

Corporate plan 2022–2026

A S P I

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INSTITUTE



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ASPI
Level 2
40 Macquarie Street
Barton ACT 2600
Australia

Tel + 61 2 6270 5100
Fax + 61 2 6273 9566
Email enquiries@aspi.org.au
www.aspi.org.au
www.aspistrategist.org.au



[Facebook.com/ASPI.org](https://www.facebook.com/ASPI.org)

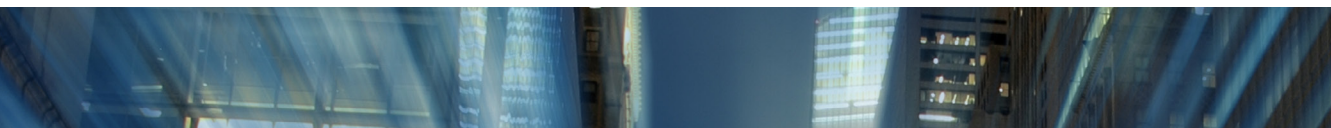


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Introduction

This 2022-2026 Corporate Plan has been prepared under section 95(1) of the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and covers the period 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2026.

ASPI's Corporate Plan 2022-2026 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. ASPI generates new ideas for policy makers, allowing them to make better-informed decisions. ASPI 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 authoritative Australian voice in international discussion on strategic, national security, cyber, technology and foreign interference issues.

Since its inception in 2001, the institute has developed into one of the leading independent policy research bodies in Australia. ASPI 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, which is responsible for setting the strategic direction for the institute. ASPI Council members are appointed by the Minister for Defence and include a nominee of the Leader of the Opposition to reinforce the non-partisan nature of ASPI's work.

ASPI is partially funded by the Department of Defence with other sources of revenue including sponsorship, commissioned tasks and event registration fees. More details of ASPI's funding sources are disclosed in this Corporate Plan.

Purpose

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

It has four specific purposes:

- conducting and publishing research on issues related to Australia's strategic and defence policy choices
- preparing policy inputs on strategic and defence issues to government, as requested by government, subject to funding
- 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
- promoting international understanding of Australia's strategic and defence policy perspectives.

Strategic aim

ASPI's strategic aim is to build upon our recognition as Australia's number one strategic defence, national security and policy research institute. To achieve this, a series of measures during the year preceding this plan has prepared ASPI to:

- maintain our excellence for delivering world-class, independent, innovative and relevant security policy analysis of defence and strategic 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.

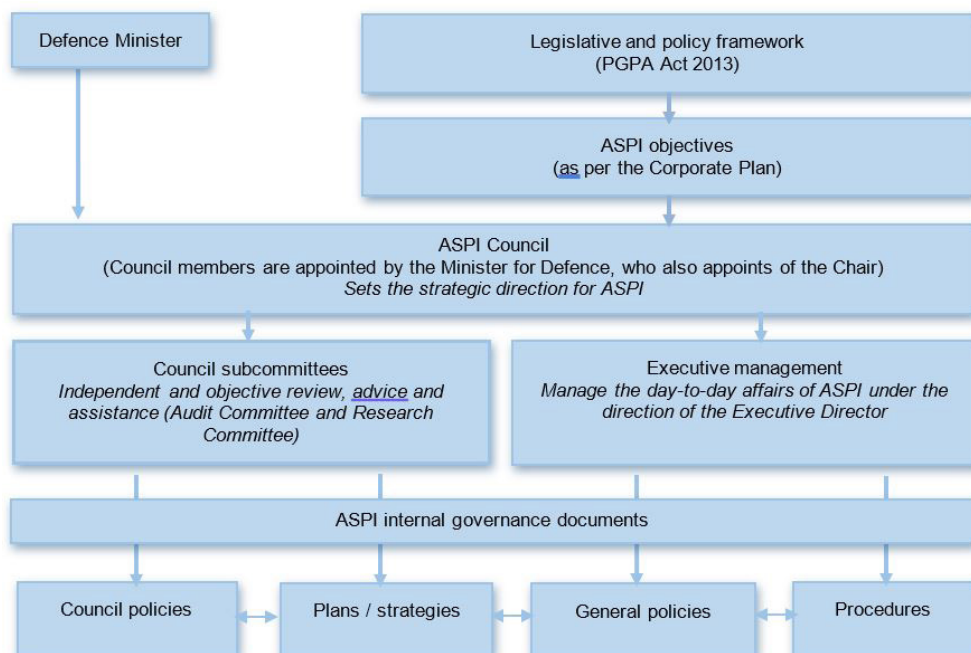
ASPI aims, through its website, publications, online commentary, events and media activities to be innovative, accurate and well-informed and to broaden public knowledge about the critical strategic choices our country will face over the coming years. The institute's work will help to foster strategic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

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

Governance framework

The ASPI Council and its subcommittees 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 on risk management. Our support processes include our internal controls, quality management arrangements, financial services, human resources, and professional development processes. We seek external and independent assurance about the quality of our systems and wherever possible pursue external certification and assurances. Examples include external IT penetration testing of our systems and external program and financial audits by the Australian National Audit Office. ASPI's governance structure is shown below.



Staffing



ASPI proudly promotes a workplace that actively seeks to include, welcome and values unique contributions of all people. ASPI is an inclusive workplace and we believe that diversity and inclusiveness enhance our initiatives, content, accessibility and strengthens our research and analysis.

At the time of reporting, ASPI employs around 89 full-time, part-time and casual staff, including a substantial number of people with PhDs, other postgraduate qualifications and individuals with extensive senior experience in policy analysis in Australia and overseas.

In addition, ASPI has appointed several Visiting Fellows—individuals with distinguished careers who produce a range of written analyses, contribute to ASPI program areas and provide mentoring for staff.

ASPI will continue to host international Visiting Fellows and encourage staff to undertake overseas fellowships.

Our Corporate Services team provides support for ASPI operations in the areas of governance, finance, human resources, events, communications and training, underpinned by information and communication technologies.

Transparency

ASPI is proactive in its disclosure of funding. ASPI created a webpage in 2019 to explain its registration on 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 made clear in the agreements with each foreign principal.

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



Sources of ASPI-wide funding is detailed here on the ASPI website. This document is updated biannually by ASPI's Finance Manager. In addition, funding sources are identified in ASPI's Annual Report, and in the acknowledgements section of individual publications.

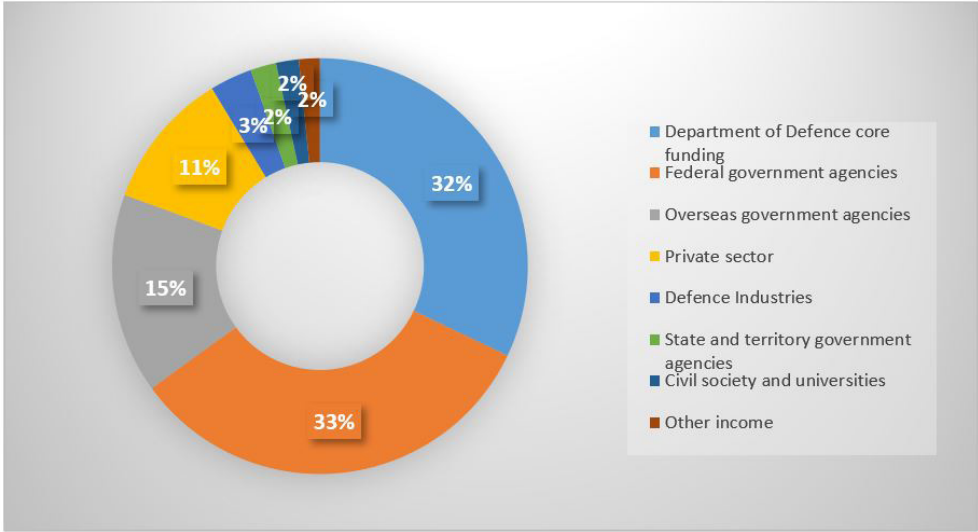
Government funding, through our funding agreement with the Department of Defence, remains the key enabler of ASPI's operations and accounts for 32% of ASPI's total income. A five-year funding agreement with Department of Defence commenced in FY2018-19 and will end FY2022-23. This funding covers much of our operating costs and those elements of the research program (on specific mutually agreed projects) and events program that are defined in the funding agreement.

In addition, ASPI is committed to securing a financial foundation for growth by seeking new partnerships and long-term sponsorship funding to develop independent policy-relevant research across a broader range of national security issues. ASPI receives funding from Australian and overseas Governments, industry and civil society groups for sponsorship, research and project support.

ASPI's independent analysis, research and conclusions are essential elements for any sponsor to understand. Our independence is critical to our work and reputation and has been demonstrated by our work for twenty years of active research, publishing and commentary.

For the 2021-2022 financial year, this funding is broken down as follows:

Funding source	Amount	% of total
Department of Defence core funding	\$4,000,000	32.1%
Federal government agencies	\$4,102,511	32.9%
Overseas government agencies	\$1,939,442	15.6%
Private sector	\$1,339,990	10.7%
Defence industries	\$410,182	3.3%
State and territory government agencies	\$250,000	2.0%
Civil society and universities	\$220,824	1.8%
Other income (ticket sales and interest)	\$202,525	1.6%
Total	\$12,465,474	100%



Operating environment

As an independent and non-partisan think tank, ASPI is unique in Australia. While a number of other think tanks operate in the strategic policy and national interest sphere, ASPI's positioning as a trusted but independent organisation with close connections to government and other key stakeholders, such as the Australian Parliament, the Australian Public Service, the media and industry, means it is well placed for success.

ASPI attracts highly credentialed and respected staff but must continue to compete with other organisations that operate in similar subject areas.

We place a premium on the production of high-quality, empirical, independent and policy-relevant research, often driven by customer demands. A strong reputation for quality, independence and timeliness of advice is critical for ASPI's future existence.

Staff and Visiting Fellows do most of ASPI's research and analysis. However, contracts are established with other experts in their fields to undertake research or prepare publications on particular topics. For example, contributions to *The Strategist*, come from a range of authors, including ASPI staff and Fellows.

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 on risk management. The most significant piece of governance legislation is the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The two most significant risks facing ASPI are that its independence and non-partisan approach are called into question or that the quality of its research and analysis diminishes. The manifestation of either risk may lead to a loss of confidence in our work and damage our reputation. If that were to happen, Australian Government departments and agencies might decide to withdraw or significantly reduce funding.

ASPI has in place a stringent editorial and communication processes and procedures to monitor what staff are saying publicly, as well as a thorough evaluation process on what pieces are posted on *The Strategist* and in other ASPI publications. Our Research Ethics Policy guides the manner in which research is to be conducted within ASPI, and research contributors are required to conduct research in a way that does not compromise our high standards.

Our independence is demonstrated every day in the content of ASPI's research and public comment. The reality and perception of the institute's independence must be guarded, but it builds on a reputation for demonstrably meeting this requirement over the past 20 years.

Workplace resilience

The covid-19 pandemic continues to affect our lives, communities and businesses. ASPI has taken what we have learned in the past two years, used it to effect the spirit of resilience and continue building better relationships and business outcomes. ASPI's Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans are subject to continuous improvement which further strengthens organisational resilience and ensures that ASPI is ready for any future disruption to business.

Performance

A report on our performance against the objectives and measures is tabled quarterly at Council meetings.

We expect growth over the next four years at least as significant as we have had in the last four years and will achieve it through establishing the Washington DC Office, delivering new sponsorship and program funding, as well as by expanding our commercial offering of training programs, ticketed events and online activities.

ASPI has identified five objectives, measures and targets to be monitored during the period of this Corporate Plan. For the first time, the Corporate Plan has included a new category in our objectives, called 'stretch targets'. This aims to give our staff measurable benchmarks of performance to keep the team focused on expanding and improving the work of the institute.

Objective 1 Conducting research and publishing relevant outputs	
ASPI informs the public by publishing information and analysis on a full range of strategic, defence and nation security issues that bear on the choices facing Australia over coming years.	
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• number and type of publications and Strategist articles produced by ASPI.• maintaining ASPI's excellence for delivering high quality, impactful and relevant security policy analysis of strategic, defence and national security issues
Targets	<p>Achieve year on year increases in the number of publications in each of the below categories, while maintaining our excellence in independent empirical and timely research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ASPI Strategist 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	Publish in a prominent international journal (i.e. Foreign Affairs) and/or newspaper of note e.g. New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, Der Spiegel

Objective 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.	
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation in government advisory committees and expert panels • citations in official government documents and speeches • reacting to government and industry demands
Target	<p>Grow ASPI's Government non-core funding by 5% annually.</p> <p>Achieve and maintain the number one position among Australian think tanks and centres as an alternative source of ideas and advice as measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation in government advisory committees and expert panels • citation in official government documents and speeches • anecdotal feedback from Government officials
Stretch Target	Grow ASPI's funding by 15% to support additional people, research and activities by increasing long term sponsorship funding.
Objective 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 several events per year which are open to the public and through readily accessible online material on ASPI's website including opinion pieces, reports, podcasts and <i>The Strategist</i> .	
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and range of ASPI public events • published opinion pieces • media coverage by ASPI experts contributing to the national debate • website, online commentary and social media usage
Target	<p>Achieve and maintain the leading public profile as measured by media analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opinion pieces published in <i>The Australian</i>, <i>The Age/SMH</i> and the <i>Australian Financial Review</i> • Television and radio interviews <p>30% Increase in followers from the previous financial year across the full range of ASPI Social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.</p> <p>Increase by 5% the number of public participation in live ASPI events as measured by on-line and in person participation.</p>
Stretch Target	Use new technologies to create additional platforms for communication.

Objective 4 Promote international understanding	
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.	
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ranking in University of Pennsylvania's Global Go To Think Tank Index • accepted invitations to speak at prestigious international conferences • links with overseas think tanks • participation in and hosting of international dialogues.
Target	<p>Maintain the number one ranking Australian think tank in the category of Defence Strategy in the University of Pennsylvania Global Go To Think Tank Index.</p> <p>Strengthen and broaden participation in dialogues; specifically, in the SEA region.</p>
Stretch Target	Ensure long term funding sustainability of the ASPI Washington DC office.
Objective 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 for government clients.	
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of interns whom ASPI supports • published pieces by interns • participants in ASPI Professional Development courses
Target	<p>Grow the number of interns from 6 per year to 7 by collaborating with key stakeholders for sponsorship opportunities.</p> <p>Consult with indigenous and culturally linguistically diverse communities to attract interns.</p> <p>Develop alternate modes of delivery for ASPI PD courses to attract greater participation.</p> <p>Strengthen participation of women across the defence, national security and foreign policy sectors.</p>
Stretch Target	Widen the pool for intern recruitment beyond the ASPI regular audience and channels for advertising and grow the number of interns to 8 by securing sponsorship.

Program areas

To achieve our objectives, ASPI research staff operate in program areas that belong to either:

- Executive, Strategy and Research
- Defence, Strategy and National Security
- International Cyber Policy Centre
- Strategic Communications
- Professional Development Centre
- ASPI Washington DC office
- The Sydney Dialogue

While each program area plans for its work to be completed throughout the year, 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, cyber-attacks or natural disasters.

Executive, Strategy and Research

This new program pulls together a number of core functions under one dedicated Director. As ASPI has grown so significantly over the past few years it has become a larger organisation, with a growing range of stakeholders and a more complex funding base. ASPI now has a far more global audience than just three years ago, with a strong and growing readership across the Indo-Pacific and Europe. It is also now an organisation managing a growing portfolio of diverse projects, which has resulted in a growth and expansion in both the numbers and types of research products being produced. The program will help ASPI manage this growth by enabling and enhancing whole-of-organisation coordination and strategic oversight, including of the institute's research products.

Set up in August 2022, this program now leads 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
- ASPI's management of strategic priority setting, particularly in relation to the Executive Director
- whole of organisation oversight of fundraising and high level stakeholder engagement
- providing oversight and support for large strategic initiatives and new programs of work as they take shape including, for example, ASPI's Sydney Dialogue initiative and the Washington DC Office.

Defence, Strategy and National Security Programs

The Defence, Strategy and National Security Program analyses strategic trends and the role of military force, including:

- changes in Australia's strategic environment and implications for Australian defence strategy, policy, relationships, capability and operations
- the role of the military and wider Defence organisation in shaping Australia's security environment
- implementation of the Defence Strategic Review
- use of militaries 'below the threshold of armed conflict' to achieve strategic gains, and how Australia might both act and respond in this grey zone
- alliances and partnerships, including the Australia-US alliance, AUKUS (including non-proliferation dimensions), the Quad and other minilateral forums
- deterrence, including Australia's engagement with the US integrated deterrence concept,
- emerging technologies and their impact – positively and negatively – on Australia's security and defence capability
- the strategic and force structure impacts of economic, demographic, environmental and other trends – including the demands on Defence to respond to domestic and regional disasters and events
- analysing PLA capabilities in the Indo-Pacific.

It also analyses the capability of the ADF through all stages of the capability life cycle, including:

- identifying requirements for future capability
- analysing competing options for materiel solutions
- assessing implementation of the Force Structure Plan
- assessing Defence's ability to sustain forces in conflict
- exploring issues related to ADF personnel matters, including recruitment, retention and training
- assessing ADF capability against regional militaries.

The program also analyses the management of the Department of Defence and assesses Australia's defence budgets and the wider range of activities required to produce and support the ADF's capabilities. This includes:

- defence funding over both the short and the long terms
- policies and capabilities of the defence industry
- project management strategies
- defence economic trends, especially as they apply to materiel.

ASPI's Pacific program will continue to focus on information operations and capacity-building, but also expand to cover defence priorities like Chinese influence and capabilities in the region, HADR and the security dimensions of supporting democratic resilience.

The Defence, Strategy and National Security Program works in close partnership with the following centres and programs, which together provide comprehensive coverage of national security issues.

Counter-Terrorism and Resilience Program

The Counter-Terrorism and Resilience Program has three key purposes:

- undertakes forward-looking research across the spectrum of critical counter-terrorism and extremism questions, facilitates dialogue and analytical innovation amongst stakeholders, and provides high quality strategic advice to government, community and industry stakeholders in relation to counter- terrorism and extremism
- provides opportunities for researchers to share expertise through publication of research, public policy analysis and recommendation of innovative, strategic policy advice to government in respect to the evolving global threat of extremism and terrorism
- facilitates collaboration between government, private sector entities, non-government organisations and academia through regular counter-terrorism/extremism dialogue focusing on the threat horizon, nature, causes as well as remedying/prevention of extremist radicalisation in society.

To achieve these goals, the centre will continue to establish itself as the leading think tank authority on extremism, terrorism, counter-terrorism and resilience in Australia.

Northern Australia Strategic Policy Centre

Established in 2019, the Northern Australia Strategic Policy Centre provides a sustained defence, national security and nation-building research focus on Australia's north.

With the support of the NT Government, ASPI has established two programs of work under the auspices of its Northern Australia Strategic Policy Centre: The North and Australia's Security and Nation-building in the North.

The programs provide a sustained research focus on nation-building and the security of Australia's north. A critical element of this work is the exploration of the north's critical role in contributing to the broader security of Australia. The program concentrates on:

- 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 and disaster response, biosecurity and energy security.

Strategic Policing and Law Enforcement Program

The Strategic Policing & Law Enforcement Program examines law enforcements contributions to national security and to broader strategic policy and the threat posed by transnational serious and organised crime.

The program focusses on:

- analysing the link between law enforcement issues and national security concerns
- the contribution of law enforcement agencies to Australia’s international objectives
- the scope and nature of Australia’s and the region’s transnational serious and organised crime threat
- research that helps law enforcement agencies position themselves for the future.

The Climate and Security Policy Centre

The impacts of climate change are 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.

Established in April 2021, the objectives of the *Climate and Security Policy Centre* are to:

- evaluate the impact climate change will have on security in the Indo-Pacific region, including by identifying the most likely paths through which disruptive climate events (individually, concurrently or consecutively) 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
- develop practical, evidence-based policy recommendations and interventions to reduce climate change risks and promote their adoption by policy makers
- increase Australian and regional expertise, understanding and public awareness of the links between climate change and national security
- identify the implications of these links for key stakeholders, including the Australian Defence Forces, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, other government agencies, parliamentarians, and the private sector.

International Cyber Policy Centre

ASPI's International Cyber Policy Centre (ICPC) is a leading voice in global debates on cyber, emerging and critical technologies, foreign interference and issues related to information operations and disinformation. The Centre's work is agenda setting and focuses on the impact these issues have on broader strategic policy.

The Centre informs public debate globally and supports policy development in the Indo-Pacific region by producing original, empirical, data-driven research. You will find the centre's research [here](#).

The Centre has a growing mixture of expertise and skills with teams of researchers who concentrate on policy, technical analysis, information operations and disinformation, critical and emerging technologies, cyber capacity building and Internet safety, Indigenous STEM and gender, satellite analysis, surveillance and China-related issues.

ASPI has established a new India program that will continue to expand given Delhi's importance to Australia's national and regional interests.

The program will span across ASPI's research centres to provide in-depth analysis of the bilateral relationship and India's role in the Indo-Pacific. ASPI will produce original empirical research on areas of potential bilateral cooperation including on critical technologies, critical minerals, defence & national security, energy security and space. The research will also look at India's footprint in the Indian Ocean region, in Southeast Asia and avenues for bolstering cooperation through the Quad and other regional groupings. We would also look to expand the scope of research to consider how tensions in the India-China relationship affect Australia's strategic environment and options.

The program will be supported by track 1.5 dialogues, a high-level visits and fellowships program and an intention to publish a diverse range of authors from India and South Asia.

To develop capability in Australia and across the Indo-Pacific region, the Centre has a capacity building team that conducts workshops, training programs and large-scale exercises for the public, private and civil society sectors. Current projects are focusing on capacity building in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands region, across a wide range of topics.

The Centre enriches regional debates by collaborating with civil society groups from around the world and by bringing leading global experts to Australia through our international fellowship program.

Some of our larger initiatives and projects also have their own websites including:

- [The Sydney Dialogue](#)
- [Understanding Global Disinformation and Information Operations](#)
- [auCheck](#) - a new public Internet security and standards tool
- [Mapping China's Technology Giants](#) (re-launched June 2021)

- [The Xinjiang Data Project](#)
- [A 3D satellite deep dive into the India-China border](#)
- [China Defence Universities Tracker](#) (updated May 2021)
- [The IndigiCyber, Defence & Space Program](#)
- [Mapping conditions in Rakhine State.](#)

Strategic Communications

ASPI informs policy debates and public understanding of strategic, security and foreign affairs issues in line with our charter. We do this by holding a wide range of events, publishing and promoting our research, speaking to media and driving policy debate through our regular podcast and *The Strategist* commentary and analysis website.

ASPI's goals in the coming period will be to continue building on the very strong public engagement that we have established. This will include:

- 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 tech, 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 discussion of current issues through news media, social media threads, *The Strategist* and our weekly podcast.

ASPI Professional Development Centre

If ASPI's role is to generate new ideas for government and foster better-informed decisions on strategic policy matters, then the role of the ASPI Professional Development Centre is to enhance strategic policy capability by applying those ideas to current and future challenges. While we draw upon ASPI's reputation, broad research focus and ability to call upon Australia and the world's leading experts, we have established a team of staff and Fellows dedicated to the delivery of a unique capability designed to build Australia's capacity for strategic policy excellence and foster 'real world' planning and strategy development.

We identify and address gaps in leadership capability and provide advice in developing and implementing complex multi-agency policies. Our professional development programs are designed, developed and delivered to the highest levels of federal, state and territory governments and their departments and agencies. These programs are short, intense and highly interactive, fostering close engagement between facilitators, expert presenters and participants to explore current and emerging policy challenges and build effective policy making and strategic analysis skills.

Our development approach is intense and highly interactive, fostering close engagement between stakeholders and experts to explore current and emerging policy challenges. We utilise scenarios, case studies, simulations, and desk top exercises which actively engage participants in addressing real-world complex and multi-faceted strategic policy and operational issues; providing opportunity for participants to directly develop and apply a range of strategic policy skills, bringing context and meaning to learning objectives, and ensuring relevance for their current and future roles.

The Centre is fully self-funding and contributes to other ASPI programs in a range of ways including through the sustainment of ASPI's conference centre lease.

We continue to evolve our program offerings and delivery including through several series of online masterclasses. The Professional Development Centre is also increasingly being approached by partners to deliver bespoke programs for international delegations from the Asia-Pacific region.

ASPI Washington DC office

The ASPI Washington DC office opened on 13 July 2022.

The key purposes of the ASPI Washington DC office:

- provide a distinctive Australian voice in the US strategic policy debate
- lift the profile of strategic regions and issues of vital interest to Australia but currently under-done in the Washington think tank community. This includes Southeast Asia, the Pacific Island Countries, and the Indian Ocean region
- ensure where vital policy debates are taking place that Australian perspectives help shape these discussions. Current areas include supply chain security, the security of critical materials and the strategic impact of emerging technology
- develop an Australian voice around key emerging and evolving areas of international competition: space, cyber, undersea warfare, the quantum realm, chemical, biological and nuclear developments
- become the go-to place in Washington for think tank perspectives on Australian defence and security policy Previous attempts to establish Australian studies centres at American universities have not been very successful. We see the major focus of ASPI Washington DC should be on our wider region and on driving strategic issues rather than on Australian domestic matters
- ensure Australian interests are built in to emerging US policy thinking and initiatives, instead of having Australian interests reverse engineered into more mature US plans
- ensure that the latest US strategic policy thinking informs Australian policy debates
- act as a conduit for bipartisan Australian political engagement in the Washington think tank world

- strengthen the development of the next generation of Australian strategic policy thinkers and their connections with the US policy and think tank establishment.

To achieve this the Washington DC office will:

- develop a program of activities, including holding roundtables and events
- publish research as part of ASPI's publication output
- engage widely in the Washington think tank and policy community
- undertake desk-top activities, wargames and scenario exercises to inform policy thinking
- host Australian and international visitors
- engage in media commentary in the US and Australia
- work with the Australian embassy to align activities and share information
- have a USA-wide focus, accepting that in start-up phase the focus of the operation should be towards the Washington DC think tank and policy community.



Women in Defence and Security Network (WDSN)

Established in October 2014, the WDSN's primary aim is to provide a forum to support the career development of women across the defence and national security community in Australia, and to facilitate critical discussion around issues related to women's participation and gender perspectives in the context of 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. The 2016 Defence White Paper recognised that 'Gender equality and increasing female participation in the Defence workforce and in senior leadership roles is fundamental to achieving Defence capability now and into the future'. Similarly, DFAT's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy (2016) 'defines gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority in Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development program'. The release of Australia's second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2021 also demonstrates the Government's commitment to gender equality globally as well as in Australia.

The WDSN also continues to publish profiles of women working within the sector at all levels in order to showcase their talent and ideas, as well as the different career pathways available for those in the network. The network released eight video profiles during the year and plans to release profiles at an increased frequency in 2022–23.

The Sydney Dialogue

After a very successful launch in 2021, necessarily in a virtual format and not as the in-person event that had been envisaged, the Sydney Dialogue continues to generate great interest regionally and globally. The requirement for an annual summit for emerging, critical, cyber and space technologies has been affirmed through a series of consultations with regional and global governments, tech actors and civil society. The inaugural in-person summit will be held in Sydney, Australia on 4-5 April 2023, with a core program, a public facing debate, side workshops and meetings.

The Dialogue will bring together business, government, and tech leaders with the world's best strategic thinkers to discuss key issues and policy challenges. The Sydney Dialogue will feature conversations on the opportunities of stronger collaboration across national and regional boundaries in critical and emerging technologies, in cyber and in space. It will also discuss 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.

The agenda will feature shared investigations of which technologies are most critical to underpin the future of our societies, our security and our prosperity, and why. It will present and discuss the merits of emerging technologies that have the potential to contribute to climate monitoring and more effective management of climate change, including the shift to zero emissions economies. It will also explore the potential of a range of technologies to improve access and equality to communications and unlock economic potential, allowing lower technological maturity actors to work with and benefit from partners that operate with more developed innovation ecosystems.

The Dialogue will be global in outlook but with an Indo Pacific focus. Invitations will be issued to select delegates from around the world, with priority given to those in the Indo Pacific.

The Sydney Dialogue aims to address the following key gaps:

- state practice and the pace of technological development is significantly outstripping formal multilateral processes. There is a lack of consensus between the key stakeholders—governments, businesses, the tech sector and civil society—and a lack of spaces that bring them together to focus on solutions and policy options, resulting in debates taking place in silos
- tech CEOs are making major decisions every day which have significant impacts on government policy and civil society. They are de-facto setting rules and norms through the technology they are making commercially available, in many instances without developed regulations, or agreed rules and norms for how those technologies are fielded and used globally. Conversely, governments around the world are confronting the reality of increasing selective decoupling. They are experiencing the abuse and manipulation

of critical and foundational technology industries, especially notable in information technologies, and are needing to make major policy decisions without necessarily having the requisite expertise or access to information

- while significant international conferences and dialogues exist for traditional areas of security and economics, there is currently no international event focusing wholly on tech, cyber and space policy. The Sydney Dialogue aims to fill this gap and create a positive environment for collaboration, cooperation and problem solving.

Lead-in events

The Sydney Dialogue team is running a series of lead in events that will help sharpen the focus and agenda of the discussion for the Sydney Dialogue 2023. These include a space-focused series of events planned for November 28, 29 and 1 December involving international experts, officials and industry leaders, which is designed to bring out the important nexus between technology, the commercial sector and government.

The Sydney Dialogue team is also running – funded by and on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs – an inaugural Quad Technology Business and Investment Forum. This event was directed by Quad Leaders at their annual Summit in May 2022 and will bring together innovators, businesses, and investors from the Quad countries on 2 December in Sydney, Australia. The aim of this event is to conduct outreach to understand the perspectives of the business and investor communities, regarding the role Quad governments can and should play in enhancing technological collaboration between the countries and achieving enhanced cooperative outcomes from trade and investment across our national borders.

