



Is Victoria's Defence Manufacturing Sector ready for AUKUS?

Panel Discussion

Monday 8 April 2024: 5:30pm for 6 – 7pm Level 13, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

AUKUS presents the largest shake-up of Australia's military and defence posture since the end of the second world war.

The trilateral security partnership with the United States and United Kingdom was agreed to deliver long-term strategic benefits and strengthen the combined industrial capacity of the three partners.

Pillar I of the partnership is an agreement to provide Australia with conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarine capability – the development of which requires an entirely new sovereign defence manufacturing ecosystem. Pillar II covers areas such as quantum, cyber, artificial intelligence and hypersonic innovation.



Victorian (and Australian) defence-focused businesses are large in number but compared to their counterparts in other OECD countries (such as the US) add relatively less value to the industrial process locally. Whilst there are significant growth opportunities, there may be specific policy, investment and skills issues which stand in the way, and merit wider discussion and stakeholder involvement to define and articulate.

AIIA has gathered together an expert panel to explore the hurdles to be overcome to ensure domestic businesses can capitalise on the defence manufacturing opportunity presented by the AUKUS agreement.

The question is "What are the key policy, digitisation, investment, and skills-development challenges that face Victorian businesses as they embrace a generation of up-coming defence manufacturing opportunities?"

We look forward to welcoming you to this the first of AIIA VIC's corporate engagement events, whereby we seek to convene insightful discussion geared towards businesses, corporates and policymakers but open to all.

[**BOOK ONLINE HERE**](#)

AIIA Victoria gratefully acknowledges the Walter Mangold Trust Fund for its ongoing support of our young members.

In-person: AIIA Premium and Young Professionals members free. AIIA Members \$20. Non-Members \$30. Student Non-Members \$10



Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria



Mohammad Chowdhury (Moderator) is the Founder and CEO of Long Street Advisors, and a Council Member at AIIA Victoria. Mohammad has worked in over 80 countries and focuses on the digital economy, digitisation in industries and regions and digital inclusion. Mohammad is a Trustee of the UK's Institute for the Future of Work and chairs its Finance Committee, has written for Forbes, the Sydney Morning Herald and the FT and serves the board of a technology company in Bangladesh. He works in this sector because he cares about opportunity, equality and inclusion. He is the author of [*Border Crossings: My Journey as an Outsider*](#) (NewSouth Books, July 2023).



Professor Regina Crameri is a member of the Defence Council Victoria, who advises the Victorian Government on strategies to develop and sustain Victoria's defence and space industry capabilities and win defence work with major Primes. Its members represent a broad range of experience across defence operations, commercial space strategy, equipment acquisitions and business and commercial practice. Regina is the Director and Founder of AIR4, an organisation that aims to change the paradigm of STEM education in Australia by encouraging students to study science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) throughout their education to increase the talent pipeline for STEM industries.



Liam Eldon has over eight years of experience in developing and facilitating international trade and investment, with a focus on defence and aerospace. He is currently the Associate Director of Defence and Aerospace at Swinburne University of Technology where he leads the investment portfolio and develops commercial strategies that advance the University's research and innovation agenda while creating value for industry and government partners.



Dale Heinken is the President and Managing Director of Ascent Vision Technologies (AVT) Australia, a CACI company, based in Melbourne, Victoria. Prior to joining AVT Australia, Dale served in the United States Navy for 26 years as a surface warfare officer with a subspeciality in naval nuclear propulsion. He retired as a Captain in 2021. During his time in the Navy, he served on a variety of ships and staffs, and he is most proud of his time as Commanding Officer of Littoral Combat Ship Crew 101 aboard USS Freedom (LCS 1), the Reactor Officer aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), and the Commanding Officer of USS Boxer (LHD 4).