



The ANAO has conducted a review of Defence media operations

PIXABAY

## ANAO RELEASES REPORT INTO DEFENCE'S MEDIA MANAGEMENT

The eternal tension between the Department of Defence and the media has been the subject of review again by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), with the independent body concluding that it could be done better in some ways.

**KATHERINE ZIESING | CANBERRA**

The review is the fifth in 20 years and comes at a point where the process is once again in transition in the wake of recommendations from the First Principles Review.

"Defence commenced an organisational reform of its Ministerial and Executive Coordination and

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Communication (MECC) Division in 2018,” the report explains. “The new model gave accountability for delivering Defence media and communications services to the Associate Secretary. Key functions such as the management of media enquiries and support to ministers and Parliament remained within MECC Division.

“Communication roles within the departmental groups and the three Australian Defence Force (ADF) Services became MECC Division embedded positions. People in those positions continued to provide communications advice and support to Defence groups and the Services, with an additional reporting line through to MECC Division.”

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**“IT’S HARD TO MEASURE SUCCESS  
WHEN YOU’RE NOT SURE WHAT  
YOU’RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE”**

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In comparison to other departments, Defence is on par with the number of people it has in these APS roles; in 2018–19, MECC’s budget was around \$18.06 million and included an average staffing level of 140 people (media roles in the Defence department account for 1.05 per cent of its total APS workforce). This does not include uniformed staff.

“Army currently has 25 full time Public Affairs Officers (PAOs), Navy has 14 personnel in full time public affairs positions, and Air Force has 12 full time PAOs,” a Defence spokesperson said in response to questions from ADM. “Additionally, five full time PAOs are posted to Headquarters Joint Operations Command, and five are also posted to the 1st Joint Public Affairs Unit.

“Media and Communication staff in Defence receive departmental tasking from MECC and are responsible to their respective Group or Service Head for the provision of media and communication services.”

In practice, these 61 media professionals within the services now have joint reporting lines. Noting the current ADF workforce of 58,363 as at 30 June 2018, the percentage of full time ADF PAOs compared to the total ADF workforce is around 0.1 per cent.

“Defence developed a manual and introduced a successor policy in mid-2019 to provide guidance for the management of its planned and routine public communications and media activities,” the report said. “The manual and policy do not clearly document the overarching objectives or expected outcomes of those activities, or establish related performance measures, as a basis for assessing effectiveness. While the responsible division (MECC) routinely reports to Defence senior leaders on communications and media activities, these reports focus primarily on output measures such as the timeliness of responses to media enquiries.”

All well and good, until: “Reporting does not inform senior leaders or provide assurance on whether the department’s public communication and media effort delivers meaningful results or whether resources are being allocated appropriately.”

At this point Defence has even yet to define what it wants to achieve with its media engagement apart from the obvious of not embarrassing the government/minister of the day or themselves. It’s hard to measure success when you’re not sure what you’re trying to achieve.

“Of the 197 communication plans located by Defence for ANAO review, only 40 per cent (79 plans) were cleared at the level of seniority required by the manual. While the plans mostly set out the activities to be undertaken — including key messages,

communication objectives, target audiences and stakeholders — only 23 per cent of plans included budget information and 49 per cent included criteria for evaluating the outcomes of the activity. Risks and sensitivities were considered in 68 per cent of communication plans.

“Defence cannot monitor the delivery or effectiveness of all its public communications and media activities against planned outcomes and budgets, because it does not always include evaluation criteria in its communication plans or routinely undertake evaluation activity.”

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**“DEFENCE CANNOT MONITOR THE  
DELIVERY OR EFFECTIVENESS OF ALL  
ITS PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS”**

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The report made two recommendations to which Defence has agreed;

1. that the Department of Defence clearly document the objective(s), expected outcomes and related performance measures for its public communications and media policy and activities, and assess risks to the achievement of the documented objective(s) and

2. Defence clarify its expectations for the eval-

uation of planned activities and introduce arrangements to provide assurance that evaluations are completed as expected and in a timely manner.

**ADM Comment:** This is a topic near and dear to me for obvious reasons. Dealing with Defence Media in its various iterations for over 13 years now, it has been a rollercoaster. The persistent issue is that of timeliness. The changing nature of the media cycle means that deadlines are tougher than ever before. Material reported to the ANAO by the Defence and National Security Media Association (a collection of journalists that report consistently on these issues) found that even when the deadline was met, just 60-70 per cent of the responses were useful.

The Department has instituted a new prioritising structure with a three-hour response window which, at first glance, is great. At second glance when you realise that the response is an email saying ‘your request has been received, we’ll do our best’, faith tends to wane but there is still hope that the new system will deliver for all parties.

The report also outlined the laborious process of getting a response cleared through the system that saw a 10-step procedure in place (everything goes to diarchy and minister) that all parties admit is sidestepped as needed.

It was also interesting to note that the number of media requests looks to have fallen significantly between 2018 and 2019; I suspect this is a reflection of journalists either self-censoring (what’s the point? Why bother asking a question when it’s answered beyond deadline and may not even be of use) or using other channels to get the information they need.

Many stories are simply not written as getting two independent sources on the record to verify the material is difficult, time consuming and sometimes just not possible within a deadline timeline.

ADM hopes that the new system, which is in transition still, can go some way towards addressing the eternal tension between the department and an informed media presence.

# FEES MANDATED FOR AUSTRALIAN SPACE LAUNCHES

The government has made a long-awaited decision and announced the introduction of partial cost recovery arrangements for space launches in Australia.

EWEN LEVICK | SYDNEY

Under the model, work on launch permits conducted by the Australian Space Agency (ASA) will not be cost recovered through fees, whilst work conducted outside the ASA will be.

"This means that the most frequently assessed applications (Overseas Payload Permits) are not expected to attract a fee," the ASA said in a statement. "Assessments likely to be cost recovered would involve complex applications, requiring consideration by a technical expert contractor, ensuring activities are as safe as reasonably practicable.

"To support these assessments, the Agency is working towards lifting in-house capability, including recruitment of staff with specific expertise."

The rules include a mechanism for the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology to waive fees at her discretion, which "could include consideration of support for innovation in the sector."

"Prior to the introduction of the partial cost recovery arrangements, the Agency will undertake consultation on the draft rules for fees prior to commencement of charging," the ASA said.

Consultation will begin in March and April and is expected to include: when partial cost recovery will likely be applied; the amount of a fee and/or a way of working out the fee; timing for payment; circumstances in which a fee may be wholly or partly waived.

"As Australia develops a world-class regulatory system, the Agency remains focused

on enabling entrepreneurship while ensuring national safety and security," the ASA said.

"The above arrangements represent a balance of encouraging innovation in the sector, while ensuring relevant costs are cost recovered from industry consistent with the Government's Cost Recovery Guidelines."

The charging model will be reviewed in 2022–23.

Advocates have previously argued against the introduction of launch fees, saying that the



The decision to set launch fees raises prices for Australian spaceports relative to international competitors. PIXABAY

additional cost will price local launch companies out of the international market and drive Australian satellite providers to overseas locations, such as the Rocket Lab facility in NZ.

The International Aerospace Law and Policy Group (IALPG), an Australian aerospace law firm, has previously said the imposition of fees would 'defeat the aspirations of the Australian public for an Australian space industry.'

"While we acknowledge that the broader Australian public should be able to realise a return-on-investment from a vibrant Australian space industry, that return-on-investment comes through the 20,000 extra jobs, export earnings that arise from a tripling of the size of the Australian space industry, greater global influence in respect of space activities and inspiration of the Australian public, each of which are objectives that the Agency is expressly mandated to achieve," the IALPG said.

Gilmour Space founder Adam Gilmour told ADM that the proposal is better than expected but still falls short of international competition.

"We would have preferred a zero-fee structure, as it is in the US and other major space nations, but this proposal is significantly better than what was originally proposed," Gilmour said. "We look forward to the ASA building up their team strength and for any outsourced costs to fall to zero over time.

"As always, we would be happy to share our team's knowledge and insights with the ASA as they work to fine-tune the details."

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## ARMY HELICOPTER STARTS MAJOR CANBERRA BUSHFIRE

The Department of Defence has confirmed that an Army MRH-90 Taipan helicopter started the Orroral Valley fire, which ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr has called 'the most serious threat to Canberra since the 2003 fires'.

**EWEN LEVICK | SYDNEY**

**R**eports indicate that the fire was growing at 400 hectares per hour on Tuesday before being downgraded later that night. It was started by a landing light on the helicopter that generated enough heat to ignite the grass.

"Defence can confirm that the fire currently burning in the Orroral Valley in the Namadgi National Park was likely caused by a landing light from an Army MRH-90 helicopter, while the aircraft was on the ground," the Department said in a statement. "The helicopter and crew were conducting aerial reconnaissance and ground clearance to enable access for emergency services personnel who were conducting bushfire prevention measures in the ACT.





The Orroral Valley fire taken from the Canberra suburb of Fadden.

KATIE SHAW VIA TWITTER

“It is deeply regrettable that our support operations have likely started this fire.”

At the time of writing, the ACT's Emergency Services Agency (ESA) has classified the Orroral fire as 'Watch and Act'.

“The warning level for the Orroral Valley Fire remains at a Watch and Act level warning due to moderate overnight conditions,” the ESA said.

“The Bureau of Meteorology has predicted increasingly challenging fire weather for the coming weekend, driven by extremely high temperatures and low humidity.

“If you do not have a plan you should start preparing now because the situation could get worse.”

Defence also confirmed that ADF helicopters would continue to support the ESA against the fire, albeit without hot landing lights.

“Defence has taken immediate action to reduce the risk of fires being started by helicopters, including not using certain aircraft lighting in extreme weather conditions,” the Department said. “We continue to work closely with the ESA to provide personnel and assets to help contain this bushfire.

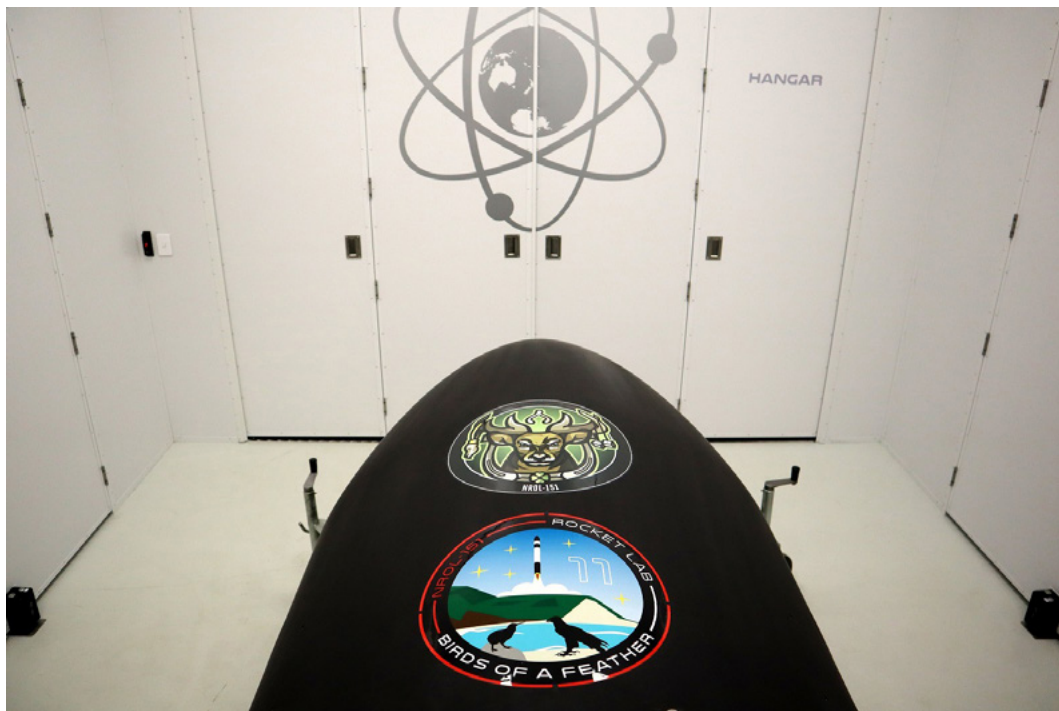
“Additional ADF helicopter assets have been deployed to search ahead of the fire, to ensure the area has been fully evacuated and people have observed the park's closure.”

**“DEFENCE HAS TAKEN  
IMMEDIATE ACTION TO REDUCE  
THE RISK OF FIRES BEING  
STARTED BY HELICOPTERS”**

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Rocket Lab is set to launch a small American spy satellite into space.

ROCKET LAB

## US TO LAUNCH SPY SATELLITES FROM NZ

**Rocket Lab, a launch company operating from NZ's North Island, has announced that it will launch a dedicated mission for the US National Reconnaissance Office (NRO).**

The NRO is the US agency responsible for the acquisition and sustainment of American intelligence satellites.

The launch window is scheduled to open on Friday and the mission, called 'Birds of a Feather,' will lift off from Rocket Lab Launch Complex 1, on the Mahia Peninsula.

The NRO competitively awarded the contract under the Rapid Acquisition of a Small Rocket (RASR) contract vehicle. RASR allows the NRO to explore new launch opportunities that can provide a streamlined, commercial approach for getting small satellites into space.

Rocket Lab's Senior Vice President – Global Launch Services, Lars Hoffman, said the Electron vehicle is uniquely placed to deliver the kind of frequent, rapidly-acquired launch opportunities required by the NRO and other government agencies to ensure resiliency in space.

"We are honoured the NRO has selected Rocket Lab as the launch provider for this dedicated mission," Hoffman said. "The Electron launch vehicle is perfectly positioned to provide the kind of rapid and responsive access to space that puts the NRO in complete control over their own launch schedule and orbital requirements."

“As the industry shifts toward the disaggregation of large, geostationary spacecraft, Electron enables unprecedented access to space to support a resilient layer of government small satellite infrastructure.”

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**“ELECTRON ENABLES  
UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS TO  
SPACE TO SUPPORT A RESILIENT  
LAYER OF GOVERNMENT SMALL  
SATELLITE INFRASTRUCTURE”**

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Rocket Lab has been launching since January 2018 and has since delivered 47 satellites to orbit on the Electron launch vehicle, enabling operations in space debris mitigation, Earth observation, ship and airplane tracking, and radio communications.

The company previously told ADM it is looking to lure Australian satellite companies to its launch site across the Tasman.

“The NZ government played an important role in creating a modern, forward-thinking regulatory framework that aims to enable a strong space economy,” Sandy Tirtey, Rocket Lab’s Director of Business Development Australia, said.

“The key to providing better access to space is launch frequency. Launch Complex 1 in NZ offers clear skies and seas, as well as a wide range of inclinations from sun-synchronous through to 39 degrees, and site is licensed for up to 120 launches per year – which is more launch availability than you can get in some entire countries.

“We’re seeing some truly innovative satellite technology coming out of Australia. With a proven launch vehicle and an established launch site just next door, it’s never been easier for Australian innovators, researchers and educational institutions to get their technology to orbit.”

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## NO 4 SQUADRON WELCOMES FIRST PC-21S

**RAAF Number 4 Squadron based at RAAF Base Williamtown has welcomed its first three Pilatus PC-21 aircraft to their new home.**

Commanding Officer Number 4 Squadron, Wing Commander Sean Jobson said the PC-21 replaces the recently retired PC-9/A and will contribute to vital squadron training activities.

“The PC-21 will assist in preparing the next generation of Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs), supporting Forward Air Control and Air Surface Integration across a broad spectrum of operations,” Wing Commander Jobson said.

“4 Squadron has a joint service responsibility for guiding the training and development of JTACs.

“The arrival of the new aircraft will ensure personnel have the opportunity to continue to execute kinetic effects in real time scenarios.”

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ATTACK CONTROLLERS”**

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The first three Pilatus PC-21s from No. 4 Squadron taxi after landing at their new home base at RAAF Base Williamtown. DEFENCE

JTAC training includes the ability to plan, brief, control and report on aircraft to provide Close Air Support in the battlefield.

"The PC-21 will ensure that 4 Squadron continues to deliver the highest standard of mission training so JTAC personnel are, and continue to remain, combat ready," Wing Commander Jobson said.

The first three 4 Squadron PC-21 aircraft ferried from RAAF Base East Sale in Victoria, with remaining 4 Squadron aircraft expected to arrive at RAAF Base Williamtown in February 2020.

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### PUBLISHED BY

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Surry Hills NSW 2010  
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greatmagazines.com.au

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# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## ADM EVENTS

More detail on ADM Events can be found on our [dedicated website](#).

- [ADM 2020 Congress](#) – 19 February 2020
- [ADM Space Summit](#) – 28 April 2020
- [ADM STEM and Defence Summit](#) – 19 August 2020
- [ADM Defence Estate and Base Services Summit](#) – 22 September 2020
- [Defence in the North](#) – 28 October 2020

## DEFENCE EXPORT CONTROL COURSE (PERTH)

**DATE** 11 February 2020  
**LOCATION** 4 McGrath Road, Henderson.  
**WEBSITE** [www.stickytickets.com.au/UGCHD](http://www.stickytickets.com.au/UGCHD)

Join us for a 1-day face-to-face training course to de-mystify the complex area of Export Control regulations. The course is suitable for SME's and will address ITAR, EAR and DEC, advice on employing dual and third country nationals, licensing requirements, and much more.

## DEFENCE EXPORT CONTROL COURSE (ADELAIDE)

**DATE** 13 February 2020  
**LOCATION** 19 Young Street, Adelaide  
**WEBSITE** [www.stickytickets.com.au/UGCHD](http://www.stickytickets.com.au/UGCHD)

Join us for a 1-day face-to-face training course to de-mystify the complex area of Export Control regulations. The course is suitable for SME's and will address ITAR, EAR and DEC, advice on employing dual and third country nationals, licensing requirements, and much more.

## AIDN NATIONAL DEFENCE INDUSTRY GALA DINNER 2020

**DATE** 19 February 2020  
**LOCATION** QT Hotel Ballroom  
**WEBSITE** [consec.eventsair.com/aidn-2020/dinner/Site/Register](http://consec.eventsair.com/aidn-2020/dinner/Site/Register)

AIDN National invite you to attend a defence industry gala event not to be missed. The dinner will include pre dinner drinks and canapes on arrival followed by a gourmet two course dinner served with premium beverages. Guests will enjoy an evening of networking, socialising and fun which includes a VIP guest speaker, presentation of the AIDN National Young Achiever Award and Silent Auction with all proceeds donated to Legacy

## **CERTIFICATE IV IN RESPONDING TO ORGANISATIONAL COMPLEXITY | ADELAIDE**

**DATE** 19-21 February, 2020  
**LOCATION** to be confirmed  
**WEBSITE** [iccpm.com/events/certificate-iv-adelaide-2020](http://iccpm.com/events/certificate-iv-adelaide-2020)

Developed and offered exclusively by ICCPM (RTO number 41394), the Certificate IV in Responding to Organisational Complexity helps project leaders develop the skills and attributes they need to respond to complexity, as defined in the Complex Project Manager Competency Standards. This is a highly interactive course which introduces project leaders to useful tools and methodologies with a strong focus on the practical application of concepts to real-world situations.

## **CERTIFICATE IV IN RESPONDING TO ORGANISATIONAL COMPLEXITY | CANBERRA**

**DATE** 24-26 March, 2020  
**LOCATION** to be confirmed  
**WEBSITE** [iccpm.com/events/certificate-iv-canberra-2020](http://iccpm.com/events/certificate-iv-canberra-2020)

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## **WILLIAMS FOUNDATION SEMINAR: NEXT-GEN AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS**

**DATE** 26 March 2020  
**LOCATION:** National Gallery of Australia  
**WEBSITE** [www.williamsfoundation.org.au](http://www.williamsfoundation.org.au)

Building upon the existing foundations of ADF capability, the aim of the March seminar is to explore the force multiplying capability and increasingly complex requirements associated with unmanned systems. From its origins at the platform level, the opportunities and potential of increased autonomy across the enterprise are now expected to fundamentally transform Joint and Coalition operations.

## **ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY INNOVATION SUMMIT**

**DATE** 16-17 April, 2020  
**LOCATION** Queenstown, NZ  
**WEBSITE** [www.apsisummit.com/page/apsi-summit-2020](http://www.apsisummit.com/page/apsi-summit-2020)

The theme of this year's APSI summit, to be held in Queenstown on the South Island, is Strengthening Security Resiliency Through Partnerships and Alliances.

## **AUSCERT 2020**

**DATE:** 02-05 June 2020  
**LOCATION:** The Star, Gold Coast  
**WEBSITE:** [www.auscert.org.au/giveaway](http://www.auscert.org.au/giveaway)

The AusCERT Conference is the oldest information security conference in Australia. Each year, we attract in the vicinity of 800 participants and approximately 50 sponsors. AusCERT is hosting more than 50 speakers at AusCERT2020, as well as an array of tutorials, workshops, networking events & much more.

## **QUANTUM TECHX**

**DATE** 08 June, 2020  
**LOCATION** TBC  
**WEBSITE** <https://www.quantumtx.com.au/qtX-program>

TechX is powered by leading innovation providers, Atomic Sky, and its team of experienced business scale-up facilitators. It's supported by a range of financiers, corporate and government partners who provide access to sites, specialist sector expertise, technical mentors and networks. Through the program each company will be provided condensed capability building, tailored site visits and direct mentoring to build capability, capital and connections.

## **ROTORTECH 2020**

**DATE** 16-18 June 2020  
**LOCATION** Royal International Convention Centre, Brisbane  
**WEBSITE** [www.rotortech.com.au](http://www.rotortech.com.au)

RotorTech 2020 is the region's premier helicopter and unmanned flight systems showcase and forum, bringing together operators, manufacturers, suppliers, regulators and government across the Indo-Asia-Pacific. With a comprehensive three-day free industry conference program, RotorTech 2020 will also feature manufacturers technical workshops and an industry exhibition showcasing more than 100 helicopter and unmanned flight related companies.

## **43RD COSPAR SCIENTIFIC ASSEMBLY**

**DATE** 15 – 22 August 2020  
**LOCATION** International Convention Centre Sydney  
**WEBSITE** [www.cospar2020.org](http://www.cospar2020.org)

The Australian space research community enthusiastically extends the invitation to you, to meet with us for COSPAR 2020, and in so doing to forge the friendships and opportunities that will connect space research for global impact. The 2020 Assembly will combine the latest in space research findings with activities designed to enrich the global space research community – including helping equip our future leaders, and workshopping with space industry – and inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers.

## **PROJECT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM 2020**

**DATE** 25-26 August 2020  
**LOCATION** Canberra Rex Hotel  
**WEBSITE** [www.pgcsymposium.org.au](http://www.pgcsymposium.org.au)

PGCS 2020 is designed to help project and program managers, and their sponsors and senior managers, develop the skills and understanding needed to deliver projects success in the next decade. Now in its 8th year, PGCS 2020 will focus on ways to build the foundations needed to create project and program success.

## **LAND FORCES 2020**

**DATE** 01-03 September 2020  
**LOCATION** Brisbane Convention Centre  
**WEBSITE** [www.landforces.com.au](http://www.landforces.com.au)

The biennial LAND FORCES exposition is an international industry event to showcase equipment, technology and services for the armies of Australia and the Indo-Asia-Pacific. The Land Forces 2020 team is now setting about ensuring the event will achieve its goals of providing an effective platform for the exchange of ideas on key land forces issues and of taking Australian industry to the world



## 2021

**AVALON 2021****DATE** 23 – 28 February 2021**LOCATION** Avalon Airport

The Australian International Airshow and Aerospace & Defence Exposition is one of Asia-Pacific's most prestigious aviation and aerospace events and the most comprehensive aviation, aerospace and defence exposition in the southern hemisphere. Avalon hosts multiple concurrent conferences and expo streams, across the spectrum of Defence, Airlines, Business and General Aviation, Sport and Recreational Aviation, Airports, MRO, Space, Unmanned Systems, Air Safety and Ground Equipment.

## VARIOUS DATES

**NSW DEFENCE INNOVATION NETWORK'S REGIONAL ROAD SHOW****DATE:** Various**LOCATION:** Various**WEBSITE:** [defenceinnovationnetwork.com/din-regional-road-show-2019-20](https://defenceinnovationnetwork.com/din-regional-road-show-2019-20)

NSW Defence Innovation Network and AIDN will be undertaking a series of small business focused regional forums across NSW. Register to attend and hear about the programs, grants, opportunities and services the NSW Defence Innovation Network (DIN) provides to the small business community across NSW. We encourage small businesses to engage with us and participate in opportunities across our networks, including DIN's seven partner universities, as well as with other state and federal agencies.

**DEFENCE READINESS SEMINAR SERIES****DATE** Various**LOCATION** Various**WEBSITE** <https://bit.ly/37fipjH>

The Defence Readiness Seminar Series kicked off in November last year. If you are considering entering the Defence market, or have staff you consider require orientation to the Defence market, you are strongly encouraged to consider this invaluable series, shaped and developed by people in the Hunter that have worked closely in the Defence Industry over many years. Please see the website for more information on how to get involved.

## **2020 ICCPM INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE SERIES**

**DATE** Various (April, August)

**LOCATION** Various

**WEBSITE** ..... <https://iccpm.com/2020-rs>

One of the characteristics of complex projects is that they emerge over time. This creates uncertainty for project leaders. To support project success, project leaders need to understand how to manage risk in uncertainty and identify new opportunities. The International Roundtable Series is a Thought Leadership initiative that brings together senior project leaders and leading academics from different industries to share their experience and international perspectives. The outcomes report will share these insights to improve project success.