



2024-28 Corporate Plan

Australian
Strategic
Policy
Institute



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Introduction

This 2024–2028 Corporate Plan has been prepared under section 95(1) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and covers the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2028.

The plan summarises the institute’s strategy and objectives and includes an analysis of future business opportunities, corporate performance, requirements and operating risks.

About ASPI

ASPI was established by the Australian Government in 2001 as an independent, non-partisan think tank that produces expert and timely advice for Australian and global leaders.

The three key underlying purposes of ASPI’s charter are to:

- 1** provide alternative sources of input to government decision-making processes on major strategic and defence policy issues
- 2** help nourish public debate and understanding, and
- 3** contribute to the development of professional strategic policy expertise in Australia.

ASPI generates new ideas for policymakers, allowing them to make better informed decisions. It is one of the most authoritative and widely quoted contributors to public discussion of strategic policy issues in the Indo-Pacific region and a recognised and trusted Australian voice in international discussion on strategic, defence, national-security, cyber, technology and foreign-interference issues.

The institute has developed into one of the leading independent policy research bodies in Australia. It is unique in the scope of its research, capacity, expertise and ability to independently engage across official and public domains. The institute is recognised nationally and internationally for its significant contributions to policy debates.

ASPI is a company limited by guarantee wholly owned by the Australian Government and governed by the ASPI Council. Council members are appointed by the Minister for Defence and include a nominee of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to reinforce the non-partisan nature of ASPI’s work.

ASPI is partially funded by the Department of Defence. Other sources of revenue include research and project grants, event sponsorship and event registration fees and corporate partnerships. All of ASPI’s funding sources are disclosed in this Corporate Plan.

Key Objectives

ASPI's role is to function as a strategic policy research centre, independent of government, providing policy-relevant research and analysis to better inform government decision-makers and public understanding of strategic and defence issues.

It has four key objectives:

- 1** conducting and publishing research on issues related to Australia's strategic and defence policy choices
- 2** preparing policy inputs on strategic and defence issues to government, as requested by government, subject to funding
- 3** conducting a program of activities to increase understanding of strategic and defence policy issues among Australians, and to encourage the development of expertise in topics relevant to Australia's strategic and defence policy choices, and
- 4** promoting international understanding of Australia's strategic and defence policy perspectives.

Strategic aim

ASPI's strategic aim, consistent with our charter, is to build upon our recognition as Australia's number one strategic, defence, national security and policy research institute.

To achieve that, a series of measures during the year preceding this plan has prepared ASPI to:

- maintain our excellence in delivering world-class, independent, innovative and relevant security policy analysis of strategic and defence policy issues
- strengthen our capacity to communicate our work to a wide range of audiences
- provide leadership and ideas to key groups with interests in our work
- grow ASPI's capacity with additional funding, people and activities
- be an employer of choice for smart and ambitious strategic policy professionals.

ASPI aims, through its website, publications, online commentary, events and media activities, to be innovative, accurate and well informed and to broaden public knowledge about the critical strategic choices our country will face over the coming years. The institute's work will help foster strategic expertise in Australia through dialogue, research and contributions to public debate.

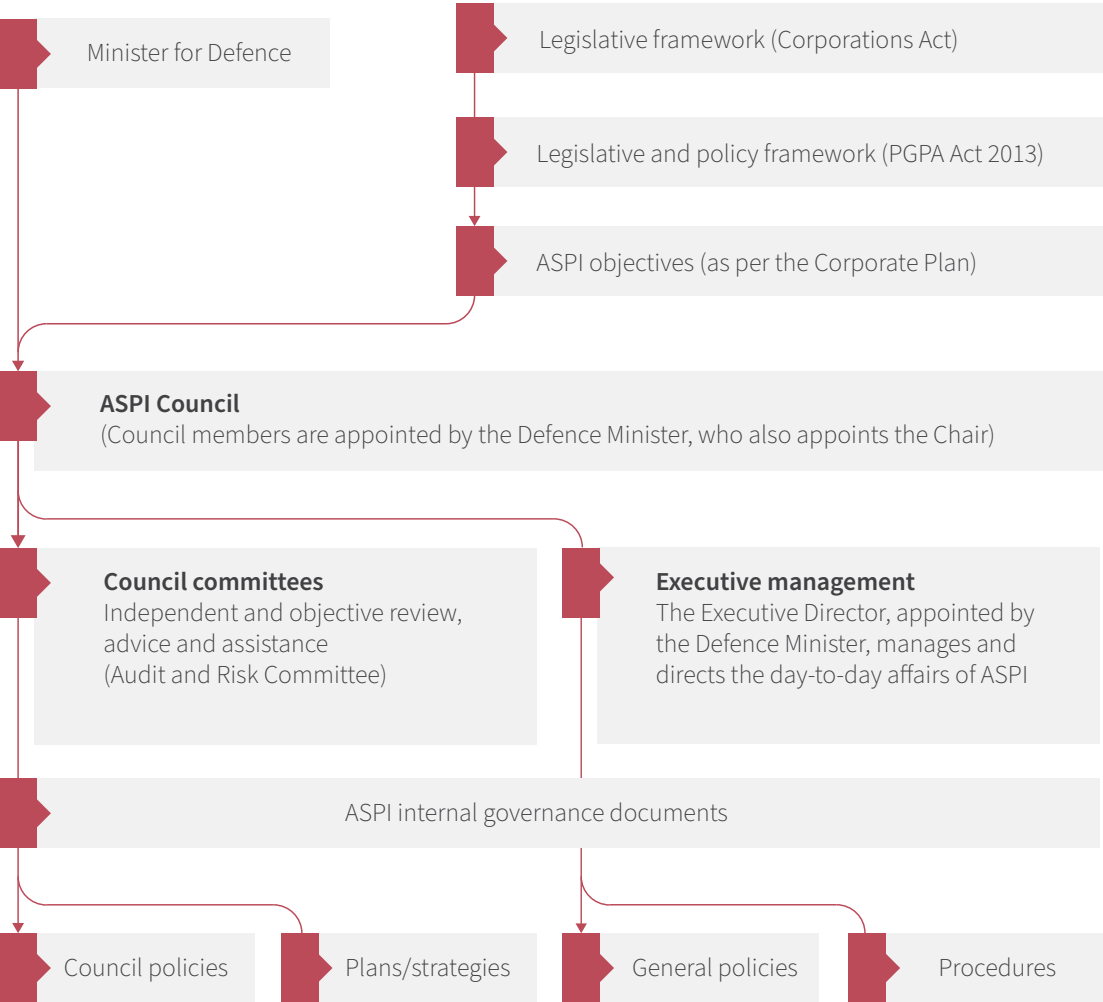
ASPI strives to provide a strong focus and constructive commentary on the practical choices and issues that confront Australia's strategic policy decisions.

Governance framework

The ASPI Council sets the strategic direction for the institute and, with our Audit and Risk committee, is responsible for overseeing the institute’s development, implementation and review of all appropriate policies and processes so that the institute is soundly governed according to legislative and regulatory requirements.

ASPI’s approach to managing risk draws on a range of legislation, policies and guidance on risk management and a comprehensive risk management plan. Our due diligence, governance and compliance processes include our annual financial audit by the Australian National Audit Office, internal audit process covering ASPI programs, quality-management arrangements, financial services, human resources and professional development processes. We seek external and independent assurance about the quality of our systems and pursue external certification and assurances. Examples include external IT penetration testing of our systems and external program.

Figure 1: ASPI’s governance structure





Staffing

ASPI staff are committed to the purpose and values of the organisation.

ASPI is an inclusive workplace, and we believe that diversity in all forms enhances our initiatives, content, research and analysis.

In early 2023, ASPI introduced a gender, diversity and inclusion strategy designed to encourage greater diversity and inclusion across ASPI, including but not limited to thought, experience, gender, age, beliefs, background, culture and language, sexuality, neurodiversity and disability. This strategy supports ASPI in better embedding more inclusive practices across recruitment and retention, our events and communications activities, the publication of research reports, our professional development and training activities, *The Strategist* and our fellowship program.

ASPI currently employs 63 full-time, part-time and casual staff with a range of expertise, including postgraduate qualifications, senior public policymaking skills, private and not-for-profit sector experience and media and communications skills in Australia and overseas.

In addition, ASPI appoints Fellows—individuals with distinguished careers and those with bespoke skills who produce a range of written analyses, contribute to ASPI program areas and provide mentoring for staff. As part of the Fellowships program, ASPI hosts international experts and encourages staff to undertake overseas fellowships.

ASPI notes that recruitment for staff with the skills the institute needs in both Canberra and Washington DC remains competitive. Those skills are sought after by government and, increasingly, the private sector.

Transparency

ASPI is proactive and transparent in its disclosure of funding. ASPI created a webpage in 2019 to explain its registration in the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (FITS), which complements ASPI's existing disclosure and reporting methods.

As with all ASPI's work, ASPI retains independent control over the content and direction of all foreign-funded or sponsored work. This is set out clearly in the institute's agreements with each foreign principal. In addition to this corporate plan, ASPI publishes an annual report.

ASPI's funding from all foreign principals has been listed on FITS: [online](#).

ASPI's funding sources are detailed on the ASPI website. That document is updated annually. In addition, all funding sources are identified in ASPI's annual report and in the acknowledgements sections of individual publications.

Government funding, through the Department of Defence, remains the key enabler of ASPI's operations and accounted for 32.8% of the institute's total income in financial year 2023–24.

ASPI's funding agreement with the Department of Defence extends to 30 June 2025. That funding supports much of ASPI's operating costs and research, projects and events on mutually agreed defence-related topics. Importantly, the institute retains its independence on judgements and policy recommendations.

ASPI is committed to seeking new long-term partnerships to support independent policy-relevant research and projects across a broader range of national-security issues. In this regard, ASPI receives funding from Australian and overseas governments, industry and civil-society groups.

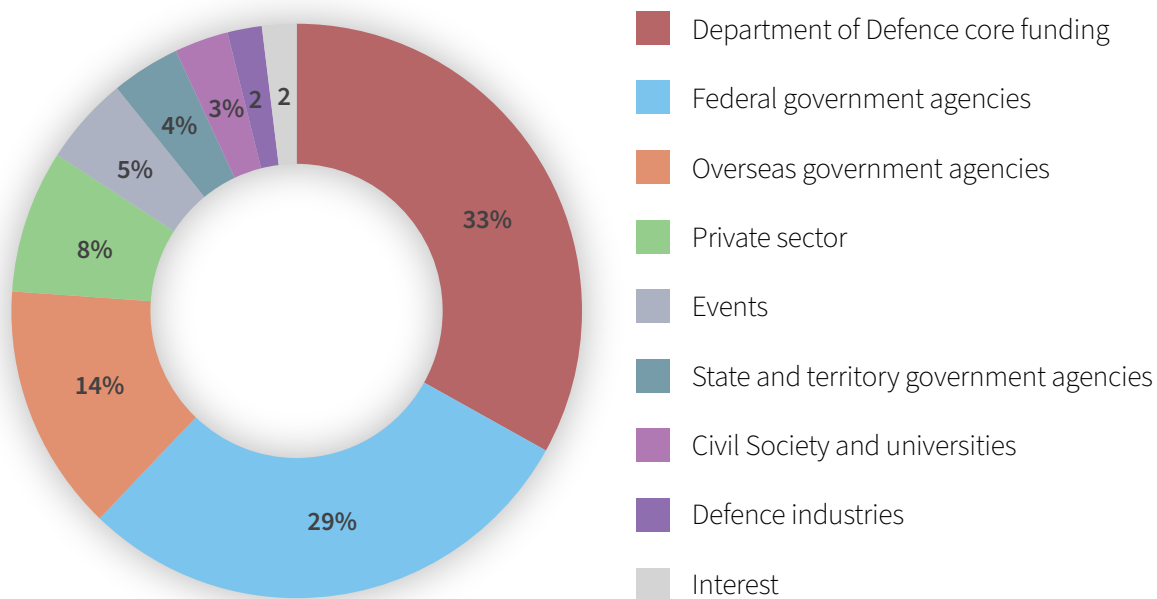
ASPI's independent analysis, research and conclusions are essential elements for all partnerships. Our independence is critical to our work and to meeting the requirements of our charter, including to provide alternative sources of input to government decision-making. This has been demonstrated by our work for over 23 years of active research, publishing and commentary.

For the 2023–24 financial year, this funding is broken down as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Funding sources, 2023-24

Funding source	Amount	% of total
Department of Defence core funding	\$4,000,000.00	32.8%
Federal government agencies	\$3,504,594.50	28.8%
Overseas government agencies	\$1,716,952.50	14.1%
Private sector	\$926,452.86	7.6%
Events	\$584,693.51	4.8%
State and territory government agencies	\$474,971.01	3.9%
Civil society and universities	\$404,072.14	3.3%
Defence industries	\$300,000.00	2.5%
Interest	\$269,601.15	2.2%
Total	\$12,181,337.67	100%

Figure 2: Funding sources 2023-24



Operating environment

The global think-tank landscape is competitive, but ASPI has earned a strong and enduring reputation for its original research and penetrating analysis.

In Australia, the think-tank community is healthy and vibrant, and several prestigious think tanks occupy specialist niches and make valuable contributions. ASPI is alone in having a focus that covers traditional defence and security as well as cyber and critical technology and fuses those areas of expertise in recognition that the world is in a period in which national security, economic security, climate security and technology are closely interrelated. ASPI also stands out for its data-driven objective research and its capacity to stage major events that attract international participation and recognition.

We have strong relationships with Australian Government departments and agencies, all sides of politics, and other contributors to the national-security policy community. We leverage our international reputation to build and maintain connections in overseas capitals, including through our Washington DC office—another element that makes ASPI unique among Australian think tanks.

Despite robust competition, ASPI continues to attract highly credentialed and respected staff from within the Defence organisation, the national-security community within the Australian Public Service, and private-sector organisations operating in the fields of defence, national security and technology. We place a premium on the production of high-quality, empirical, independent and policy-relevant research, often driven by industry demands. We believe that maintaining a strong reputation for quality, independence and timeliness of advice is critical for ASPI's future existence.

In 2022–23, we introduced additional layers of quality assurance into our internal and external peer review processes and project-development practices across all ASPI research products. This has helped to build additional contestability into our data-collection and methodological approaches, as well as our analysis and policy recommendations.

Staff and Visiting Fellows do most of ASPI's research and analysis. However, ASPI may also commission external experts to undertake research or prepare publications on particular topics of relevance to strategic, defence, national-security and foreign policy.

ASPI's analysis and commentary platform, *The Strategist*, has significant reach and influence throughout the defence, national-security and foreign-policy community and is available to both internal and external authors. It enables ASPI's research and analysis to be communicated to a large, global policy audience and offers non-ASPI authors an opportunity to share their expert views on the full range of defence and national-security topics. *The Strategist* is an important voice for developing Australian and global strategic thinking and expertise. It provides a unique platform for contestability, debate and analysis that is unmatched in the Indo-Pacific on defence and national-security issues of vital importance to Australia and the region.

In February 2024, the Australian Government announced an Independent Review of Commonwealth Funding for strategic policy work. While the outcome of the review is currently unknown, this may affect the Corporate Plan from 30 June, 2025.

Risk oversight and management

The ASPI Council and our independent Audit and Risk Committee are responsible for ensuring that a range of policies and tools are developed, implemented and regularly reviewed so that the institute is soundly governed.

ASPI's approach to managing risk draws on a range of legislation, policies and guidance aligned to the institute's two governance frameworks: the PGPA Act and the Corporations Act.

ASPI's two main risks are reputational and financial.

Reputational risk relates to the quality of our research and analysis, the maintenance of our independence and non-partisan approach, and the threat from interference, including through disinformation, by foreign regimes and their proxies who seek to undermine the institute. ASPI's objective is to be impactful to defence and national-security policymaking, and to do so requires stakeholder confidence in the independence of our judgements formed on the basis of data and empirical evidence. This also explains why ASPI has made the transparency of funding sources mandatory.

Financial risk is created by short-term funding arrangements and the possibility of reduced Australian public-sector investment. We continue to work proactively to develop new and sustainable funding and revenue streams to provide greater organisational stability and certainty.

ASPI staff are permitted to express views publicly, including on social media, and communication processes and procedures are in place to ensure that staff are doing so appropriately and objectively. A stringent editorial and evaluation process exists for pieces proposed to be posted on The Strategist and in other ASPI publications. A rigorous research publication process guides the way research is to be conducted within ASPI, and all research reports are required to undertake an internal and external peer-review process to ensure that our work is heavily contested and debated before it is released for publication.

Our independence is demonstrated every day in the content of ASPI's research and public commentary. The reality and perception of the institute's independence is guarded strongly and builds on a reputation for demonstrably meeting that requirement over the past 23 years.

Workplace resilience

ASPI maintains a detailed Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan, which is subject to continuous review and improvement to further strengthen organisational resilience. The plan ensures that ASPI is ready for any future potential disruption to operations.

This includes fortifying our infrastructure and ICT capabilities to ensure operational continuity despite the challenges of an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Performance

A report on ASPI’s performance against key measures is tabled annually at ASPI Council meetings.

We expect to consolidate the gains and growth of recent years by embedding new and updated corporate systems and processes, delivering new partnership and program funding, and expanding our commercial offering of training programs, ticketed events and online activities.

ASPI has identified six measures and targets to be monitored during the period of this Corporate Plan. This includes a new objective implemented in 2023: to achieve new funding sources and revenue streams.

Table 2: ASPI’s measures and targets

Measure 1	Conducting research and publishing relevant outputs
ASPI informs the public by publishing information and analysis on a full range of strategic, defence and national-security issues that outline the choices facing Australia over coming years. Measure 1 addresses key objectives 1 and 2	
Measurement	- Stakeholder and reader feedback on the number, type and quality of publications and Strategist articles produced by ASPI - Maintaining ASPI’s reputation for delivering high-quality, impactful and relevant security policy analysis of strategic, defence and national-security issues
Targets	Achieve year-on-year increases in the positive feedback received from stakeholders on the product categories below, while maintaining our excellence in independent empirical and timely research: - ASPI <i>Strategist</i> articles - ASPI reports - ASPI books - Publication of articles in external policy journals - Chapters in edited volumes (external) - Speaking at external academic conferences - Speaking at external policy conferences.
Stretch target	Publishing research that fills an acknowledged gap, identifies an issue subsequently taken up by policymakers, or that has a material effect on existing policy.

Measure 2 Provide government with an alternative source of strategic policy ideas and advice

ASPI is a source of new ideas and innovative solutions for government, both through our published work and through policy analyses specifically commissioned by government.

Measure 2 addresses key objectives 1 and 2.

Measurement	• Invitations to participate in parliamentary enquiries, government briefings and expert panels • Citations in official government documents and speeches • Feedback from stakeholders and the public on the value of ASPI outputs
Target	Achieve and maintain the number one position among Australian think tanks and centres as an alternative source of ideas and advice, as measured by: • reference to ASPI in the reports of government and parliamentary committees • increased requests for advice, analysis and briefings from ASPI research staff by members of parliament and parliamentary committees • growth in anecdotal feedback from government officials, in particular about the reach and impact of ASPI analysis, as well as from other stakeholders and the public.

Stretch Target ASPI referenced as contributing to new or changed government policy positions.

Measure 3 Stimulate public discussion on key aspects of defence and security policy

ASPI is one of the most authoritative and widely quoted contributors to public discussion, prompting debate on strategic policy issues in Australia.

ASPI informs the public by hosting events each year, many of which are open to the public, media appearances and through readily accessible online material on ASPI's website, including opinion pieces, reports, podcasts and *The Strategist*.

Measure 3 addresses key objective 3.

Measurement	• ASPI-hosted public events • ASPI published opinion pieces • Media coverage of ASPI experts contributing to the national debate • Extent of website, online commentary and social media usage by policymakers
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Target	Achieve and maintain ASPI's leading public profile, as measured by: • successful hosting of a defence conference, dialogue in Darwin on critical minerals and a combination of other events both hosted at ASPI or other venues focused on topics related to security, including critical technologies and disinformation • Increase in the number of attendees and viewers of ASPI events, as measured by online and in-person participation • regular opinion pieces published in the mainstream media as well as other platforms, including <i>The Strategist</i>. • regular television, print and radio interviews conducted • increase in followers from the previous financial year across the full range of ASPI social-media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.
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Stretch target	Update technologies and communication platforms to widen online reach and participation.
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Measure 4	Promote international understanding
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ASPI strengthens links with overseas think tanks to inform the international community of Australia's strategic and defence policy. ASPI is a highly sought-after contributor and presenter at international events.

Measure 4 addresses key objective 4.

Measurement	• Invitations to speak at major international conferences • Demonstrated collaboration with overseas think tanks • Participation in and hosting of international dialogues
Target	• Strengthen and broaden ASPI's participation in dialogues globally • Increase the number of international participants at ASPI events and authors on <i>The Strategist</i> • Increase the number of international secondees and fellows visiting and working with ASPI • Maintain and, where appropriate, increase formal arrangements with international think tanks
Stretch Target	Build long-term and diverse funding sustainability for the ASPI Washington DC office. Grow and diversify international project funding for ASPI Canberra.

Measure 5 Develop expertise

ASPI is committed to fostering the next generation of strategic policy thinkers and continues to play an active role in professional development with key partners.

Measure 5 addresses key objective 3.

- Measurement
- Number of interns and/or young researchers whom ASPI supports
 - Published pieces by interns/researchers
 - Participants in ASPI Professional Development courses

- Target
- Maintain an active internship program.
 - Consult with Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities to attract more applicants.
 - Develop alternative modes of delivery for ASPI Professional Development courses to attract greater participation.
 - Strengthen the participation of women and diverse groups across the defence, national-security and foreign-policy sectors to help Australia foster a more inclusive and dynamic strategic and policy community.

- Stretch target
- Grow the Women in Defence and National Security Network program, achieving an increase in activities and participation, including sustainable funding support

Measure 6 Achieve new funding and revenue streams

ASPI will seek to provide greater funding certainty and stability by expanding its revenue-generating activities, including through new partnership agreements, project funding and additional grant and research bids.

Measure 6 addresses key objectives 2, 3 and 4.

- Measurement
- Number and value of new partnership agreements
 - Number of successful new project, grant and research proposals

- Target
- Increase the volume of new funding and revenue generated, in particular from non-government sources, by 5% per annum.

- Stretch Target
- Grow ASPI's external funding through long-term / multi-year arrangements to self-sustainability.

Program areas

To achieve our key objectives, ASPI research staff operate in areas belonging to one of the following:

- Executive, Strategy and Research
- Defence Strategy and National Security
- Cyber, Technology and Security
- Northern Australia Strategic Policy Centre
- Statecraft and Intelligence Centre
- The Climate and Security Policy Centre
- Professional Development Centre
- Strategic Communications
- Washington DC office
- The Sydney Dialogue.

While each program area proactively generates and plans its work ahead, ASPI's product must also be relevant and timely. Therefore, some of our work can be a direct response to national and international events, such as terrorist attacks, cyberattacks or natural disasters.

Executive, Strategy and Research

The Executive, Strategy and Research Program pulls together several core functions.

ASPI has grown significantly over recent years, and now has a broader range of stakeholders and a more complex funding base. The institute now has a more global audience than just a few years ago, and a strong and growing readership. It is also now an organisation managing a portfolio of diverse projects, which has resulted in expansion in both the numbers and types of research products being produced. The Executive, Strategy and Research program will ensure ASPI manages that growth and diversity by enabling and enhancing whole-of-organisation coordination and strategic oversight, including of the institute's research products and partnerships. The program will do this by leading on:

- ASPI's research agenda, including review and quality-control processes and commissioning new products; the program also provides support to research teams on project and research development, funding opportunities and project delivery
- management of ASPI's implementation and operationalisation of its strategic priorities, particularly through the Executive Director
- organisational oversight of fundraising and stakeholder engagement, including partnerships
- oversight and support for new strategic initiatives as they take shape; this has included The Sydney Dialogue and continued support for the work of the Washington DC office.



Defence, Strategy and National Security

ASPI's Defence, Strategy and National Security Program analyses global strategic trends and explores priority issues in Australia's national security and defence policy.

With wars in both Europe and the Middle East and increased tension in the South China Sea, the program will consolidate its reputation for informing the public debate and exploring the implications of key developments in Australia's international defence environment. The team will contribute to a high-quality, respectful national debate and provide a healthy contest of ideas regarding defence strategy and policy.

The program's research and other activities support positive defence policy outcomes through rigorous, independent advice and an exploration of the strategic choices facing Australia. We access expertise from a wide range of relevant sectors—government and non-government—across Australia and internationally. Our ongoing areas of focus, which we will continue to refine over time in response to both current conflicts and future trends, include:

- Australia's evolving strategic environment and implications for Australian defence strategy, policy, international relationships, capability and operations
- the role of the military and wider Defence organisation in delivering Australia's security objectives
- regular and deep analysis of the defence budget, including of the economic and other factors driving new capability development and acquisition
- implementation of the Defence Strategic Review (DSR), including contributing to a stronger public understanding of the key processes that inform defence strategy and planning (for example, the DSR's direction to establish a net-assessment process to inform the two-yearly National Defence Strategy)
- establishment of the Australian Strategic Capabilities Agency within Defence, and analysis of issues relevant to the naval surface fleet review and defence industry development policy
- events 'below the threshold of armed conflict' and irregular warfare
- alliances and partnerships, including the Australia–US alliance, AUKUS (including non-proliferation dimensions), the Quad (and other minilateral forums), and Australia's engagement through multinational institutions
- deterrence, with an emphasis on increasing understanding of theories of deterrence, how they apply in Australia's strategic context and what that means for Australia's force posture and international engagement
- emerging dual-use and military technologies and their impact on ADF strategy and planning, including for force design
- issues related to ADF personnel matters, including recruitment, retention and training
- China's military strategy, force development and capability.

Cyber, Technology and Security Program

The Cyber, Technology and Security (CTS) Program is a leading voice in global debates on cyber and online foreign interference and issues related to information operations and disinformation.

This work will continue and consolidate the more recent addition of issues such as economic coercion, human rights and critical technologies. CTS will continue original, empirical, data-driven research focusing on how those issues affect society to inform global public debate and policy development.

CTS analysts apply a combination of open-source research expertise, language proficiency and technical, linguistic, data and imagery analysis skills to provide in-depth, data-driven analysis and policy recommendations on pressing policy questions. Strategic themes include cyber security, capacity building, critical and emerging technologies and hybrid threats. The primary geographical area of interest is the Indo-Pacific, spanning work in and on the Pacific, Southeast Asia, China and India. Work to identify and hold to account Beijing's malign actions, in particular its abuse of technology, will be a priority area. CTS's capacity-building team continues to develop capability in Australia and across the Indo-Pacific, conducting workshops, training programs and exercises for the public, private and civil-society sectors. Projects will continue to focus on capacity building on a wide range of topics, including cybercrime, AI standards and intellectual property theft.

ASPI's *Critical Technology Tracker*, now ASPI's third most-read report of all time, provides unique insights into countries and institutions that are investing in high-impact research in more than 50 critical technologies that will underpin our future societies and economies. This work will continue to expand to fill a crucial gap in our understanding of the critical technology ecosystem and inform ongoing policy decisions on securing trusted and reliable technology supply chains. The aim is to examine additional technologies and technology readiness indicators for technology development.

ASPI's work related to India will continue to examine opportunities for bilateral and multilateral cooperation, India's footprint in the Indo-Pacific and how that is received in the Pacific and Southeast Asia, and how tensions in the India–China relationship affect Australia's strategic environment. CTS will also continue to provide in-depth analysis on state-backed foreign interference and influence operations in Australia and the region, particularly through the use/misuse of social media and media platforms and the online harassment of 'dissident' and activist communities.

Some of our larger initiatives and projects also have their own websites, which will continue to be updated where appropriate and resourced, and feature in future work, including:

- ASPI's [Critical Technology Tracker](#)
- AI Tech diplomacy
- Cyber-enabled Commercial Espionage
- [The Xinjiang Data Project](#)
- [A 3D satellite deep dive into the India–China border](#)
- [Understanding Global Disinformation and Information Operations](#)
- [Mapping China's Technology Giants](#) (relaunched in June 2021)
- [China Defence Universities Tracker](#) (updated in May 2021).

Northern Australia Strategic Policy Centre

The Northern Australia Strategic Policy Centre focuses research on Australia's north in the areas of defence, national security and nation-building.

With the support of the Northern Territory Government, the centre has established two projects which that will be an ongoing priorities for the future: 'The North and Australia's Security' and 'Nation-building in the North'.

A critical element of the centre's work across these areas will be the exploration of the north's critical role in contributing to the broader security of Australia.

That includes:

- maintaining a strong public policy focus on the role of the north in the broader security of Australia at a time when strategic circumstances are driving new policy thinking in Canberra
- developing a modernised way of thinking about the north and security by updating strategic frameworks that remain anchored in the 1980s 'defence of Australia' context
- situating the north in a broader discussion about national-security interests beyond defence, encompassing home affairs, border security and customs, space, cybersecurity, humanitarian relief and disaster response, biosecurity and energy security.

The centre also has significant expertise across bespoke areas, including counterterrorism and national resilience, law enforcement and policing, and these will continue to feature heavily.

THE DARWIN DIALOGUE





Statecraft and intelligence centre

ASPI's work on statecraft and intelligence focuses on the increasingly important role of intelligence in the conduct of statecraft, particularly in the Australian context.

Research and analysis topics include intelligence history; the impact of popular culture on public understanding (and misunderstanding) of intelligence matters; emerging issues and challenges facing intelligence services internationally and in Australia; international comparisons and lessons; the place of intelligence agencies (and their oversight and organisation) in democracies; counter-intelligence and counter terrorism.

The program will:

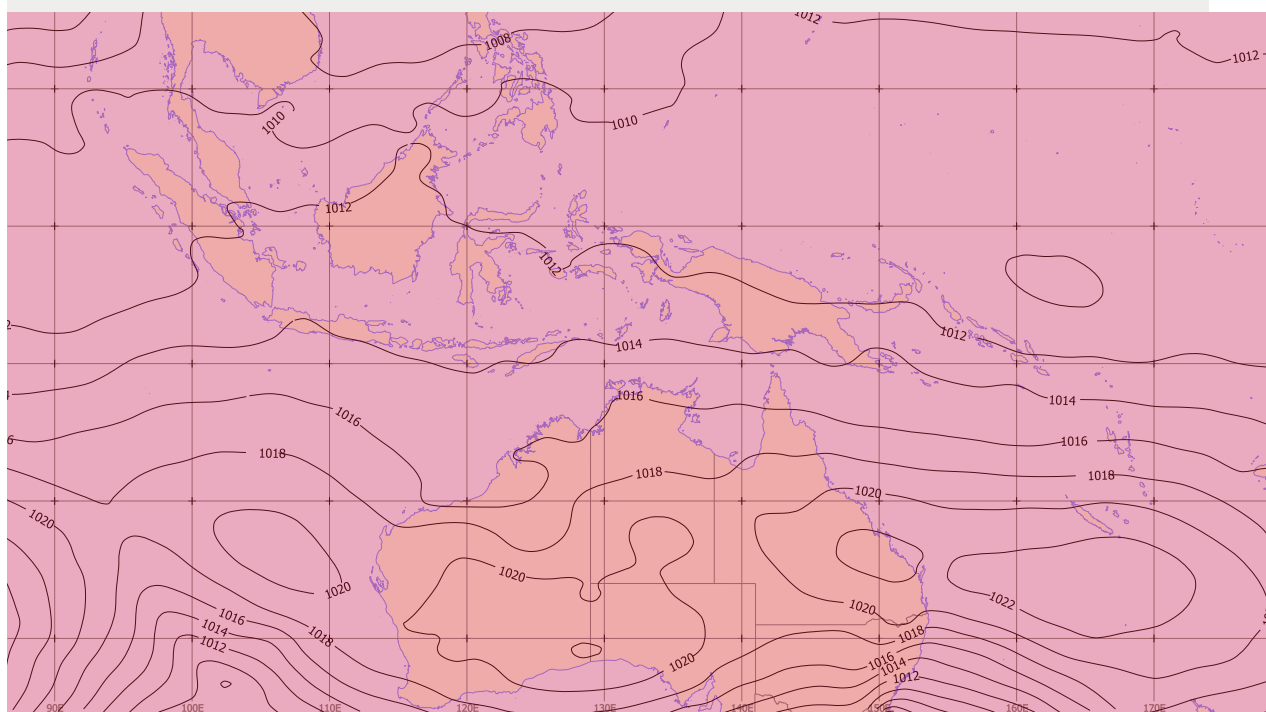
- conduct and publish valued research on intelligence matters
- prepare suitable policy inputs on intelligence issues
- conduct a range of activities to increase the understanding of intelligence among the Australian community (and to encourage the development of national expertise in intelligence).

The Climate and Security Policy Centre

The Climate and Security Policy Centre, established in April 2021, evaluates the impact that climate change will have on security in the Indo-Pacific region.

Climate change is already being felt globally in record-setting extreme weather events that are contributing to poverty, hunger and humanitarian disasters. The consequences for the Indo-Pacific region, the most disaster-prone globally, will be profound. Climate change will exacerbate existing regional security challenges and contribute to new challenges that undermine regional stability and increase the risk of conflict. The centre's work will therefore continue to focus on identifying the most likely paths through which disruptive climate events can cause cascading, security-relevant impacts such as disruptions of critical supply chains, energy insecurity, food insecurity, separatist movements, humanitarian disasters, population displacement, opportunistic intervention by outside powers, political instability and conflict. This work will only increase in significance.

The centre will continue to develop practical, evidence-based policy recommendations and interventions to reduce climate-change risks and promote their adoption by policymakers. It will increase Australian and regional expertise, understanding and public awareness of the links between climate change and national security. And it will identify the implications of those links for key stakeholders, including the ADF, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, other government agencies, parliamentarians and the private sector.



Strategic Communications

ASPI informs policy debates and public understanding of strategic, security and foreign-affairs issues in line with our charter.

The institute does that by holding a wide range of events, publishing and promoting its research, speaking to media and driving policy debate through regular podcasts and *The Strategist* commentary and analysis website. ASPI will continue building on the very strong public engagement that it has established. As described throughout this plan, *The Strategist* has significant reach and influence throughout the defence, national-security and foreign-policy community and is available to internal and external authors. It is a core mechanism by which ASPI carries out all of its three underlying purposes of providing alternative advice, nourishing public debate and contributing to the development of professional expertise. ASPI's podcast, *Stop the World*, is produced weekly and casts a freeze-frame around the constant blur of events to bring some clarity and insight on topics ranging from defence and disinformation to cyber and critical technologies.

This program will continue supporting:

- impactful research that engages specialists and the public and drives fresh discussion of the most pressing and challenging security issues, including Australia's defence capability, cyber and disinformation threats, countering economic coercion, climate change, Indo-Pacific strategic competition, critical materials and technology, and space
- events that bring together leading thinkers and practitioners to generate ideas and grapple with the most complex and pressing challenges in strategic and international affairs
- contributing analysis and expertise to discussions of current issues through news media, social-media threads, *The Strategist* and our weekly podcast.



Professional Development Centre

The role of ASPI's Professional Development Centre is to enhance strategic policy capability by exploring current and emerging challenges and building effective policymaking and strategic analytical skills.

ASPI Professional Development programs are designed to address emerging trends, equipping participants with the knowledge and skills needed to stay ahead of the curve in an ever-changing professional landscape. The programs foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment that encourages collaboration, critical thinking, active participation, networking, and knowledge sharing among participants, presenters and industry experts.

The centre's subject-matter experts bring lived experience to the programs. ASPI presenters (staff and Fellows) are critical to the success of its programs and are highly sought after by partners. The centre has the unique ability to call upon a significant network of current and former senior government officials, leading industry experts and academics from across Australia and the globe.

Its strategic policy and leadership programs (ranging from one day to 10 days) are delivered with partners in the defence, national-security and national-intelligence communities in a face-to-face environment, apart from the masterclass series, which is delivered to Defence virtually. The centre increasingly delivers bespoke programs for international delegations from across the Asia-Pacific region.

Accordingly, over the next two years, ASPI Professional Development will focus on:

- maintaining and growing revenue to retain self-sufficiency and support wider ASPI programs
- strengthening existing relationships with key partners to extend existing programs across multiple years
- identifying professional development gaps to create new opportunities with existing partners
- leveraging existing strategic policy and leadership programs (and tailoring them) for new partners
- providing capacity within the program schedule/facilities to identify and respond to requirements for new programs that often arise at relatively short notice.





Washington DC office

ASPI is Australia's only international think tank, with an office in Washington DC that serves to provide a distinctive Australian voice in the US strategic policy debate and lifts the profile of strategic regions and issues that are of vital interest to Australia but which are underrepresented in the Washington think-tank community.

Since it opened in July 2022, ASPI's Washington DC office has helped to ensure Australian perspectives shape vital policy debates such as those on supply-chain reliability, the security of critical materials and the strategic impact of emerging technologies, including space, cyber, undersea warfare, quantum, AI and semiconductors.

ASPI DC has become the go-to place in Washington for think-tank perspectives on Australian defence and security policy, acting as a conduit for bipartisan Australian political engagement in the Washington think-tank world and strengthening the connections between the Australian and US strategic policy communities, including for future generations.

The Washington DC office will continue to embed itself in the US think tank ecosystem, in particular by holding roundtables and other events, publishing analysis, engaging widely in Washington, undertaking desktop activities, war games and scenario exercises and hosting Australian and international visitors. It will also increasingly engage in media commentary in the US and Australia and identify new ways to collaborate with the Australian Embassy in DC.

The Sydney Dialogue

After a very successful in-person Sydney Dialogue in April 2023, ASPI has leveraged the dialogue as an ongoing feature of its work on critical technologies to ensure that it isn't a one-off public event and, subject to ongoing Australian Government support, it will continue to be held in coming years.

The dialogue brings together business, government and tech leaders with the world's best strategic thinkers to discuss key issues and policy challenges.

The Sydney Dialogue features conversations on the opportunities for stronger collaboration across national and regional boundaries in critical and emerging technologies, in cyber and in space. It also discusses the challenges inherent in competing visions for the governance and application of key technologies, and in the increasing export of technologies and ideas that threaten the interests and values of free and open societies.



Women in Defence and Security Network (WDSN)

The primary aim of the Women in Defence and Security Network (WDSN) is to provide a forum to support the career development of women in the defence and national-security community in Australia and to facilitate discussion of issues related to women's participation and gender perspectives in defence, national-security and foreign policy.

The importance of female participation and leadership in the defence and security sector has been recognised across government and the private sector, and the WDSN has grown steadily since it was established in October 2014.

The WDSN also publishes profiles of women working within the sector at all levels to showcase their talent and ideas, as well as the different career pathways available for those in the network.

ASPI aims to grow the WDSN, and to continue to attract interest from across government departments and agencies, industry and academia. The network will seek to increase its activities, through new initiatives targeted at students and early-career professionals, including by hosting skill-building workshops at ASPI (on writing high-quality and impactful op-eds, for example) as well as informal discussion groups to facilitate debate.

The WDSN will continue to host its flagship speed mentoring event, and will seek to collaborate with other similar initiatives, including as part of Winspire, to collectively support and encourage women to pursue careers in national security. To sustainably grow the network, WDSN will seek to fundraise to resource the network and increase its activities across the coming years.

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