data & Security, and Converging Technologies, which we bring together to deliver sustainability transformation.

Find out more: https://www.fujitsu.com/.

BRONZE PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE
IS SPONSORED BY:

BROLIS

BROLIS Defence Group is a Lithuanian-Danish high-tech defence company headquartered in Vilnius. The group develops cutting-edge electro-optical and laser systems for defence and security applications, specializing in advanced electro-optics for dismounted soldiers — including aiming lasers, night vision, uncooled thermal imaging, and SWIR (short-wave infrared) technology. Its products range from dismounted soldier systems and border surveillance solutions to OEM projects for airborne and applications.

BROLIS supplies its advanced solutions to customers in more than 40 countries worldwide, including Australia and Canada, and has recently secured major contracts with the Belgian Armed Forces and the Danish Army, reinforcing its role as a key NATO supplier. Founded in 2011 by the three Vizbaras brothers, Brolis has grown into a vertically integrated high-technology company, and in March 2026 announced a majority stake acquisition by ETNA Equity Fund, a Copenhagen-based private equity firm — marking the largest defence sector transaction in the Baltic states to date.

BRONZE PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE
IS SPONSORED BY:

CAMBRIDGE AEROSPACE

Cambridge Aerospace is a rapidly scaling defence technology start-up focused on countering the evolving drone and missile threat.

Founded by experienced aerospace engineers and military operators, the company addresses the growing imbalance between low cost offensive systems and high cost traditional defensive systems.

To do this, we develop and build autonomous interceptors and advanced energetics. Our growing product portfolio includes Skyhammer, an autonomous interceptor optimised for large UAS and loitering munitions, and Starhammer, a solid rocket motor interceptor designed to counter cruise missile threats using scalable, mass manufacturable architectures.

Cambridge Aerospace has demonstrated exceptional execution speed, progressing from concept to flight tested systems in months. We believe Australia is uniquely positioned to play a larger role in allied missile, interceptor and advanced manufacturing supply chains, particularly as our allies seek to strengthen industrial resilience and interoperability.

The company is actively exploring opportunities for Australian manufacturing, testing and industry partnerships that could contribute to sovereign capability uplift and long-term industrial growth.

LANEWAY PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE
IS SPONSORED BY:

SHIELD AI

Shield AI is one of the world's leading defence technology companies, with significant Australian operations and deep expertise in autonomy. Founded in 2015, Shield AI's mission is to protect service members and civilians through intelligent systems. The company develops and deploys AI software and uncrewed platforms that support defence and security operations globally.

In Australia, Shield AI is scaling to meet the priorities of the National Defence Strategy. Following the acquisition of Melbourne-based Sentient Vision Systems in 2024, the company is expanding Australia's sovereign autonomy ecosystem through highly skilled local engineering jobs, developing capability for the ADF, and growing export pathways to Asia.

At the core of Shield AI's defence technology portfolio is Hivemind, an AI pilot that has flown on more than 30 platforms. Hivemind enables autonomous and collaborative operations in GPS-denied and communications-degraded environments, helping deliver the resilience, persistence and operational effect required for future military operations.

LANEWAY PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE
IS SPONSORED BY:

IHI

IHI Corporation, established in 1853, is one of Japan's leading heavy industries involved in resources and energy, infrastructure, industrial systems and aero-engines, space and defence. IHI has an extensive track record in working with the Japanese Government and its allies on defence and military projects, including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and Global Combat Air Programme. IHI has also developed a small solid rocket named "Epsilon" under the contract with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

IHI established its first overseas subsidiary, IHI Engineering Australia, (IEA) in 1971. IEA has been providing end-to-end engineering, procurement and construction solutions to Australia-based industries such as gas turbine power generators for mining industries for over 50 years.

COFFEE CART PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE IS SPONSORED BY:

SNC AUS

SNC AUS™ was founded in 2024 as a wholly owned subsidiary of U.S.-based Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) to accelerate growth across INDOPACOM and better serve customers in Australia and the region. Based in Adelaide, South Australia, SNC AUS enhances SNC's global presence alongside its operations in the United States and the United Kingdom, aligning with the AUKUS trilateral security partnership.

We specialise in providing premiere intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) services, ensuring true coalition interoperability through compatible open system architectures and trusted solutions. SNC AUS focuses on delivering advanced capabilities in the Australian defence sector, including common electronic warfare (EW) architecture, digital radio frequency (RF), Digital Grid™, uncrewed platforms, and the Modi C-UAS family of systems (recently released to AUKUS partners).

We proudly benefit from our parent company, SNC's, 60+ years of proven heritage as a leader in innovative, advanced technology solutions and open architecture integrations for aerospace and national security customers.

ASPI INNOVATION PARTNER

THIS INITIATIVE
IS SPONSORED BY:

WHAT WORKS

As ASPI's Strategic Innovation Partner, What Works drives the design, technical advancement and commercialisation of ASPI's flagship platforms such as the China Defence University Tracker and Critical Technology Tracker. Drawing on over 25 years of expertise in strategy, technology and AI, we empower partners to grow, adapt and thrive through practical innovation in an era of rapid change.

SPEAKERS





JUSTIN BASSI

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASPI

Justin Bassi is the Executive Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

From June 2019 to March 2022 he was Chief of Staff to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne. Immediately prior to this, Justin was the Cyber Intelligence Mission Manager at the Office of National Intelligence, where he led the integration of cyber security and critical technologies across the National Intelligence Community.

From September 2015 to August 2018, Justin was the National Security Adviser to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. He led the team advising the PM and Cabinet Ministers on Australia's national security, defence and international relations. This included responsibility for all areas of security legislation, policy and operations, including counter terrorism, foreign interference, cyberspace, intelligence and border security.

Prior to that, Justin spent over 10 years in the Australian Public Service, including in the intelligence community for the Office of National Assessments and at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet where he had responsibility for cyber security policy.

Justin is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Justin completed a Bachelor of Laws and Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice at the Australian National University and a Bachelors of Applied Science in Media at the University of Canberra.



DR MARIGOLD BLACK

SENIOR LECTURER IN WAR STUDIES, UNSW CANBERRA

Dr Marigold Black is a Senior Lecturer in War Studies at UNSW Canberra. She trained as an historian of ideas specialising in sovereignty, and now conducts research on the hidden architectures of thought shaping security and defence strategies in complex and evolving environments. Before joining UNSW Canberra, Dr Black was a Research Leader in Strategy and Statecraft at RAND Australia where she led and contributed to research across a wide range of national security and strategic policy issues including military integration of robotics and autonomous systems, defence mobilisation planning, governance in domains with alternative spatiality, deterrence (economic, grey zone, and nuclear), innovation systems, countering foreign interference, and sovereign capability. Dr Black has held fellowships with the Australian Army Research Centre, the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University, and the Laureate Research Program in International History at the University of Sydney. She was also Founder and Director of a private research company supporting clients in the Australian defence and national security sectors. Dr Black completed her PhD in history at the University of Sydney, where her research explored the intellectual pre-history of the U.S. Constitution, focusing on understandings of sovereignty before and during the American Revolution. For 2026-2027, Dr Black is also a non-resident fellow at RAND Australia.



AIR MARSHAL STEPHEN CHAPPELL DSC CSC OAM

CHIEF OF AIR FORCE, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

Air Marshal Stephen Chappell DSC CSC OAM joined the Royal Australian Air Force in January 1993, graduating from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1995 with a Bachelor of Arts.
Air Marshal Chappell has held command appointments at Squadron, Wing and Component levels and has accumulated over 2,900 flying hours on the F/A-18A, F-15C, F/A-18F and EA18G.

Senior staff appointments include Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Defence Force late in 2017, supporting both Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin, and General Angus Campbell. He was selected as Chief of Air Force and promoted to Air Marshal in July 2024.

Air Marshal Chappell received a Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC) for outstanding achievement in air combat development and preparedness as Commander of No. 1 Squadron in January 2017, and a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) in recognition of his 'distinguished command and leadership' on Operation Okra in June 2017.

He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for meritorious service to the Royal Australian Air Force in the field of Air Combat in the 2013 Queen's Birthday Honours
In 2013, Air Marshal Chappell attended the Australian Command and Staff College, completing a Master of Military and Strategic Studies and was awarded the Chief of Air Force prize. He graduated the Defence Strategic Studies Course at the Australian War College in 2017.



HON. PAT CONROY MP

AUSTRALIA'S MINISTER FOR DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND MINISTER FOR PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS

The Hon. Pat Conroy MP is the Minister for Defence Industry, Minister for Pacific Island Affairs, and the Federal Member for Shortland.

Pat was elected to the House of Representatives as the Member for Charlton, New South Wales in 2013 and, following an electoral redistribution, as the Member for Shortland, New South Wales in 2016, 2019, 2022 and 2025.

From 2016 to 2019, Pat was Shadow Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy and Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure.
In 2019, he was appointed Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence and Shadow Minister Assisting for Climate Change and Energy.

From 2008 to 2013, he was Principal Policy Adviser and then Deputy Chief of Staff to the Hon. Greg Combet, AM, MP, who served as a Minister in the Rudd and Gillard Labor Governments. In these roles, Pat worked in developing significant policies in areas including Defence Materiel, Defence Science and Industry and Innovation.

Born in 1979, Pat was raised on the NSW Central Coast and went on to study Economics at the University of Sydney, graduating with Honours in 2000.

Pat is married with two children and lives in his electorate of Shortland which covers the Eastern Lake Macquarie area and the Northern Central Coast. He enjoys cooking, playing rugby union and watching rugby league.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL SUSAN COYLE AM CSC DSM

CHIEF OF JOINT CAPABILITIES, AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Lieutenant General Susan Coyle enlisted as a soldier in the Army Reserves in 1987 before completing a science degree at the Australian Defence Force Academy and graduating from the Royal Military College in 1992 into the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. Appointed to Chief of Joint Capabilities Group in July 2024, she proudly leads the Space and Cyber Domains and National Support for Defence.

Lieutenant General Coyle has worked at the tactical, operational and strategic levels and is fortunate to have had multiple opportunities to command. Key appointments have included Head Information Warfare, Commander Forces Command, Commander Joint Task Force 633, Commander 6th Brigade, Commander Task Group Afghanistan and Commanding Officer 17th Signal Regiment. She has deployed to Timor Leste, Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Lieutenant General Coyle holds three post-graduate masters degrees and is a Distinguished Graduate of the United States Army War College and an alumnus of the Harvard Advanced Management Program.

Lieutenant General Coyle was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for Commander Joint Task Force 633, a Distinguished Service Medal as Deputy Commander JTF 636/Commander Task Group Afghanistan, and a Conspicuous Service Cross as Commanding Officer 17th Signal Regiment. Whilst posted to the United States, she received the U.S. Army Commendation Medal as the 11th Signal Brigade Satellite Engineer.



PROFESSOR RENATO CRUZ DE CASTRO

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

Renato Cruz De Castro is a distinguished professor at the Department of International Studies, De La Salle University, Manila. He has written over 100 articles on international relations and security, published in several scholarly journals and edited volumes in the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Malaysia, France, Singapore, Taiwan, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United States. In 2019, the Board of Trustees of the Philippine Political Science Association (PPSA) announced that Professor De Castro is the most prolific Filipino Political Scientist in terms of scholarly publication and one of the top 10 Filipino Political Scientists in terms of citations. On December 20, 2024, the AFP Chief-of-Staff, Lt. General Romeo Brawner Jr., awarded Professor De Castro with the Sandigan AFP Stakeholder Award for his “extensive research, public education initiatives, and active involvement in institutions, which have significantly played a fundamental role in advancing the knowledge of regional security dynamics and its implications for Philippine sovereignty and regional security.” He earned his Ph.D. in Government and International Studies from the University of South Carolina as a Fulbright Scholar in 2001. He obtained his B.A. and two master’s degrees from the University of the Philippines.



DR MALCOLM DAVIS

SENIOR ANALYST, DEFENCE STRATEGY PROGRAM, ASPI

Dr. Malcolm Davis is a Senior Analyst in ASPI's Defence Strategy Program, broadly focusing on current and future warfare, space policy and security, and defence policy. Malcolm is currently working on analysing issues related to Australian defence capability and future warfare, including air power and autonomous systems, space capability, and defence strategy.

Before joining ASPI in January 2016, Malcolm was a post-Doctoral Research Fellow on Chinese military modernisation at Bond University from 2012-2016. From October 2010 to March 2012, he worked with the Department of Defence in Strategic Policy Division (EL1) and from October 2007-October 2010, with Navy Headquarters (APS-6). From August 2000 to October 2007, he was a Lecturer in Defence Studies with Kings College London, at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in Shrivenham, United Kingdom.

Malcolm has published extensively with ASPI, and through external academic publications since joining ASPI, focusing mainly on space policy and space security, analysis of military technology, defence policy, and Australian defence policy.

Malcolm holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Politics (Strategic Studies) from the University of Hull, focusing on maritime and naval capability development in Asia. He holds two Master of Arts degrees, from the Australian National University and from Lancaster University, both on Strategic Studies. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from the Flinders University.



PROFESSOR PETER J. DEAN PHD SFHEA

GENERAL SIR FRANCIS HASSETT CHAIR OF MILITARY STUDIES, AUSTRALIAN WAR COLLEGE AND PROFESSOR OF STRATEGIC STUDIES, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Professor Peter J. Dean PhD SFHEA is the General Sir Francis Hassett Chair of Military Studies at the Australian War College and professor of strategic studies at The Australian National University.

In 2022-23 he was the Co-Lead of the Defence Strategic Review Secretariat, where he served as Senior Advisor and principal author for the Independent Leads, Professor The Hon. Stephen Smith and Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AFC (Ret'd). In 2024 he was the principal consulting author for the Australian Government's 2024 Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Plan.

Previously Professor Dean was Director of the Foreign Policy and Defence Program at United States Studies Centre – Sydney University, Chair of War Studies and the Director of the Defence and Security Institute at the University of Western Australia, and Pro Vice Chancellor (Education) at the University of Western Australia. Prior to these roles he held numerous leadership and research roles the Australian National University, The University of Notre Dame Australia and the University of New South Wales.

Professor Dean has an extensive background in strategic and defence studies with a focus on Australia, the United States and Japan.

Professor Dean has been a Fulbright Fellow and Endeavour Research Scholar and in addition to his Hassett Chair Role he is currently a non-resident Senior Advisor for Defence Strategy at the US Studies Centre and Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington D.C.



PROFESSOR MELISSA DE ZWART

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN PLANTS FOR SPACE AND PROFESSOR, SPACE LAW AND GOVERNANCE, ANDY THOMAS CENTRE FOR SPACE RESOURCES, ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY

Melissa is the Deputy Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Plants for Space and Professor, Space Law and Governance, Andy Thomas Centre for Space Resources, at Adelaide University.

Melissa is a globally recognised expert in space law, working in the areas of commercial and military uses of outer space, encompassing both domestic and international space law. She has worked closely with the Australian space industry, including previously serving as Deputy Chair of the Space Industry Association of Australia, as well as on the successful bid team for the 2025 International Astronautical Congress.

She has published widely on all legal and regulatory aspects of the space environment and contributed extensively to reviews and reforms of the regulatory framework. Her work on the intersection of technology and law has been influential to regulatory reform and has been cited by the High Court of Australia and in several government reports, as well as in Parliamentary debates and legislative review.

Melissa served on the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Classification Review Board (2009-2014) and as a Legal Officer, Royal Australian Navy (Reserve) (2019-2025). Melissa is a Member of the International Institute of Space Law and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.



STEPHEN DZIEDZIC

FOREIGN AFFAIRS (ASIA PACIFIC) REPORTER, ABC NEWS

Stephen Dziedzic is the ABC's Foreign Affairs (Asia Pacific) reporter, based in the Parliament House bureau. He covers foreign policy and Australia's relationship with countries in the Asia Pacific region. Stephen has worked for the ABC since 2007.



HON. DR DAVID FEENEY

COUNCIL MEMBER, ASPI

David Feeney was appointed Victorian Defence Industry Advocate (VDIA) in November 2025. David has worked across defence industry in various board, strategic advisory and consulting roles.

David's previous work experience includes working in the trade union movement and the organisational wing of the Australian Labor Party. He served as a Federal Industrial Officer in the National Office of the Transport Workers Union (1994 to 1999), State Secretary and Campaign Director for the Australian Labor Party in Victoria (1999-2002) and Campaign Director for the Australian Labor Party in South Australia (2005-2006). David worked as the Director of Strategy in the Office of Premier Steve Bracks (2002-2005).

In 2007 David was elected as a Senator for Victoria, being appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Defence in 2010 in the First Gillard Ministry. His responsibilities included ADF force structure, the Pacific Maritime Security Plan, acting as a liaison with Pacific Island Countries and responsibility for ADF Reserves and Defence Estate. In 2013 David was elected to the House of Representatives as the member for Batman and was appointed Shadow Minister for Justice and Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence.

David's qualifications include a PhD from the University of Melbourne and a Master of Public Policy and Management (MPPM) from Monash University. David is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



JOEL FITZGIBBON

FORMER MINISTER FOR DEFENCE AND MEMBER FOR HUNTER

Joel brings over 25 years of experience as a former federal Member of Parliament for the New South Wales seat of Hunter. Throughout his extensive career in politics, Joel served in Cabinet and held the ministerial portfolios of Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Minister for Defence, and Chief Government Whip.

He also held several shadow portfolios throughout his time in Opposition, including Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Shadow Minister for Resources, Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Australia, Shadow Minister for Small Business and Tourism, and Shadow Assistant Treasurer.

Joel has served on a number of parliamentary committees, covering diverse issues including regional affairs; agriculture and resources; economics and finance; employment and workplace relations; foreign affairs, defence and trade; and public administration. Prior to his time in federal parliament, Joel was a local Councillor and Deputy Mayor of the Cessnock City Council, and a small business owner.

Joel provides CMAX Advisory's clients with corporate strategy and policy advice, assisting international and Australian businesses navigate the unique Australian business landscape. He also provides advice for Australian companies looking to expand their business overseas.



RAQUEL GARBERS

NON-RESIDENT SENIOR FELLOW, AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICY INSTITUTE

Raquel is a Non-Resident Senior Fellow with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. She is the former Director General for Strategic Defence Policy at the Canadian Department of National Defence, where she served as the principal architect of Canada's defence policy, led strategic work on the future of Canada-US relations in the new world order, and represented Canada at high-level international meetings, including NATO and the Five Eyes.

In her time at Defence, she also served as a visiting practitioner on hybrid warfare with the US Department of Defense (Hawaii) and co-led the Canada at Economic War program at the Centre for International Governance Innovation.

Raquel has almost three decades of experience in senior roles across the Canadian defence, security and intelligence community. She is one of Canada's leading geo-strategic experts specialising in hybrid threats, military operations and the defence industrial base, with a particular focus on hostile economic statecraft. In addition to her work with ASPI, Raquel sits on the Global Advisory Board for the European Values Center.



MARKUS GARLAUSKAS

DIRECTOR, INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY INITIATIVE, SCOWCROFT CENTER FOR STRATEGY AND SECURITY, ATLANTIC COUNCIL

Markus Garlauskas is the director of the Indo-Pacific Security Initiative of the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security. He leads the initiative's efforts focused on geopolitical risk, conflict and nuclear deterrence, United States strategy, and building cooperation with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. He led projects and tabletop exercises focused on deterrence and defense issues in East Asia as a nonresident senior fellow from August 2020 until assuming his duties as director in January 2023.

Garlauskas served in the US government for nearly twenty years. He was appointed to the Senior National Intelligence Service as the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) for North Korea on the National Intelligence Council from July 2014 to June 2020. As NIO, he led the US intelligence community's strategic analysis and wargaming on North Korea issues and expanded analytic outreach to non-government experts.

Garlauskas served for nearly twelve years overseas at the headquarters of United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command and US Forces Korea in Seoul. His staff assignments there included chief of the Intelligence Estimates Branch and director of the Strategy Division. For his service in Korea, he received the Joint Civilian Distinguished Service Award, the highest civilian award from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Garlauskas holds a BA in History from Kent State University. He earned a Master's Degree from Georgetown University's Security Studies graduate program, where he is now an adjunct professor.



VICE ADMIRAL MARK HAMMOND AO RAN

CHIEF OF NAVY, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

Vice Admiral (VADM) Mark Hammond AO RAN joined the RAN in 1986 as an electronics technician before commissioning as a naval officer in 1988. He is a dual qualified officer, graduating from the RAN Principal Warfare Officers Course, the Netherlands and United States Navy Submarine Command courses, and Australia's Senior Submariner.

VADM Hammond served extensively in Collins Class submarines. He also gained international experience in French, British and US nuclear attack submarines and Dutch conventional submarines.

On promotion to Commodore, VADM Hammond was appointed Director General Maritime Operations. He then returned to the United States as the liaison officer to the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was awarded the United States Legion of Merit (Officer) for his performance in this role and, in 2018, was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for exceptional service to the Australian Defence Force.

On promotion to Rear Admiral, VADM Hammond assumed duties as the Deputy Chief of Navy in 2018, and in late 2020, was appointed Commander of the Australian Fleet.

VADM Hammond assumed command as Chief of Navy on 7 July 2022. In 2023, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service to the Royal Australian Navy in senior command roles.

VADM Hammond holds a Bachelor of Science, Master of Management, Master of Maritime Studies and is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program.



PETER HARTCHER

POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL EDITOR, THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD AND THE AGE

Peter Hartcher is the political editor and international editor of the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, a non-resident fellow at the Lowy Institute. Peter has been writing about power and politics, war and peace, booms and busts for 45 years. His latest book is Red Zone: China's Challenge and Australia's Future. His forthcoming book is The Age of Carnivores.



AIR VICE–MARSHAL NICHOLAS HOGAN CSC

HEAD OF AIR FORCE CAPABILITY, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

Air Vice-Marshal Nicholas Hogan CSC joined the Royal Australian Air Force as a (then) navigator in 1991. He graduated from flying training in 1993 and was posted to fly the C-130 Hercules. Over the next 16 years, Air Vice-Marshal Hogan accrued over 6500 military flight hours in all C-130 roles and missions. During this time he served as a United States Air Force exchange officer at Pope AFB (North Carolina), staff officer in Special Operations Command and Joint Operations Command, the C-130 Wing Headquarters as the standards and safety officer and as the Executive Officer at 37SQN.

At the cessation of his flying duties in 2009, Air Vice-Marshal Hogan completed Australian Command and Staff College and then served as a staff officer for the Chief of the Defence Force prior to taking Command of Number 285 Squadron. At the completion of his command, he served as Staff Officer to the Chief of Air Force prior to assuming the role of the Director of Current Military Commitments in Military Strategic Commitments for which he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC).

Air Vice-Marshal Hogan took Command of Number 84 Wing in 2019 prior to assuming the role of Director General Space Domain Review in October 2020. In conducting the Space Domain Review, he assisted in the creation of Defence Space Command where he held the inaugural role of Director General Space Capability in 2022.

Air Vice-Marshal Hogan commenced the role of Director General Force Options and Plans in 2023 where he assisted to design the future force of the Australian Defence Force. Air Vice-Marshal Hogan was promoted to the role of Head of Air Force Capability in December 2024.



MIKE HUGHES AIM

DIRECTOR, DEFENCE STRATEGY PROGRAM, ASPI

Mike Hughes is the Director of the ASPI Defence Strategy Program.

Prior to joining ASPI, Mike led Protegas Australia's multi-source fusion capability and supported clients' intelligence planning, collection, analysis and production needs. Before this, Mike spent 27 years in the national security community, primarily in the NIC. In 2022, Mike's distinguished service was recognised with an Australian Intelligence Medal (AIM) for his collaborative style, foresight and initiative in a series of analytical, liaison and senior executive roles. Mike retired from the Australian Public Service in 2023 as ONI's Indo-Pacific Intelligence Mission Manager, where he drove the optimisation of NIC resources in support of Australia's Indo-Pacific policies.

Mike has covered Defence and national security issues across the South Pacific, South East and North East Asia, and built close cooperation with partners across the region through his leadership of intelligence diplomacy initiatives. He also implemented the inaugural trilateral defence intelligence initiative with counterparts in Japan and The United States and in South Korea and the United States respectively. Mike has served as a diplomat in Washington DC, where he promoted Australia's defence, intelligence and national security interests while building an extensive network in the US defense, intelligence and policy community.

Mike holds a first-class honours degree in Political Science from the University of Western Australia.



HUGH JEFFREY

DEPUTY SECRETARY, STRATEGY, POLICY, AND INDUSTRY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Hugh Jeffrey was appointed to Defence in August 2018 with a background in foreign and national security policy and intelligence.

Prior to joining Defence, Hugh Jeffrey held positions in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Office of National Assessments.

Hugh Jeffrey has had 4 overseas postings, including as Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of Australia in Washington DC and to NATO in Afghanistan, where he was Senior Adviser to the International Security Assistance Force Commander and the NATO Ambassador.

Hugh Jeffrey is married and has 2 young children.



ADMIRAL DAVID JOHNSTON AC RAN

CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE

Admiral Johnston joined the Royal Australian Naval College as a junior entry Cadet Midshipman in 1978. Graduating as a Seaman Officer in 1982, he later specialised as a Principal Warfare Officer.

He was appointed Chief of the Defence Force on 10 July 2024. He has extensive experience across a range of leadership, maritime and joint operations, training and capability management appointments in Australia and overseas.

Admiral Johnston's senior command appointments include Commanding Officer of HMAS Adelaide (FFG 01), HMAS Newcastle (FFG 06), Commander Border Protection Command, Chief of Joint Operations, and Vice Chief of the Defence Force.

His operational experience includes Operation RELEX (2002), Operation QUICKSTEP in Fiji (2006), Operation RESOLUTE (2007) and Operation SLIPPER (2010).

Admiral Johnston's honours and awards include his appointment as Member of the Order of Australia (2012), advancement to Officer of the Order of Australia (2018) and Companion of the Order of Australia (2022) 'for eminent service to the Australian Defence Force through strategic stewardship and capability engagement.'



VICE ADMIRAL JUSTIN JONES AO CSC RAN

CHIEF OF JOINT OPERATIONS, AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Vice Admiral Justin Jones assumed responsibilities as the seventh Chief of Joint Operations on 5 July 2024.

Vice Admiral Jones is a Principal Warfare Officer with dual specialisations in surface warfare and advanced navigation. He has served in patrol boats, guided missile destroyers, guided missile frigates, amphibious assault ships, and combat support ships. He has deployed operationally to the Middle East four times, been force assigned to 11 named operations, and deployed into the Indo-Pacific region on 13 occasions during his career.

Vice Admiral Jones had command of the guided missile frigate HMAS Newcastle from December 2008 to July 2010. In 2009, the ship was awarded the Duke of Gloucester Cup for overall efficiency and the Spada Shield for the surface combatant foremost in operations. Vice Admiral Jones then had command of the combat support ship HMAS Success from October 2014 to May 2016, which included a deployment to the Middle East and North West Indian Ocean assigned to Operation MANITOU. He resumed command of Success from 18 August to 18 November 2016 for an Indian Ocean deployment.

Vice Admiral Jones was born in Adelaide, South Australia. He is a graduate of the Royal Australian Naval College and the Australian Command and Staff College, and holds a Master of Management Studies, a Master of Arts (Strategy and Policy) and a Graduate Diploma in Defence Studies.



DR. LAVINA LEE

DIRECTOR, FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENCE PROGRAM, UNITED STATES STUDIES CENTRE

Associate Professor Lavina Lee is Director of the Foreign Policy and Defence Program at the United States Studies Centre where she leads research on the Australia-US alliance, geo-strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, and opportunities for foreign and defence cooperation among US allies and partners. Prior to this, she was Chair of the Discipline of Security Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney, having joined Macquarie as an academic in 2007. She has held board positions, including as a member of the Council of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (2020-2023) and as a Director of the Institute for Regional Security. Prior to joining Macquarie University, she was a political risk consultant with Control Risks Group.

She has led projects for the Australian government and think tanks on opportunities and weaknesses of the 'Quad', Chinese influence in South-East Asia, the role of democracy promotion in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, deterrence in the grey-zone and the implications of Chinese nuclear modernisation on US extended deterrence. Her work integrates academic and policy approaches, and she speaks widely to expert and lay audiences on international and security issues.

Dr Lee has commerce and law degrees from the University of NSW, an MA in International Peace and Security from King's College, the University of London (with distinction), and a PhD in International Relations from Sydney University.



KATE LOUIS

HEAD OF DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY, AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY GROUP AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY GROUP DEFENCE COUNCIL

Kate joined the Australian Industry Group in 2017 following an extensive career in the Department of Defence.

Kate started at the Department of Defence as a graduate in 1997. She has extensive experience with Defence capability development, acquisition, contestability and industry policy. Her final position with Defence was First Assistant Secretary Defence Industry Policy Division where Kate was responsible for the effective implementation of the Government's approach to Defence Industry policy.

As the Executive Director of the Ai Group Defence Council, Kate has the privilege of working with industry and Defence to provide trusted policy advice and help build the Defence and industry partnership.

Kate has a Bachelor of Laws (1st Class Honours) and Bachelor of Arts from the Australian National University.



SAMANTHA MAIDEN

POLITICAL EDITOR, NEWS.COM.AU

Samantha Maiden is the political editor for news.com.au. She has also won three Walkleys for her coverage of federal politics including the Gold Walkley in 2021. She was also previously awarded the Graham Perkin Australian Journalist of the Year, Kennedy Awards Journalist of the Year and Press Gallery Journalist of the Year. A press gallery veteran, she has covered federal politics for more than 25 years.



PETER MALINAUSKAS MP

PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Peter Malinauskas is the 47th Premier of South Australia.

Adelaide born-and-bred, Peter studied commerce at the University of Adelaide and has dedicated his working life to raising the standard of living for everyday South Australians.

He was elected to State Parliament in 2015, became Labor Leader in 2018 and was elected Premier of South Australia in 2022.

Peter is leading a government which is getting things done for South Australia, with a strong focus on the state's prosperity for today and for the long term.

Beyond his official duties, the Premier's greatest loves are his wife Annabel, their four young children and the mighty Port Adelaide Football Club and the Adelaide Uni Blacks.



HON. RICHARD MARLES MP

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

The Hon. Richard Marles MP is the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, Minister for Defence and the Federal Member for Corio.

Richard was first elected to the House of Representatives for Corio, Victoria in 2007.

Richard's previous ministerial appointments include Minister of Trade, Minister for Employment, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry, and Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Affairs.

Born in 1967, Richard was raised and educated in Geelong and went on to study Law and Science, achieving a LLB (Hons) and a BSc from the University of Melbourne.

Richard lives in Geelong with his wife Rachel and has four children, Sam, Isabella, Harvey and Georgia.

He is a devoted Geelong Cats supporter, golf fanatic, a keen photographer, a snowdome collector and local history enthusiast.



DR JENNIFER MORONEY

SENIOR POLITICAL SCIENTIST, RAND CORPORATION

Dr. Jennifer D. P. Moroney is a Senior Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation and has worked for RAND for 23 years. She specializes primarily in security strategy/planning, evaluation of security cooperation, including technical SC areas such as space and cyber, foreign military sales, international armaments cooperation, and assessing barriers to interoperability with allies and partners. She co-manages RAND's support to DSCA on institutional capacity building work and is one of RAND U.S.'s leaders on AUKUS (Australia, UK, U.S.). She is heavily engaged in a leadership role in RAND's security cooperation research for the DoW including the OSW/PP, DSCA, Air Force, Space Force, Army, and Combatant Commands. Dr. Moroney served on the Defense Science Board in 2020. From 2014-2018, Dr. Moroney served as the inaugural Director of RAND Australia and was based in Canberra. Prior to that, Dr. Moroney served as the Director of RAND's Defense and Political Sciences Research Department. Prior to joining RAND, Dr. Moroney worked in the private sector and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense/NATO Policy. She has been an adjunct professor at The George Washington University, a NATO Research Fellow, and served as the associate director of RAND Project AIR FORCE's Strategy and Doctrine Program. Dr. Moroney received her Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Kent, UK. She has over 200 peer reviewed publications.



H.E. VASYL MYROSHNYCHENKO

AMBASSADOR OF UKRAINE TO AUSTRALIA

Vasyl Myroshnychenko resumed the role as the Ambassador of Ukraine to Australia on April 1, 2022. He briefly served as an Advisor to the Minister of Defence in March of 2022. Prior to that, he served as a member of the Supervisory Board of the Ukrainian Institute, a cultural diplomacy outfit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service in March 2022, he was an active business and civil society leader for two decades. He was a Chevening Scholar and earned MSc in Politics of the World Economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2006. He also olds two degrees in international relations from Institute of International Relations, Kyiv National Shevchenko University.

Vasyl has two children Yaroslava (22) and Yurii (8) and is married to Liana.



MOTOYA NAKAMURA

HEAD OF SATELLITE CONSTELLATION PROJECT GROUP, IHI CORPORATION

Motoya Nakamura is Head of the Satellite Constellation Project Group in the Space Systems Business Development Department at IHI Corporation, sitting within the company's Aero Engine, Space and Defense Business Area. In this role he leads IHI's flagship initiative to build a 24-satellite Earth observation constellation combining synthetic aperture radar, optical, infrared, hyperspectral, radio frequency and VDES sensors — a sovereign capability project intended to strengthen Japan's national security and support civilian and commercial applications, with imagery to be shared with allies and like-minded partners.

Motoya joined IHI in 1994 and his career has spanned the company's heavy engineering and energy businesses, including as Project Manager and later General Manager in the Power Plant and Energy & Plant Operations divisions, and as Vice President and Director of Operations at IHI INC. in the United States.

From 2021 to 2026, he served as Managing Director of IHI Engineering Australia, where he led IHI's local operations and partnerships before taking up his current role in Tokyo. Motoya holds a Bachelor of Engineering from the Tokyo Institute of Technology and an MBA from Globis University.



DR OSAMU NISHIWAKI

DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY, MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY OF JAPAN

Dr Osamu Nishiwaki is currently serving as Director-General for Trade and Economic Security at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of Japan. In his current position, he is in charge of economic security policy as well as defense industry policy.
Immediately prior to his current post, he served as Deputy Commissioner of the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA), Ministry of Defense, where he was responsible for defense industry policy and defense equipment transfers, including the Mogami case for Australia.
Dr. Nishiwaki joined the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in 1993, and has since held a range of senior positions including Director for International Export Controls and Principal Director for Multilateral Trade Policy.
Dr. Nishiwaki holds a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Tokyo, Master of Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, a Doctorate in Policy Studies (Doctor of Policy Studies) from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS).
He is the author and co-author of several books, including Economic Security and Technological Superiority, Economic Security and Semi-Conductor Industry and the International Trade Order under U.S.–China Strategic Rivalry.



MAJOR GENERAL GREGORY NOVAK AM

COMMANDER, DEFENCE SPACE COMMAND, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Major General Novak graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1995 to the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. Early in his career he filled a range of regimental and staff appointments including Staff Officer Grade 1 for battlefield digitisation at Army Headquarters and Commanding Officer of the 1st Combat Signal Regiment.

He was promoted to Brigadier in January 2020 and appointed Commander Defence Strategic Communications in the Chief Information Officer Group.

In December 2021, Major General Novak was appointed Commander of the Australian Army's 6th Brigade where he led some of Defence's most capable intelligence, surveillance, electronic warfare, cyber, battlespace control, and force-level engineering units. He was promoted to Major General in October 2023 and assumed his current appointment as Commander Defence Space Command in December 2023.

Major General Novak has deployed to Bougainville, Afghanistan, the broader Middle East Area of Operations, and twice to East Timor.

Major General Novak holds a Master of Science in Information Technology and a Master of Arts in Strategy and Policy. He held the appointment of Head of Corps for Army's Royal Australian Corps of Signals from January 2020 to December 2023 and was awarded Member of the Order of Australia in 2023 Australia Day Honours for exceptional service in ADF command and liaison appointments.



MATT OPIE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DEFENCE SA

As Chief Executive of Defence SA Matt's priority is to support and grow the defence and space sectors in South Australia to contribute to the state's prosperity and national defence capability. His role also encompasses Chief Executive of the South Australian Space Industry Centre and responsibility for the Defence Innovation Partnership and Veterans SA.

Matt has worked on high technology defence projects as a project and program manager, tender manager, campaign manager, in strategy and business development and industry engagement across Australia, the Asia-Pacific, US and Europe.

An Australian Defence Force Academy and Royal Military College Duntroon graduate, Matt served as an officer in the Royal Australian Corps of Signals in Australia, Europe and the Middle East and has held senior defence positions across government, defence industry and academia over the course of his 40-year career.

Matt has a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Business Administration.



MARK PALMER

VICE PRESIDENT, VISION SYSTEMS, SHIELD AI

Mark Palmer is Vice President of Vision Systems at Shield AI, leading the development of AI-enabled vision and autonomy technologies for defence and aerospace applications. With more than two decades of experience across aviation, defence, and advanced technology sectors, including international leadership roles across multiple global markets, he has held senior roles at Sentient Vision Systems, BAE Systems, and Thales, and is recognised for driving innovation in ISR, autonomous systems, and AI-powered defence capability development across allied markets.



JENNIFER PARKER

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE, DEFENCE AND SECURITY INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND PRINCIPAL AND FOUNDER, BARRIER STRATEGIC ADVISORY

Jennifer Parker is the principal and founder of Barrier Strategic Advisory. Having served for over two decades in the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as a warfare officer, she holds a number of university and think tank affiliations, including Adjunct Professor of Practice at the University of Western Australia Defence and Security Institute, Non-Resident Fellow at the Lowy Institute, Expert Associate at the National Security College at the Australian National University, and Adjunct Fellow in naval studies at the University of New South Wales Canberra. Jennifer is also an International Fellow at the London-based Council on Geostrategy.

During her time in the RAN Jennifer specialised as a Principal Warfare Officer, including undertaking deep specialist training with the Royal Navy in Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer. Jennifer has extensive operational experience from the Middle East to the Caribbean, and most areas in between. She has undertaken a series of naval appointments nationally and internationally in areas including force design strategy, career management, international exercise planning and operations. That included service as an exchange officer with the Royal Navy and as second in command of HMAS Darwin, one of the Royal Australian Navy's guided missile frigates.

Jennifer's last appointment in the RAN was as Director of Operations in Bahrain of the Combined Maritime Forces, a 47-nation coalition promoting maritime security in the Middle East and Indian Ocean region.



SENATOR JAMES PATERSON

SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE AND LIBERAL SENATOR FOR VICTORIA

Senator James Paterson is a Liberal Senator for Victoria, and Shadow Minister for Defence. First elected in March 2016 at age 28, Senator Paterson is the youngest Liberal ever elected to the Senate.

He was previously the Shadow Minister for Finance, and prior to that, the Shadow Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security, and Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

He has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Melbourne. He completed the Senior Executives in National and International Security program at Harvard's Kennedy School, is a graduate of the McKinnon Institute Advanced Political Leadership program, was the 2023 SR Nathan Exchange Fellow to Singapore and was a 2023 Asia Fellow of the International Strategy Forum. Senator Paterson is the patron of Liberal Friends of Israel.



MARIA ROST RUBLEE

PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Maria Rost Rublee is Professor of International Relations at the University of Melbourne and an internationally recognised expert on nuclear politics, international security, and the role of norms, legitimacy, and public trust in national security decision-making. Her research focuses on how beliefs, social dynamics, and institutional practices shape defence policy choices in democratic states, particularly in high-risk and high-consequence domains such as nuclear governance.

Her multi-method scholarship has made significant contributions to academic and policy debates on nuclear security, non-proliferation, and defence governance. She is the author of an award-winning monograph, co-editor of three edited volumes, and has published more than 40 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters in leading journals including Security Studies, Comparative Political Studies, and the Journal of European Public Policy.
Prior to entering academia, Professor Rublee served as an intelligence officer for the United States government, bringing practical experience of security institutions to her research and policy engagement. Her professional contributions have been recognised by the Australian Political Science Association's 2025 Academic Leadership Award and her selection to the Center for Strategic & International Studies' 2022 Top 50 U.S. National Security & Foreign Affairs Leadership List. She is President of Women in International Security-Australia and serves on the editorial boards of International Affairs, Contemporary Security Policy, Nonproliferation Review, and the Australian Journal of International Affairs.



NICOLA SMITH

CANBERRA BUREAU CHIEF, AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW

Nicola Smith is the Canberra bureau chief for the Australian Financial Review, a role she assumed in 2025 following a career as a foreign correspondent for the UK's Sunday Times and Telegraph. Her extensive international reporting has spanned the globe, from the administrative heart of the European Union to the front lines of global flashpoints including North Korea, the South China Sea, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ukraine. After an initial posting in Brussels, she covered Asia while based in Delhi, Taipei and Seoul and brings a global lens to covering national and international security.



COURTNEY STEWART

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEFENCE STRATEGY PROGRAM, ASPI

Courtney Stewart is the Deputy Director of the Defence Strategy Program at ASPI. Her current work focuses on advancing new coalition-based approaches to deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region, strengthening Australia's national defence strategy, and contributing to major defence initiatives shaping the future of force structure, capability delivery, and regional security cooperation.

Before joining ASPI, Courtney held senior advisory roles in the Australian Department of Defence, including at the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator and Army Headquarters. From 2015 to 2018, she served as the US Department of Defense Policy Exchange Officer to the Australian Strategic Policy Division. Previously she held roles in the Pentagon, including Country Director for Korea, Senior Advisor for Preparedness Policy, Nuclear Deterrence Policy Analyst and as a member of the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review staff. She was the lead author and chief US negotiator of the 2013 US–ROK Tailored Deterrence Strategy Against North Korean Nuclear and Other WMD Threats. Her contributions were recognised with a US Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service in 2015. She holds an MA in Science and Security from King's College London (with Merit), and BAs in political science and history from the University of California, Los Angeles, where she graduated with highest departmental honours.



PROFESSOR BEC STRATING FAIIA

DIRECTOR, LA TROBE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL SECURITY AND PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

Bec Strating FAIIA is the Director of the La Trobe Centre for Global Security and a Professor of International Relations at La Trobe University, Melbourne. She is the Australian Member Committee Co-Chair of the Council on Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific and serves as an Australian representative in the Expert and Eminent Persons Grouping in the ASEAN Regional Forum. Bec's research focuses primarily on Asian regional security, maritime disputes, and Australian foreign and defence policy. Her publications includes 'Girt by Sea: reimagining Australia's Security' with Professor Joanne Wallis (La Trobe University Press/Black Inc, 2024), which was launched by Foreign Minister Penny Wong in April 2024. Bec currently leads the DFAT-funded "Blue Security" network focused on maritime security issues in the Indo-Pacific. She is currently a non-resident fellow at National Bureau of Asian Research, an expert affiliate at the Australian National University's National Security College, and Chair of the Women in International Security-Australia's advisory board. Bec received her PhD from Monash University in 2013 and was the Director of La Trobe Asia from 2020 until 2025.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIMON STUART AO DSC

CHIEF OF ARMY, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY

Lieutenant General Stuart assumed command of the Australian Army on 2 July 2022.

Enlisting as a soldier in 1987, Lieutenant General Stuart was commissioned into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps in 1990.

He has commanded on operations on five occasions at the company, Joint Task Force, brigade and force levels in East Timor, Afghanistan and Egypt/Israel respectively. He has worked in joint, whole of government, international and multi-national environments for most of the past 20 years. Most recently, Lieutenant General Stuart fulfilled the role of Head of Land Capability in Army Headquarters after a three-year deployment in command of the Multinational Force and Observers from 2017-19.

Lieutenant General Stuart is a graduate of the Royal Military College - Duntroon (1990), the United Kingdom's Joint Services Command and Staff College (2003), the United States Army War College (2015) and the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program (2022). He holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of New England and Masters' degrees in Project Management (UNSW), Arts - Defence Studies (Kings College, London) and Strategy (US Army War College).

Lieutenant General Stuart's honours and awards include his appointment as Member of the Order of Australia (2011), the Distinguished Service Cross (2014) and advancement to Officer of the Order of Australia (2020).



H.E. KAZUHIRO SUZUKI

AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO AUSTRALIA

Ambassador SUZUKI Kazuhiro was appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Australia in March 2023. Preceding this assignment, he was Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Turkey from October 2020 to April 2023.
He began his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 1986. During his time in the Foreign Ministry, he has held a variety of positions, including Political Counsellor at the Embassy of Japan in the People's Republic of China from 2004 to 2007. From August 2007 to October 2013, he served as Director for Japan-U.S. Security Affairs, Director for Embassy and Consulate Management, and Director of Aid Policy and Management for the International Cooperation Bureau. He served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative of Japan to the African Union from December 2013 until September 2016.

From September 2016 to January 2018, he served as Minister for Economic Affairs at the Embassy of Japan in Washington D.C. From January 2018 to July 2020, he was Assistant Minister/Director-General of the North American Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He holds a Bachelor of International Relations from the University of Tokyo, a Master in Political Science from Stanford University and Master of International Affairs from Columbia University.



STEVEN THORPE DSM

MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OMNI EXECUTIVE

Steven Thorpe commenced as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Omni Executive Pty Ltd (Omni) in 2026, after 9 years working in various senior management roles within the Company. Prior to Omni, Steven was an independent consultant in the National Security sector and spent twenty years in the Australian Army. When in the Army he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) and a Commendation for Distinguished Service. His active service included deployments to East Timor, Iraq and five times to Afghanistan. He is a retired Lieutenant Colonel. Steven has a Master Business Administration (MBA) from the Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM), a Master of Business from University of New South Wales (UNSW), a Master Of Defence and Strategic Studies from the Australian National University (ANU), and a Bachelor of Arts from UNSW. He is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and has a Diploma of Project Management. Steven is married to Jen and has four children, all born between 2006 and 2014. His hobbies include boating, surfing, fishing, AFL, Rugby and Cricket. He spends his spare time with his family, taking every opportunity to have fun and adventure.



KRISTIJONAS VIZBARAS

CO-FOUNDER, BROLIS

Kristijonas Vizbaras is a Lithuanian scientist and entrepreneur — co-founder of BROLIS, a Lithuanian-Danish high-tech defence company group (www.brolis-defence.com), which specializes in developing and manufacturing advanced electro-optical systems for dismounted soldiers and is modernizing NATO and allied armies at scale. Kristijonas himself has a solid background in semiconductor technology (BSc in Electronics Engineering from Vilnius University, MSc in Nanotechnology from the Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden, and completed PhD studies in Semiconductor Technology at the Technical University of Munich, Germany). He has been decorated with the Knight's Cross for Merit to Lithuania by the Republic of Lithuania, the Cross for Merit of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, the 2nd Class Cross for Merit by the Lithuanian Home Guard, and the Cross for "Heroes Without Weapons" by a Ukrainian civic association, among others, for his unwavering and continuous support through military aid during the full-scale invasion.



DAVID WROE

RESIDENT SENIOR FELLOW, ASPI

David Wroe is a Resident Senior Fellow with ASPI, and the Convenor for the Sydney Dialogue 2025. He was previously a journalist for nearly two decades, including many years as The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age's national security correspondent, based in Canberra.

From 2019 until 2022, he was senior media adviser and speechwriter for Foreign Minister Marise Payne.

He was part of a team that won the Walkley Award for international reporting in 2015 and has been a finalist in other journalism awards.

He has previously been based in Berlin and Cairo, and has reported widely from the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific on major issues to do with defence, security and foreign affairs.



SHANNON ZIMMERMAN

SENIOR LECTURER IN STRATEGIC STUDIES, CENTRE FOR FUTURE DEFENCE & NATIONAL SECURITY, DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Shannon Zimmerman is a Senior Lecturer in Strategic Studies at the Centre for Future Defence & National Security at Deakin University. She currently teaches defence diplomacy, national resilience and social cohesion, non-traditional security threats and mobilisation into the Defence and Strategic Studies Course at the Australian War College. Previously, she was a postdoctoral research fellow at the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. Her research investigates peace and stability operations, specifically how peacekeepers protect civilians in conflict environments characterised by asymmetric threats. She also works on gender and counterterrorism and studies misogyny motivated terrorism, looking at the online groups in the 'Manosphere'. Shannon currently convenes the community of practice for member states on the United Nations Office of Counter-terrorism's Gender and Identity Factors Platform. Shannon received her PhD from the University of Queensland in 2019 and her Masters in Conflict Resolution from Georgetown University in 2012.

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