



Defending Seabed Critical Infrastructure

Dr. Samuel Bashfield

Wednesday 21 May 2025: 5:30pm for 6 – 7pm AEST at Level 13, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Australia is yet to adequately grapple with the unique challenges that critical seabed infrastructure protection poses to its defence and national security.

While the paramount importance of Australia's sea lines of communication is widely understood, Australia's seabed lines of communication – principally submarine telecommunication cables – are understudied and underappreciated. Submarine telecommunication cables transmit approximately 98% of data traffic globally and are the backbone of the Internet.



Dr. Samuel Bashfield will examine how suspected instances of seabed warfare in Europe, coupled with US-China tech competition, have manifested a war beneath the waves in the Indo-Pacific. Governments in Europe and the Indo-Pacific are rapidly pivoting to secure existing and new submarine cable networks, to promote 'trusted' regional connectivity infrastructure, and to derisk supply chains.

How should we interpret these emerging seabed dynamics? What are the options for Australia to pursue?

AIIA Victoria invites you to join Dr. Samuel Bashfield to discuss the needed evolution in Australia's protection of critical seabed cable infrastructure.



Dr Samuel Bashfield is an expert on Indo-Pacific security and defence policy with ten years' experience as an author, researcher, consultant and project manager, delivering insights and dialogue on our most pressing national security challenges. Sam speaks and publishes on national security and defence issues in leading international disciplinary journals and influential media outlets. In his current role as Research Fellow & Director, Security & Geopolitics at the University of Melbourne's [Australia India Institute](#), he studies and interprets geopolitical and defence trends across the Indo-Pacific, with a particular focus on India, the Indian Ocean Region, maritime security, and seabed issues. Sam was conferred his PhD in national security policy from the ANU National Security College in 2025, where he is currently an Expert Associate and previously attained a master's degree. He has a Bachelor of Arts (Global) degree with first class honours from Monash University. He was a Non-Resident Fellow

with the Royal Australian Navy's Sea Power Centre and has completed fellowships with the Australian War College, the Observer Research Foundation (India) as well as the Pathfinder Foundation (Sri Lanka). He was a Raisina Young Fellow in 2024. Sam has previously worked at the ANU National Security College, University of Sydney, and at the Australian Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. He is currently drafting two books – the first examining seabed critical infrastructure protection and the second analysing Cold War-era Indian Ocean strategic dynamics, with a focus on the British Indian Ocean Territory and Anglo-US relations.

[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

Webinar: Free for all AIIA members. Student Non-Members \$5. Non-Members \$10

Registered Office: Suite 2, Level 13, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Telephone (03) 9654 7271 Email: admin.vic@internationalaffairs.org.au

Website: www.internationalaffairs.org.au/victoria