

WOMENS INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM
WILPF AUSTRALIA



WILPF

MILITARISATION IN AUSTRALIA: NORMALISATION AND MYTHOLOGY

MAY 2021

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – Australia

WILPF is a feminist, non-aligned, anti-war and peace-building member-based organisation. WILPF brings women together to oppose conflict, violence and global militarisation, and provides a unique space for peace activists across Australia and globally to work together for a sustainable peace.

WILPF envisions a world free from violence and armed conflict, in which human rights are protected; and the diversity of women and men are equally empowered at the local, national and international levels.

Further details about WILPF Australia's work and information on how to join as a member is available at: wilpf.org.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WILPF Australia acknowledges the Traditional owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to those past, present and future and acknowledge that sovereignty of lands has never been ceded.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AACAP	Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Programme
ACSC	Australian Cyber Security Centre
ADEO	Australian Defence Export Office
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADSUN	Australian Defence Science and Universities Network
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AIDP	Army Indigenous Development Program
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ANU	Australian National University
APS	Australian Public Service
ASD	Australian Signals Directorate
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
ASIS	Australian Secret Intelligence Service
ASPI	Australian Strategic Policy Institute
CASG	Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group
CDIC	Centre for Defence Industry Capability
COMDISPLAN	Australian Government Disaster Response Plan
D-RAP	Defence Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2022
DACC	Defence Assistance to the Civil Community
DIPS	Defence Industry Policy Statement 2016
DMO	Defence Materiel Organisation (replaced by CASG June 2015)
DSI	Defence Science Institute
DSU	Defence Strategic Update
DWP	Defence White Paper
FSP	Force Structure Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMAS	'Her Majesty's Australian Ship' (RAN commissioned units)
IIP	Integrated Investment Program 2016
IIR	Independent Intelligence Review
IPRP	Indigenous Pre-recruitment Program
JOSS	Joint Operational Support Section
LRASM-AGM-158C	Long Range Anti-Ship Missile
MRH90	Multi-role Helicopter 90 Taipan
NIC	National Intelligence Community
ONI	Office of National Intelligence
OPV	Offshore Patrol Vessel Arafura Class
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statement
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RSL	Returned and Services League
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SME	Small and medium enterprise

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Over the last 106 years the Women's International League for Freedom (WILPF) has advocated for universal disarmament and worked to build peace across the globe. It has been evident that for many years it is not enough to just talk about militarisation, but that it must be systematically unpacked to highlight the multi-layered processes, linkages and underlying roots, which underpin its legitimacy, normalisation and mythology, and to understand how and why militarisation gains acceptance and popularity.

Militarisation in Australia: Normalisation and Mythology is WILPF Australia's contribution to the systematic analysis of the processes of normalisation of military involvement within Australian culture, society, the economy, and government policy. The military in Australia has played a significant role in the history, mythology and narrative of Australia, building on military presence in the colonisation of Australia's indigenous peoples. Since 2010 militarisation has increased significantly with increasing investments in military budgets, expansion of arms industry and exports, and peaking in 2020 with domestic military operations related to natural disasters, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. This Research Report provides an important beginning to uncovering the contemporary multiple layers of militarisation in Australia, and a platform for further research, policy analysis and advocacy. Normalising militarisation is not contributing to a more peaceful and secure Australia, and we need to find more equitable and just ways to strengthen true human security and to build resilience and capabilities in all our diverse communities across Australia.

Approach

The aim of this Research Report is to identify, analyse and demonstrate the extent and nature of the processes of militarisation and increased normalisation of domestic military involvement in Australia, between the years 2010 and 2020. The Research focuses on three themes of militarisation in Australia: the Department of Defence's evolving policy and ever-increasing annual budgets, defence industry expansion and military-industry links, and the increased engagement of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in the domestic arena through accelerated social campaigning. The last section of the Report reviews the implications of these processes in the shaping of Australia's response in times of domestic crisis, concluding that increased militarisation and military domestic expansion has resulted in the extensive mobilisation of the military during the events of 2020, as demonstrated through the ADF's Bushfire Assist Taskforce and Operation Covid-19 Assist.

Due to the density of the subject and a current lack of a readily accessible consolidated analysis, the main purpose of the Research Report is to collect, compare, and to offer a synopsis. The goal is to make accessible already available information and serve as an entry point to the extent of militarisation in Australia. The Report examines the following themes: the objectives and policy dictating Commonwealth military spending, Defence expenditure trends as compared to alternative spending options, foreign dominance in the domestic defence industry, the blurring boundaries between nonpartisan civilian institutions and the military, the wide reach of ADF imagery in society, favorable social polling and legislation. The inferences drawn outline growing trends in Defence expenditure and provide an insight to the growing Australian 'military-cultural' complex. These are key to understanding the increased focus on the military in the Australian Government and public. More importantly, they are crucial to understanding the widespread acceptance of military use in local and state governance.

Defence policy and expenditure

Defence expenditure is the foundation for tracing militarisation in Australia. Between 2010 and 2020, Defence saw a significant change in policy and strategy, and subsequent spending. Defence total annual budget estimate increased nominally by 50% between 2010 and 2020, from \$30.5 billion to \$45.5 billion in 2020. Throughout the decade, three major policy papers were published; each securing increased budgets for the ADF and military acquisitions. The 2016 Defence White Paper (DWP) is particularly important in this respect, as it represents a pivotal point in shaping the military's structure and employment. It introduced deterrence and regional competition as central strategic themes, which were further expanded upon in 2020 with the Defence Strategic Update (DSU) and Force Structure Plan's (FSP) twin emphasis on enhanced capabilities. This strategic framework has resulted in an acceleration in the rate of the increasing investment in the Defence Portfolio, from the 10-year/\$195 billion investment plan unveiled in 2016, to the expanded, and unprecedented, \$270 billion version announced in 2020. This latest plan entails a total Defence investment of about \$575 billion by 2030. The budget and 10-year investment forecast remained steady throughout 2020, and was seemingly exempt from cost cutting despite the recent economic downturn. Defence budgets continue to grow, and Defence spending has already passed 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is a clear indication of the Australian Government's commitment to Defence's expanding role in shaping Australia's strategic environment.

Domestic defence industry and arms export

The expanding domestic defence industry resulting from ongoing investments in ADF capabilities is a second indication of militarisation in Australia. As Defence influence on the private sector grows, it enlists the public in support of further militarisation, by legitimising increased procurement in the public sector. Defence acquisitions in 2020-2021 are estimated to be valued around \$14.4 billion and 34% of the total Defence Budget. Australia's growing investment in military capabilities situates it as one of the four largest importers in the world in 2019. Consequently, much of defence industry in Australia is centered around major foreign Defence providers, operating through Australian subsidiaries. Still, the domestic defence industry is large and growing rapidly in the presence of so much investment. The domestic military supply-chain currently comprises over 3,000 Australian businesses and indirectly supporting 15,000 additional businesses across the country. In 2018, the Defence Export Strategy set a 10-year plan to expand Australia's defence industry to the status of a top ten global defence exporter, further securing the position of Defence in the Australian economy.

Normalising militarisation in the domestic arena

Signs of the accelerated expansion of the military into spheres external to Defence of course go beyond those elements of the Australian economy, and can be clearly identified within civil institutions and society at large. Respected 'independent' research institutions are, in some cases, influenced by both Defence monetary and human factors. These establishments are often heavily and increasingly funded by Defence and defence industry stakeholders, creating a predisposition to editorial dependency on and accountability for Defence agendas. Personnel crossover between Defence and non-partisan organisation is noteworthy, since it jeopardises mainstream opinion through unavoidably swayed commentary. In 2010-2020, the ADF public image was further enhanced through its active and aggressive marketing. Defence's sizeable investment in advertisement has again demonstrated proportional and absolute growth, increasing from \$36.2 million in 2010-2011 to \$59.8 million in 2018-2019. In 2017-2018, Defence spending on advertising and market research peaked at \$76.4 million, making it the highest single government department advertising budget for that year, exclusive of promotional events.

In addition to maintaining strong media presence, the ADF dedicates human resources to community engagement and renewed outreach programs. The growing investment in social welfare influences perceptions of the military in Australia, shaping its public image as a social service organisation rather than as a combatant institution. Alongside policy changes and economic expansion, civil aid initiatives by Defence serve as an effective means of promoting militarisation and reinforcing the normalisation of military presence in civil society. According to national polling, those efforts are succeeding. Recent years show a vast public support for the use of the ADF in humanitarian aid, and a positive disposition towards Defence Budget increases. Support for Defence by the Australian public is also reflected in the high rates of civilian attendance at military related events. Australians are overwhelmingly engaged with ADF imagery, illustrated best by the vast participation in military memorials, and events like the 'Light up the Dawn' Anzac Day initiative during the 2020 Coronavirus lockdown. Participation is also high in non-military events like State parades and civilian expositions, where ADF heavy equipment, combat aircraft and armoured vehicles are now often displayed alongside civilian entertainment.

Australian society's acceptance of the ADF as a legitimate actor in domestic affairs, both in the economy and in culture, has helped establish the grounds for further domestic military mobilisation. Consequently, the extent of the Australian military's involvement in domestic disaster relief increased significantly over the last decade. ADF aid to domestic disaster response has always been common in Australia, but its efforts to date have paled beside those demonstrated in 2020. Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-2020 was the largest ever peace time domestic mobilisation of military forces within Australia. It included a massive use of re-purposed combat equipment and the deployment of 8,236 ADF personnel, including about 2,500 Reservists deployed on the first modern compulsory call-out, who performed 1,500 tasks across the nation. Similarly, the ongoing Operation COVID-19 Assist has already involved the mobilisation and domestic employment of more than 2,200 ADF personnel, and is only expected to increase.

Defence involvement in purely domestic crises and natural disasters is subjected to complicated bureaucratic procedures. Traditionally, military involvement was only at the invitation of state governments, and to be used to complement state and local efforts. 2020 saw this delicate balance tipped, with the legislative framework for ADF domestic employment being significantly streamlined. The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, investigating the 2020 Bushfires, recommended new legislation to enable Defence to be employed proactively by the Commonwealth government. The Defence Legislation Amendment (Enhancement to Defence Force Response to Emergencies) Bill 2020 was subsequently passed in December 2020, but even without the enabling legislation, the recommendations seemed to be in practice already. The Commonwealth Government had offered military personnel and equipment to the Coronavirus efforts across the different states and territories. With ADF personnel replacing civilian guards and police forces in quarantine tasks across the country, the military landscape of Australia continues to deepen and Defence continues to gain influence and legitimacy. It's not surprising then that the Defence Budget and its procurement plans were not disturbed in the aftermath of 2020.

Future research and advocacy

This Research Report provides an important beginning to uncovering the multiple layers of contemporary patterns of militarisation in Australia, and offers a platform for further discussion, research, policy analysis and advocacy. This platform will need regular updating and "tracking" of militarisation. If future policy and legislation grows permitting more domestic intervention by the ADF in Australia, so will the normalisation of military economic dominance and the availability of military symbolism within society could also be expected to increase. The inferences, layers and linkages between these processes are key to understanding the often subtle processes of militarisation.

There are many questions that are raised by the implications of these findings about how Australia needs to find more equitable and just ways to strengthen human rights, true security and to build resilience and capabilities in our communities all across Australia. As we emerge from the pandemic Australia needs to ask:

Does the normalisation of militarisation strengthen our civil society, or does it contribute to an increased dependency on a well-funded military infrastructure and personnel to address disasters, fires and pandemics in Australia to the detriment of the capability and resilience of Australia's civilian responses and communities?

INTRODUCTION

Demystifying militarisation

Over the last 106 years the Women's International League for Freedom (WILPF) has advocated for universal disarmament and worked to build peace across the globe.¹ WILPF Australia carries on this work today bringing together women to oppose conflict, violence and global militarisation and to build a sustainable peace. For many years it has been evident that it is not enough to just talk about militarisation, but that it must be systematically unpacked to highlight the multi-layered processes, linkages and underlying roots, which underpin its legitimacy, normalisation and mythology, and by which militarisation gains acceptance and popularity..

Militarisation in Australia: Normalisation and Mythology is WILPF Australia's contribution to the systematic analysis of the processes of normalisation of military involvement within Australian culture, society, the economy, and government policy. The military in Australia has played a significant role in the history, mythology and narrative of Australia, building on the military presence in the colonisation of Australia's indigenous peoples. Since 2010 militarisation has increased significantly with increasing investments in military budgets, expansion of arms industry and exports, and peaking in 2020 with domestic military operations related to natural disasters, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Normalising militarisation is not contributing to a more peaceful and secure Australia. We need to find more equitable and just ways to strengthen human rights, true security and to build resilience and capabilities in all our diverse communities across Australia. This Research Report provides an important beginning to uncovering the contemporary multiple layers of militarisation in Australia, and a platform for further research, policy analysis and advocacy.

Purpose and approach

This Research Report presents a study of the increasing militarisation² experienced in Australia between 2010 and 2020. The aim of the Report is to identify, analyse and demonstrate the extent and nature of the increased processes of normalisation of military involvement within Australian society, the economy, and government policy over the last decade. This is a critically important issue as Australians begin to emerge from 2020 and the year of COVID-19. However, there is an absence of a readily accessible and consolidated current analysis and references on the impact of this increasing militarisation trend in Australia.

This Report focuses primarily on the collection, comparison, and provision of an overview of key data. The goal is to consolidate already available information, to promote awareness, and to serve as an access point to the issue that militarisation is increasing in Australia. Information presented in the Report relies principally on primary sources, with polling and commentary data drawn from creditable public sources. Defence Portfolio Budget Statements are used throughout the report to calculate Defence spending.³ This means that all spending conducted by the Department of Defence is incorporated, which leads to significantly increased figures as compared to public statements from senior politicians. This was done to illustrate the overall costs associated with Defence, including salaries and superannuation benefits, as these are non-negotiable costs.⁴

1 WILPF International – Reaching Critical Will. <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/>

2 Militarisation is understood as the expansion in military culture, discourse, symbolism and attitudes into civilian spheres.

3 It should be noted that all data presented in this Report was derived from publicly available government sources. However, while accessible, the information as a whole is intricate in nature and formatting. This has affected the ability to extract and analyse data and the extent of potential conclusions and arguments.

4 The Department of Defence refers to the overarching organisation, including the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), and civilian elements of the 'defence' enterprise; which encompasses the whole endeavor of national 'defence', i.e. paramilitary elements such as intelligence agencies, armed elements of the Australian Border Force, and other dual-use capabilities, which also provide national defence without being managed by the Defence Department.

THE RESEARCH REPORT FOCUSES ON THREE THEMES OF MILITARISATION IN AUSTRALIA:

- the Department of Defence's evolving policy and ever-increasing annual budgets;
- Defence industry expansion and military-industry links; and
- the increased engagement of the Australian Defence Force (ADF)⁵ in Australia's domestic spaces through accelerated social campaigning.

The last section of the Report reviews the implications of these processes in the shaping of Australian response in times of domestic crisis. It concludes that increased militarisation and military domestic expansion has resulted in the extensive mobilisation of the military during the events of 2020, as demonstrated through the ADF's Bushfire Assist Taskforce and Operation COVID-19 Assist.

The Report examines the following themes: the objectives and policy dictating Commonwealth government military spending; Defence expenditure trends as compared to alternative spending options; foreign dominance in the Australian defence industry; the blurring boundaries between nonpartisan civilian institutions and the military; the wide reach of ADF imagery within Australian society, and social polling and legislation. The inferences drawn are key to understanding the increased focus on the military in the Australian Government and across the Australian public. *However, the critical question remains: how can "increasing militarisation" contribute to a more peaceful and secure Australia in a post-COVID era?*

5 The ADF is the military component of Defence; encompassing the three branches of the Australian military.

SECTION 1: SHIFTING POLICY AND INCREASED SPENDING

The military and the Australian Government

The first indications of the processes of increasing militarisation taking place in Australia between 2010 and 2020 are seen in the changes made in Commonwealth government policy, military strategy, and Defence budgeting and related spending. The 2009 Defence White Paper (DWP) was the first DWP published since 2000, and dealt with a vastly different strategic context, informed by the tumultuous events of the preceding years.⁶ Both the 2009 and 2013 DWPs, clearly defined a focus on global security as a priority over regional affairs.⁷ A thorough read of the 2016 DWP,⁸ the 2020 Defence Strategic Update (DSU)⁹ and Force Structure Plan (FSP)¹⁰ in particular reveals a shift in these objectives and in accelerated military policy, from a traditional emphasis on outward global security to a renewed interest in military deterrence and regional competition. In this respect, the 2016 Integrated Investment Program (IIP)¹¹ presented in conjunction with the 2016 DWP was the first policy paper to encompass all elements of Defence investment into workforce, structures and military equipment.

Following this, the DSU and FSP set the justification for the significant increase in Commonwealth government spending on Defence. The 2016 DWP situated the current Defence focus on regional affairs. Domestic engagements, defined by the strategic objective of *'deter, deny and defeat attacks on, or threats to, Australia and its national interests'* are not stated as principal, but are suggested to be of equal importance to any other more global military objectives.¹² The DSU further advances this notion by prioritising the Australian immediate region. This objective is especially relevant in detailing Defence's involvement in domestic tasks, as support to the domestic arena is the first point listed as a priority for military operations. Expanding on the 2016 DWP, the 2020 papers define three strategic military priorities: *to shape, deter, and respond in the context of what is perceived to be an increasingly hostile strategic environment*. Essentially, it is a strategic platform for promoting Australian military advantage achieved through the procurement of high-tech capabilities, hence building the conditions for increased investment in Defence and ongoing spending on the overarching defence sector.

Under the 2016 DWP, the Australian government announced a 10-year Defence budget plan that would have seen Defence budget increasing from \$32.4¹³ billion in the 2016-17 fiscal year to \$58.7 billion in 2025-26. The Government's 10-year investment plan into Defence capabilities (acquisition and sustainment of new equipment) was estimated as \$195 billion. Lastly, the 2016 DWP stated a commitment to increase Defence funding to 2% of the Australian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2020-21, bringing Defence spending to a modern Australian record.

Under the 2020 DSU and FSP, the Government's unprecedented planned investment in Defence capabilities is to be further increased from \$195 billion over ten years to \$270 billion, as part of a total funding of around \$575 billion over the next ten years (by 2030). This increase cannot be understood other than as an assertion of the Government's commitment to Defence's expanding role in shaping Australia's near region, signified by the 2016 DWP.

6 The September 11th 2001 attacks, the 2002 invasion of Afghanistan, the 2002 Bali Bombings, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the 2006/2009 American 'surges' into Iraq and Afghanistan, to name just a few.

7 https://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/2009/docs/defence_white_paper_2009.pdf, https://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/2013/docs/WP_2013_web.pdf

8 <https://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/docs/2016-defence-white-paper.pdf>

9 https://www1.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020_Defence_Strategic_Update.pdf

10 https://www1.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020_Force_Structure_Plan.pdf

11 <https://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/Docs/2016-Defence-Integrated-Investment-Program.pdf>

12 Paragraph 3.10.

13 All references are in Australian dollars.

Defence budgets and expenditure

The increase in defence expenditure will be illustrated in this section through an overview of Budget Statements of the Department of Defence, followed by a discussion on the expanding budget of the Australian intelligence community, between 2010 and 2020. While intelligence agencies are not directly parts of Defence, they serve similar strategic purposes to the military. Analysing the two together allows a better understanding of the actual extent of Government support and investment into national defence and security in Australia as a part of the process of militarisation.

As indicated in Table 1, each Defence Budget Statement¹⁴ since 2016 has maintained the trend set in the 2016 DWP. The DWP promised an additional \$29.9 billion in the budget invested over the period 2016-2026. This figure has increased annually since. In 2015-2016, the Defence total budget estimate stood at approximately \$37.9 billion, subsequently increasing in 2016-2017 to \$38.2 billion, 2017-2018 to \$40.7 billion and again in 2018-2019 to \$43 billion. In 2019-2020 the Defence total budget estimate continued to grow to approximately \$45.5 billion, and is predicted to stabilise around that mark in 2020-2021. While 2016 certainly marks a pivotal point in the process of militarisation, growth in Defence spending is a consistent phenomenon over the last decade.

TABLE 1: DEFENCE BUDGETS AND THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY 2010-2020

Fiscal Year	ADF Budget (in millions \$AUD)	GDP in millions	Population	Defence as % of GDP
2010-2011	30500	1,390,006	22,172,469	2.19
2011-2012	30600	1,484,837	22,522,197	2.06
2012-2013	30300	1,526,491	22,928,023	1.98
2013-2014	35300	1,585,617	23,297,777	2.23
2014-2015	36600	1,619,447	23,640,331	2.26
2015-2016	37900	1,646,872	23,984,581	2.30
2016-2017	38200	1,734,871	24,127,200	2.20
2017-2018	40700	1,824,170	24,598,900	2.23
2018-2019	43000	1,925,898	25,180,200	2.23
2019-2020	45500	2,015,648	25,649,985	2.26
2020-2021	45500		25,649,985	

Sources: Defence Portfolio Budget Statements, Defence portal, <https://www.defence.gov.au/budget/PBS.asp>
The Australian Bureau of Statistics, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/national-accounts/australian-national-accounts-national-income-expenditure-and-product/sep-2020/5206001_Key_Aggregates.xls
And, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/jun-2020/310101.xls>

As indicated in Figure 1, the Defence total estimate budget in the 2010-2011 fiscal year was approximately \$30.5 billion, signifying a 50% nominal increase by 2020. Within the Defence budget, capability acquisitions underwent marked growth. In 2010-2011 it was approximated at \$5.8 billion, or roughly 20% of the Budget. By 2020-2021, it had almost tripled, standing at approximately \$14.3 billion, roughly 31% of the Budget. With the Defence Budget continuing to grow at around 9% annually, it means that spending on Defence had already passed 2% of GDP and is predicted to reach around 2.25% by 2020.¹⁵ (See Figure 2)

¹⁴ All Defence Portfolio Budget Statements referred to in this report were accessed through the Defence portal <https://www.defence.gov.au/budget/PBS.asp>

¹⁵ For example, ASPI estimate is significantly smaller, at 2.19%. This is likely due to the exclusion of conditions of employment costs. See: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/budget-shows-defence-spending-growth-on-track/?fbclid=IwAR34FPgihAkqjclQ-BZrxZdNSbYMOcMDWs29NCWOAJXcMMYIY4dkcluO-Y>

FIGURE 1: ADF ANNUAL BUDGET

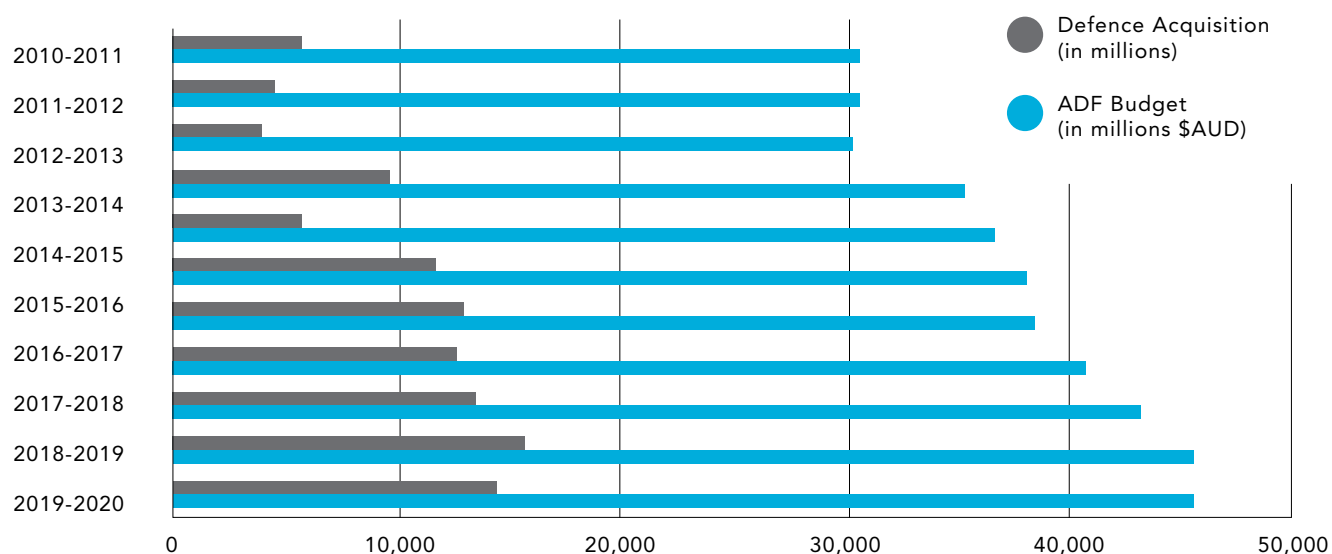
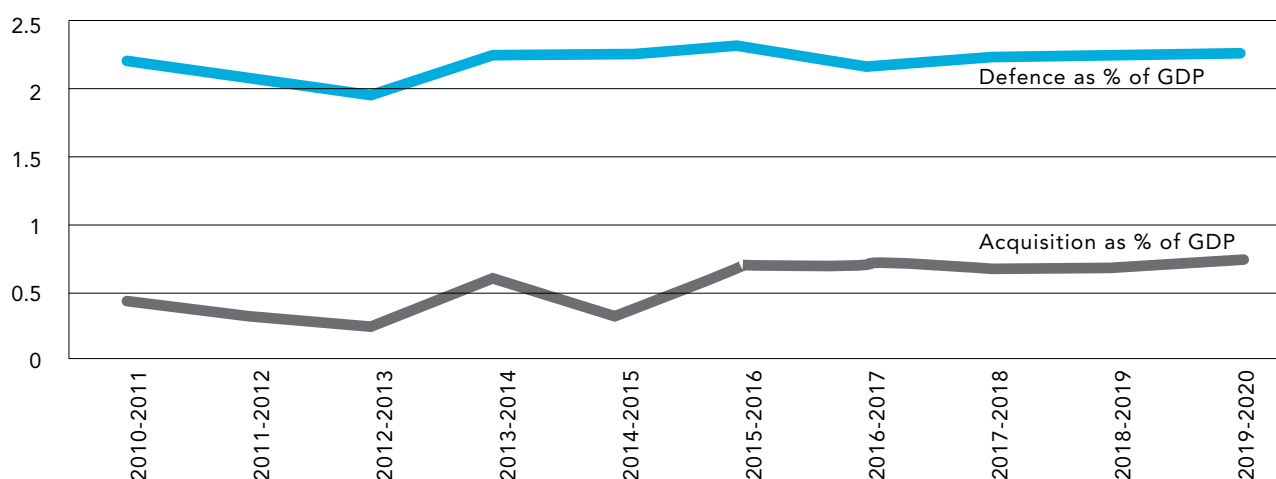


FIGURE 2: ANNUAL SPENDING AS % OF GDP



A similar expansion can be seen within the Australian intelligence and para-military community. Constituting a foundational part of the Australian national defence apparatus while being non-military in function, these organisations provide further indications of militarisation occurring within Australian society. The redirected focus on national security is first indicated in the formation of the National Intelligence Community (NIC) in 2017, following the 2017 Independent Intelligence Review (IRR) recommendations.¹⁶ Meant as a mechanism for improving structural and operational efficiency, the IIR was first implemented in 2011, and initiated periodic reviews into the Australian intelligence community. In addition to periodic structural reorganisations, including the creation of the NIC and the IRR, fluctuations in spending provide a second indication of that focus. As a whole, there has been an overall increase in Commonwealth funding of Australia's intelligence organisations in the last decade. The performance and monetary reports of some of the agencies are not released to the public. However, government public announcements concerning the intelligence community in addition to the available reports help delineate a story of expansion.

For example, as recently as 2020, Prime Minister Morrison announced that \$1.35 billion of the existing Budget would be directed at boosting the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) and Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) capabilities, including \$149 million specifically directed at expanding ASD data science and

¹⁶ <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/2017-Independent-Intelligence-Review.pdf>

overseas cybercrime capabilities. The ASD total resourcing in the year prior was approximately \$944 million, more than doubling its budget. Other key events that occurred in 2019 included the announcement that the Australian Federal Police (AFP) would receive an additional \$512.8 million over five years (by 2024) to enhance capabilities, and that Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) would receive an additional \$58.6 million in their annual budgets, in order to enhance current and future operations.¹⁷

In terms of total spending throughout the decade, while ASIO budgeting fluctuated year on year, it has remained around the \$669 million mark recorded in 2020. However, the agency's funding as a share of the NIC has dropped precipitously, as agencies such as the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) saw their budgets double over the decade. ASIS, ASD and ACSC were clear winners, with the ASIS growing from a mere \$291.7 million, or approximately half of ASIO's budget in 2010-2011, to \$638.3 million in 2019-2020.¹⁸

Of course, government must have the ability to respond militarily if the state is subject to armed aggression to keep citizens safe. But nation building, the exercise of democratic rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions are predominantly civilian responsibilities. Securitisation and its concomitant, militarisation, are fundamentally anti-democratic.¹⁹

Defence expenditure: The social cost

A useful way of conceptualising the extent of Defence spending and budget expansion between 2010 and 2020 in Australia is by comparing concrete examples of Defence resourcing with options for alternative civilian spending, otherwise achievable for equivalent dollar values. According to the DSU, a capability investment²⁰ estimated at approximately \$15 billion in cyber defence alone is to be completed by 2030, in addition to an approximate \$7 billion investment in Defence Space capabilities. On a larger scale, total Defence acquisitions in 2020-2021 are estimated at \$14.4 billion and around 34%. This is only anticipated to expand, with forecasts for 2025-2026 predicting acquisitions making up 39% of total funding, reaching as high as 40% by 2029-2030. The alternate potential spending of that \$29 billion fulfilling societal needs is considerable, and as we emerge from COVID what are the questions that Australians need to ask about how budget decisions are being made?

Some examples out of the large number of recent Defence capability acquisitions included 12 regionally superior submarines as part of the 2016 IIP, meant to replace Australia's existing Collins Class submarine Fleet. Early estimates of the acquisition and sustainment of the new submarines were valued at \$50 billion. In 2019, the Australian Government readjusted this price and admitted the true figure for the acquisition alone to be closer to \$80 billion, not including sustainment, which would bring the total to \$225 billion.²¹ (See Figure 3) The cost is expected to continue to increase, as the design of the future fleet is concluded and building ensues.

17 All information in this paragraph was attained and verified through the following official sources: <https://www.afp.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/rp/2009-10/10rp17.pdf>, https://budget.gov.au/2019-20/content/bp2/download/bp2_expense.pdf, <https://www.afp.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/rp/2009-10/10rp17.pdf>, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2F6592500%22>, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/national-security/2011-independent-review-intelligence-community>, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/national-security/report-2017-independent-intelligence-review>, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/nations-largest-ever-investment-cyber-security>

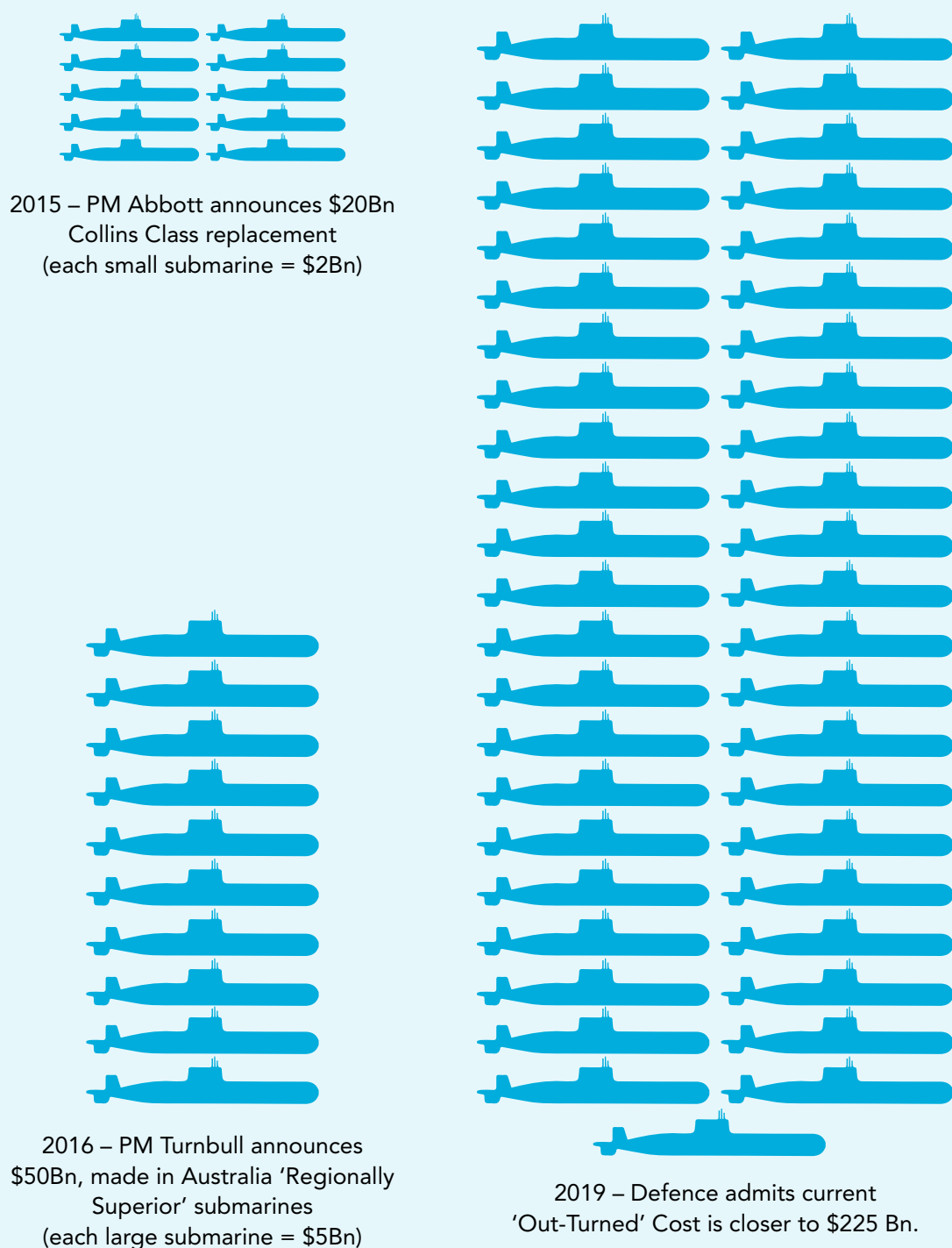
18 Information in this paragraph was attained from the Defence PBS documents, as well as from the following budgetary statements: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/reports-and-pubs/budgets/2020-21-asio-pbs.pdf>, <https://www.afp.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/rp/2009-10/10rp17.pdf>, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-20-foreign-affairs-and-trade-pbs-asis.pdf>, https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/2010-11_ASIS.pdf

19 Alan Behm "Securitisation: How to magnify problems rather than solve them." Pearls and Irritations 24 Aug 2020. <https://www.johnmenadue.com/securitisation-how-to-magnify-problems-rather-than-solve-them/>

20 Capability investment is the financial cost of the acquisition and sustainment of military equipment.

21 Rear Adm. Sammut, Senate Estimates, 29 November 2019: https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/estimate/70150859-b9a2-4ed6-bcc6-e235ccee8bb3/toc_pdf/Foreign%20Affairs,%20Defence%20and%20Trade%20Legislation%20Committee_2019_11_29_7408_Official.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22committees/estimate/70150859-b9a2-4ed6-bcc6-e235ccee8bb3/0000%22

FIGURE 3: GROWTH OF THE FUTURE SUBMARINE PROGRAM – 2015 TO PRESENT



Source: Senate Estimates, 29 November 2019

Similarly, the IIP announced the acquisition of infantry fighting vehicles, currently being carried out as part of the Mounted Close Combat Capability (LAND 400 Phase 3) program. The program is meant to acquire replacements for the Army's current fleet of M113AS4 Armoured Personnel Carriers. It was originally budgeted at \$10 billion, but is now valued at approximately \$18.1-27.1 billion (according to the FSP). With a planned order of 450 vehicles, each vehicle will therefore cost the Australian tax payer between \$40-60 million.

Other examples of Defence's apparent extravagant palate are well illustrated through the recent purchase of the Lockheed Martin Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM, Project Air 3023 Phase 1²²) for the RAAF's Super Hornets. Estimated at a unit cost of almost \$5.4 million,²³ it was announced in July 2020 that the Australian Government is committed to acquire \$800 million worth of LRASM from the US Navy.²⁴ Spending is not spared following acquisition in regular use, either. Having planned to be flown 9,670 hours in 2019-2020 alone,²⁵ the MRH-90 helicopter is conservatively estimated to cost Defence \$30,000 per hour of flight time, or \$290 million annually. The ADF currently has 46 MRH-90 functioning helicopters in total. Ironically enough, the helicopters – purchased only in the past decade for a sum of about \$4 billion²⁶ – were recently deemed somewhat inadequate, with Defence admitting that the aircraft's doors are too narrow to allow satisfactory combat use.

As noted in Table 2, when contrasted with average costs of social services, such as education and health across the Australian society, the extent of military spending and Defence expansion in recent years becomes even more striking. For example, in 2019 the average Commonwealth funding per student in Australia was \$5,097.²⁷ Compared with Defence acquisitions, this means that just one of the 450 infantry fighting vehicles could cover funding for around 9,000 students a year.

TABLE 2: EQUIVALENT HYPOTHETICAL OPPORTUNITY COSTS TO SOCIAL SPENDING

Equivalent social value of one unit:	Maximum Coronavirus fortnightly payment 1x single	2019 average Commonwealth funding per student	Average annual salary of a General Practitioner	Capital cost of a new hospital bed (*in existing hospital)	Capital cost of one fully equipped average (90 bed) Regional Hospital
Cost of 1x / hr flight time of MRH-90 helicopter (Estimated)	36.78	5.89	0.25	0.15	0.00
Unit cost of 1x Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (Estimated)	6,620.08	1,059.45	44.17	27.00	0.01
Unit cost of 1x L400 Infantry Fighting Vehicle (Estimated)	61,297.05	9,809.69	409.00	250.00	0.11
Unit cost of 1x Attack Class Submarine (Estimated - 2020)	22,281,476.03	3,565,823.03	148,673.19	90875.00	40.39

Sources: As described in text.

22 PBS 2017-2018

23 <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/32277/here-is-what-each-of-the-pentagons-air-launched-missiles-and-bombs-actually-cost>

24 <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/long-range-strike-capabilities-maintain-regional-security#:~:text=The%20Morrison%20Government's%20commitment%20to, cost%20of%20around%20%24800%20million.>

25 PBS 2019-2020

26 <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/multi-role-helicopter-program>

27 Budget Overview 2019-2020 <https://budget.gov.au/2019-20/content/overview.htm>

From Education to Health, the capital cost of a new hospital in Australia is estimated between \$200-\$500 thousand per bed, including costs of design and equipment. The cost of redevelopment of an existing hospital is estimated at 30-90% of a new one.²⁸ In 2017-2018, there were 693 public hospitals in Australia, with 61,647 beds.²⁹ Sidestepping the acquisition of the new submarine fleet could have potentially subsidised 1.125 million new hospital beds or the redevelopment of as many as 3.2 million “existing” hospital beds. Even accepting the original budget of \$20 billion for submarines in 2014 would have left enough for a million new hospital beds. Considering the fact that in 2017-2018 the number of hospital beds per 1,000 population in Australia was decidedly lower than the average set that year by the OECD, the magnitude of the increasing cost for the submarine fleet becomes even greater.

Keeping a focus on health, the average annual salary of a General Practitioner in Australia is currently set at \$122,248,³⁰ making the acquisition cost of one anti-ship missile equal to the hypothetical employment of 44 new GPs across Australia. Similarly, the expense of one flight hour of a MRH-90 helicopter could potentially finance the maximum fortnightly JobSeeker³¹ payment of roughly 36 Australian households currently relying on Coronavirus supplements, or alternatively, support one household for 18 months during these troubling times.

Australia's new Defence Strategic Update emphasizes greater self-reliance but there is a lack of complementary diplomatic efforts thus extending the militarisation of Australia's international relations with the attendant risk that we might not just be dragged into unnecessary conflict but that we might precipitate it. If, post COVID-19, our region is to be 'poorer and less orderly' are adverse changes in our strategic position only to be dealt with by military means?³²

28 Victoria Department of Health and Human Services, Infrastructure Planning and Delivery, [http://www.capital.health.vic.gov.au/Project_proposals/Benchmarking/Hospital_capital_planning_module/#:~:text=The%20capital%20cost%20of%20a,per%20m%C2%B2%20\(current%20costs\)](http://www.capital.health.vic.gov.au/Project_proposals/Benchmarking/Hospital_capital_planning_module/#:~:text=The%20capital%20cost%20of%20a,per%20m%C2%B2%20(current%20costs))

29 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/hospitals/hospital-resources-2017-18-ahs/contents/hospitals-and-average-available-beds>

30 <https://au.indeed.com/salaries/physician-Salaries>

31 <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/jobseeker-payment/how-much-you-can-get>

32 Richard Moore “Into the Dragon’s Mouth: The Dangers of a Defence-led Foreign Policy.” Australian Outlook 10 July 2020. <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au>

SECTION 2: DEFENCE INDUSTRY EXPANSION AND MILITARY-INDUSTRY LINKS

Australian militarised industry

The expansion of the Defence and security budgets and increased rate of spending over the past decade serve as a foundation for understanding the ways in which militarisation is spreading to Australian industries. As Defence presence in the private sector grows, it enlists the public in support of Defence, normalising increased procurement. Indeed, a consistent justification offered for Defence's record spending, and repeated year after year in Commonwealth Budget Overviews of recent years, is that future investments in Defence would not only strengthen the capacity of the ADF, but also create jobs, contribute to prosperity and improve the societal welfare of the Australian public. The sentiment is perfectly encapsulated in an October 2020 media release from the former Minister for Defence, Senator Reynolds. Entitled "A safer and stronger Australia", the Minister argues that the never before seen \$270 billion government investment in Defence capabilities signifies:

*"[U]nprecedented opportunities for Australian industry and the creation of more Australian jobs. The Morrison Government is strengthening the Australian Industry Capability (AIC) Program to help maximise opportunities for Australian business in these projects. [...] This ensures that local suppliers, contractors and tradies have the opportunity to secure more of this work, creating more jobs for local communities."*³³

The egalitarian economic opportunity is promoted in the release as a prime motivation for the increased budget, instead of what it actually is; a political justification for spending on favoured constituencies. An investment in Defence industry may certainly create more jobs, but it is important to recognise that these opportunities will likely not be shared by other economic sectors and indeed come with significant opportunity costs. On the contrary, outside players may very likely be in competition with Defence industry for the same budgetary and human resources. Promoting Defence industry with the argument that it sustains and guarantees jobs "that would otherwise have been lost"³⁴ promotes a false discourse in this case.

The silent expansion of Australian military industry

From the preceding discussion, it could be inferred that Defence industry, as referred to in Government reports and media releases, functions as a junction point between military and civilian society. But what actually makes up Defence industry? The military industry in Australia is defined by the Government as essentially all businesses with an Australian Business Number that are serving as providers of defence-specific goods or are operating as suppliers on the military supply chain and benefit the Australian Department of Defence, or alternatively, an international defence force. This includes both Australian-based companies and Australian subsidiaries of foreign conglomerates. As of 2019, Australian Defence imports were approximately 65% of Defence capital equipment.³⁵ Still, the military industry represents a large and growing portion of Australian economy, first as a direct employer and second as an end-consumer.

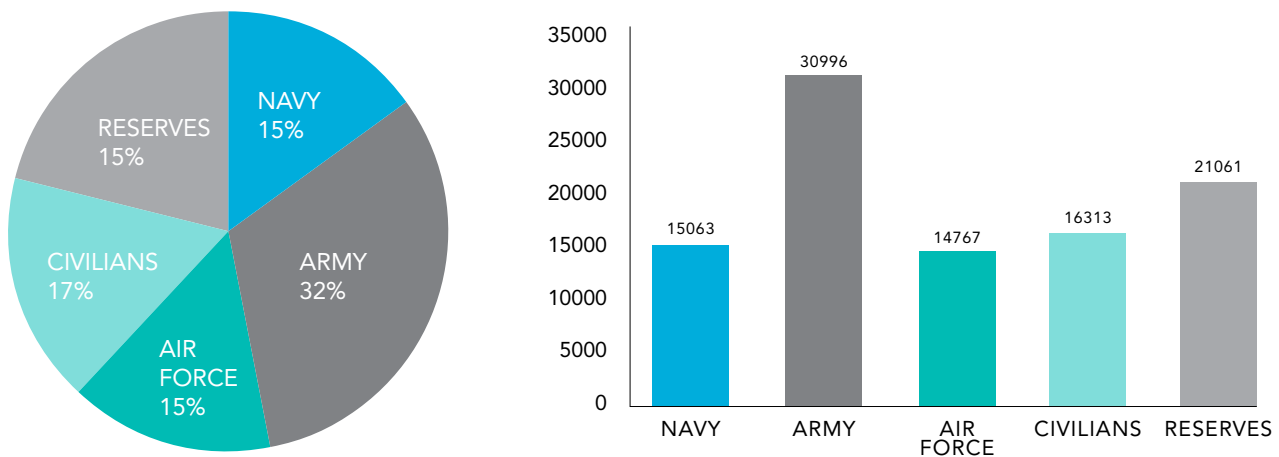
³³ <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/lreynolds/media-releases/safer-and-stronger-australia-budget-2020-21>

³⁴ Defence Industry, 2016 DWP, <https://www.defence.gov.au/Whitepaper/docs/Defence-Industry.pdf>

³⁵ https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/BudgetReview201920/Defence

Defence is firstly an employer, with the average full-time ADF workforce in 2020-2021 forecast to be 77,136 employees (as indicated in Figure 4), not including the Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG) workforce. The Defence workforce has stayed relatively constant since 2010-2011, averaging around of 96,000 Permanent and Reserves personnel and Defence civilians.

FIGURE 4: ANTICIPATED DEFENCE WORKFORCE BREAKDOWN, 2020-21



Source: Portfolio Budget Statement 2020-21, https://www.defence.gov.au/Budget/20-21/2020-21_Defence_PBS_00_Complete.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0T2llb-w0i1DaXaPAAtSJL_Q8tjOvGgNYHacV0cr3l3c3Amqsd51HVhCY_Q

Nevertheless, there is a marked change in composition of the ADF. If in 2010-2011 the percentage of uniformed forces constituted only 60% of the forecasted workforce, in 2020-2021 it is estimated to grow to 79%, with the remaining of employees being APS civilians.³⁶ Defence industry, providers and suppliers, currently comprise over 3,000 businesses across Australia,³⁷ indirectly supporting 15,000 additional businesses with 70,000 non-Defence workers.³⁸ Defence industry expansion is only set to increase, particularly in light of the investment plans and large capability acquisitions aforementioned. With capital investment in Defence to grow 39% by 2025-2026 under the Defence Capability Plan,³⁹ the position of the Defence industry as a significant sector of the Australian economy is becoming increasingly secured.

In 2012, a Defence Trade Controls Act was passed, meant to strengthen military-related export and supply. However, the 2016 DWP is key to understanding Defence expansion into new markets. It introduced the idea that military-industrial relations and public-private partnerships are a tool of the national strategy. The 2016 Defence Industry Policy Statement followed the DWP and was aimed at bringing this cooperation into fruition. The Policy Statement initiated the Centre for Defence Industry Capability (CDIC), which is administered as a part of CASG under the Minister for Defence Industry, and is budgeted at approximately \$230 million by 2025-2026. It also initiated the Innovation Hub, targeted at turning research into military capabilities.⁴⁰ Set together, these initiatives are designed to promote “home-grown” military capabilities and assist Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in connecting with Defence industries. This is important, since many of the development opportunities are not directly with the ADF, but with other prime companies in the military supply chains.

³⁶ All workforce data presented was taken from the PBS 2010-2020

³⁷ <https://www.defenceindustry.gov.au/about-defence-industry>

³⁸ <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/melissa-price/media-releases/morrison-governments-defence-strategy-deliver-jobs-and-6>

³⁹ 2016 IIP

⁴⁰ <https://www.defence.gov.au/WhitePaper/Docs/2016-Defence-Industry-Policy-Statement.pdf>

In 2018, the Defence Export Strategy⁴¹ set the 10-year objective to grow Australia's defence industry to the status of a top ten global defence exporter. Indeed, Australia's overall standing in defence export ranking has been gradually increasing. In 2015-2019, Australia was ranked 19th amongst global top defence exporters,⁴² despite Australia's relatively small population and market. True ranking is likely to have been higher, since only "major arms" were calculated into the ranking, therefore overlooking much of the Australian 'dual-use goods' industry and technology defence industry. Perhaps even more concerning, Australia is ranked as one of the four largest arms importers in the world, behind Saudi Arabia, India and Egypt.⁴³

Continued attempts to pursue increased global ranking and economic growth objectives led to the formation of a new Australian Defence Export Office (ADEO) in 2018,⁴⁴ working jointly with the CDIC, and another \$20 million addition to annual funding. That reform included a historic change to the Defence Export Controls (DEC), which as of 1 January 2018, began requiring exporters to provide export values when applying for permits.⁴⁵ According to the DEC, defence export permits reached a value of more than \$4.9 billion in 2018-2019, which was more than three times that in 2017-2018, and more than four times higher than in 2016-2017. By 2020, it is safe to say that the stimulus and regulation is working to promote private sector industry development in defence exports. In the 2020 ADEO Sales Catalogue, 170 Australian businesses were featured – a 49% increase from the year previous.⁴⁶

Foreign players in the Australian defence industry

The 2016 Defence Industry Policy Statement (DIPS) and the documents that followed established the significance of Australian industry as a vital input to military capabilities. In a 2017 commentary for the Sydney Morning Herald, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) senior researcher Siemon Wezeman assessed this process, explaining that Australian investment in military industry is rationalised by the Australian Defence's aim to "cater for its own needs, largely now as subsidiaries of foreign companies, which works nicely if the government wants to spend its money in Australia (even if that may be not 100 per cent cost-effective)."⁴⁷ The extent of this statement, and particularly its reference to foreign players, is captured in the performance of key defence industry foreign subsidiaries, operating both within Defence and on the defence supply chain.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is in the recent recapitalisation of the Australian Navy, with the naval shipbuilding industry becoming a growing enterprise over the last decade. In this respect, the 2020 DSU boasts about the renewal of the Navy fleet as being the largest project of its kind in modern Australian history. The combatant components of the fleet will include 12 submarines (as discussed earlier), 3 air warfare destroyers,⁴⁸ and 9 frigates.⁴⁹ Delivery of the warfare destroyers is nearly finished, and the delivery of the last of the submarines is expected to be finalised in 2050. At this point, it is crucial to note that the domestic naval industry is fairly small and is largely dominated by foreign presence. In other words, the immense modernisation efforts intending to create an Australian military complex, are principally led by bringing foreign stakeholders into the Australian market.

41 The Defence Export Strategy, <https://www1.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/defenceexportstrategy.pdf>

42 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/fs_2003_at_2019.pdf

43 *Ibid.*

44 The Defence Export Strategy, see footnote 33

45 DEC FY 2018-19, <https://www1.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/Financial%20Year%202018%2019%20Statistics.pdf>

46 <https://www1.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/Australian-Defence-Sales-Catalogue-2020.pdf>

47 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/murky-business-australias-defence-industry-is-growing-but-at-what-cost-20171023-gz6767.html>

48 A requirement that was outlined in the 2000 DWP, with acquisition finalised in 2009.

49 Approved by government in 2016, with acquisition finalised in 2018. <https://www1.defence.gov.au/project/hunter-class-frigate>

And their presence is indeed growing, beginning with ASC Shipbuilding Pty Ltd,⁵⁰ a major Defence provider in Australia, which is controlled in part by BAE Systems Australia Ltd,⁵¹ the Australian subsidiary of the British conglomerate BAE Systems Public Limited Company.⁵² With its workforce spread across two states, South Australia and Western Australia, the company is currently building for the ADF the next-generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs). ASC recorded operating profits after tax of \$22.6 and \$30.3 million, and total revenues of \$675.9 and \$743 million in 2019-2020 and 2018-2019 (respectively).⁵³ In comparison, the company circulated only \$10.6 million in operating profit after tax in 2010-2011, signifying a significant growth. BAE Systems Australia itself had contracts valued in 2018 at more than \$3.41 billion from the Australian Government, a steep increase from 2010, when they were valued at approximately \$936 million.

Similar cases of foreign subsidiaries include Thales Australia,⁵⁴ Lockheed Martin Australia Pty Limited,⁵⁵ Elbit Systems of Australia Pty Ltd,⁵⁶ and the latest establishment of Varley Rafael Australia Pty Ltd.⁵⁷ Thales Australia, which in 2020 reported more than 1600 Australian SMEs in its supply chain and \$1.3 billion worth of exports in the last decade,⁵⁸ has increased its contracts value with the Australian Government from approximately \$440 million in 2010, to \$789 million in 2019. Lockheed Martin Australia, had contracts valued at \$153.8 million in 2010, blew to more than \$672.67 million in 2019.

The case with Elbit and Rafael is interesting, since both companies only recently established presence in the Australian market, with Elbit's first government contract recorded in 2012, and Rafael's first large contract with signed only as recently as 2018. Elbit's net worth of contracts with the Australian Government over the last decade stands at an impressive \$517.98 million whereas Rafael's net contracts sum of \$38.67 million is expected to increase significantly in the coming years, with forthcoming acquisition of the company's Spike missiles for the Land 400 program.⁵⁹

Where once it was a sheep's back, then farm equipment, cars and minerals, now it seems, Australia is aiming low – seeking to build an international reputation on the ever-greater export of killing machines.⁶⁰

50 <https://www.asc.com.au/>

51 <https://www.baesystems.com/en-us/home>

52 <https://www.baesystems.com/en/home>

53 <https://www.asc.com.au/about-us/company-reports/>

54 <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/countries/asia-pacific/australia>

55 <https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-au/index.html>

56 <https://www.elbitsystems.com.au/>

57 <https://www.vrasystems.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=751373>

58 <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/countries/asia-pacific/australia>

59 Australian Government contract values were extracted from AusTender, and include all contracts valued at 10 thousand and above. <https://www.tenders.gov.au/cn/search>

60 Paul Daley The Militarisation of Australian History. Militarism: Australia's Foundational Myth. Presented November 2019. <https://www.mapw.org.au>

SECTION 3: INCREASED MILITARY ENGAGEMENT IN AUSTRALIA'S CIVILIAN-DOMESTIC SPACE

Australian military and civilian institutions: Civil-state-military blurring boundaries

The Australian Government's involvement in the expansion of the military into spheres external to Defence circulates beyond the Australian economy, and may be identified in civilian institutions as well. Research organisations, often referred to as "think tanks", are largely perceived and presented as independently run and managed, which in turn is meant to reassure civil society of their unbiased and trustworthy commentary. Normally, this would assume that the think tank is not financially dependent on the institution it is meant to analyse or critique.

However, an in-depth review of one of Australia's most important defence "think tanks", Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), reveals a somewhat different story. The research institution, which recorded 600,000 PDF downloads in 2019 alone, offers critical readings of Australian Defence and strategic policy. While originally founded by the Australian Government, it is commonly believed to be an autonomous entity. Furthermore, in its annual reports, the institute is described as a "trusted source of analysis and advice." It then goes on stating that, "[t]he institution has developed into one of the leading independent research bodies in Australia".⁶¹ In reality, ASPI is still heavily funded by Australian major government and defence-corporate stakeholders. Of course, this is not to suggest that ASPI lacks transparency. On the contrary, all funding information is openly accessible to the public, but rather, that ASPI's commentary on military and defence issues should be read in light of its funding. Moreover, as an "independent think tank" financially supported by the Australian Defence Department and industry players, ASPI represents a clear example of the military's expansion into Australian social mainstream discourse. Yet, in its 2019-2020 Statement⁶², ASPI declares the following:

"[I]n entering any financial relationship, ASPI insists on maintaining complete independence in its editorial judgements. Indeed, that independence is why people see value in sponsoring ASPI work and why so many people consider ASPI to be a touchstone of sound judgement and analysis."

However, with \$4 million constituting 36% of its annual budget coming in funding from the Australian Department of Defence, it is questionable whether ASPI is able to exercise independent editorial judgement. Beyond the Department of Defence, ASPI's list of corporate sponsors in 2019-2020 includes as many as 18 different Defence-related corporate sponsors, ranging from Australian embassies and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to defence industry suppliers such as Lockheed Martin, Thales Australia, Naval Group Australia, Rafael, Raytheon, and others. ASPI's claims of editorial autonomy may have stood as valid if sponsorship had remained steady, but when compared with the think tank's subsidies from 2010, it is evident that funding not only grew, but that the number of Defence-invested sponsors multiplied. Back in 2010, ASPI's list of corporate sponsors included only 7 Defence and defence industry-related sponsors. Its funding from the Department of Defence was also significantly lower, and stood at \$3 million.⁶³ Given this financial dependency, how can the think tank provide unbiased commentary on sponsoring institutions?

61 <https://www.aspi.org.au/annual-reports>

62 2019-2020 ASPI Annual Report

63 Annual Reports 2010-2020, <https://www.aspi.org.au/annual-reports>

ASPI's growing dependence on the Australian Defence sector is further reflected in the appointment of personnel inside the institution. Like other civilian institutions seemingly impartial to Defence, for example establishments such as the Australian War Memorial, ASPI provides an example of personnel overlap with Australian Defence, and potential for conflicting interests. As of late 2020, the Institute's current Executive Director served as the Chief of Staff for the Minister of Defence (and advised on the writing of the 2016 DWP); one of its senior fellows was a former Commander of the Navy; and many of its analysts were retired ADF personnel of various ranks and fields.⁶⁴

Similarly, at the Australian War Memorial, the organisation's Board of Directors includes a former Prime Minister and the current Chiefs of all three services of the ADF, with former Senior Officers throughout the organisational structure.⁶⁵ The War Memorial is of course not an entirely separate entity from Defence, given that it is a Commonwealth agency that is funded by the Australian Government. It operates as an autonomous crown corporation with a non-partisan Board of Directors, but this independence is questionable in light of their funding. Perhaps not surprisingly, the annual budget of the Memorial has also risen over the last decade, from \$41 million in 2010 to \$58 million in 2020.⁶⁶ With expanding construction the War Memorial, provides a further indication of the Australian Government's growing interest and commitment to demonstrating increasing militarisation within Australian society, through research and educational institutions in particular.

In examining the strategic directions of an organisation, the people are essentially the policy. This is a crucial point in the case of non-partisan organisations, and all the more so in the case of "think tanks" and independent research facilities meant to offer the public criticism of institutions like the military. Cross-sectoral diffusion between government, Defence, and civilian institutions may however, jeopardise organisational ability to conduct a truly independent review free of political constraints and vested interests. When the same people representing the same views are synchronised across stakeholder organisations, simply by their former associations and allegiances, the guarding forces of civil-military relations may be undermined. This in turn further allows, and more importantly legitimises, the economic expansion of the military into noncombatant markets, through partnerships between civilian research and defence industry players.

In Australia, such collaborations are already taking place, through research and education institutions' strategic alignments with defence industry. For example, they range from the Naval Shipbuilding College's Workforce Register established in 2018,⁶⁷ the University of Adelaide's 2019 partnership with ASC in its Masters of Marine Engineering program,⁶⁸ to Lockheed Martin's announcement of a future research collaboration with Flinders University, signed in 2020.⁶⁹ Further collaborations include the University of Sydney Business School's partnership with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN)⁷⁰ beginning in 2017 in the launching of the Systems Thinking and Innovation Program, the Australian National University's Strategic and Defence Studies Centre in partnership with the Australian War College,⁷¹ and the Defence Science Institute (DSI) within the University of Melbourne, established in 2010.⁷² The Australian Defence Science and Universities Network (ADSUN) has developed standing linkages with every major university in Australia, and also incorporates major defence industry players.⁷³

64 <https://www.aspi.org.au/our-people>

65 <https://www.awm.gov.au/about/our-people/council>

66 Annual reports 2010-2020

67 <https://www.defenceindustry.gov.au/about-defence-industry>

68 <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/newsroom/news/list/2019/07/31/masters-degree-builds-submarine-expertise>

69 <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/australia/press-release/thales-and-flinders-university-sign-mou-automate-launch-and-recovery-system>

70 <https://www.sydney.edu.au/business/study/executive-education/systems-innovation-program.html>

71 <http://sdsc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/our-students/military-and-defence-studies-program>

72 <https://www.defencescienceinstitute.com/>

73 For further details, see: <https://www.dst.defence.gov.au/partner-with-us/university/adsun?fbclid=IwAR171f-zfPEKVMt6wqV852r00J78jBJHkfODNwNDn8Vbmhmp7sLKj-dafj8>

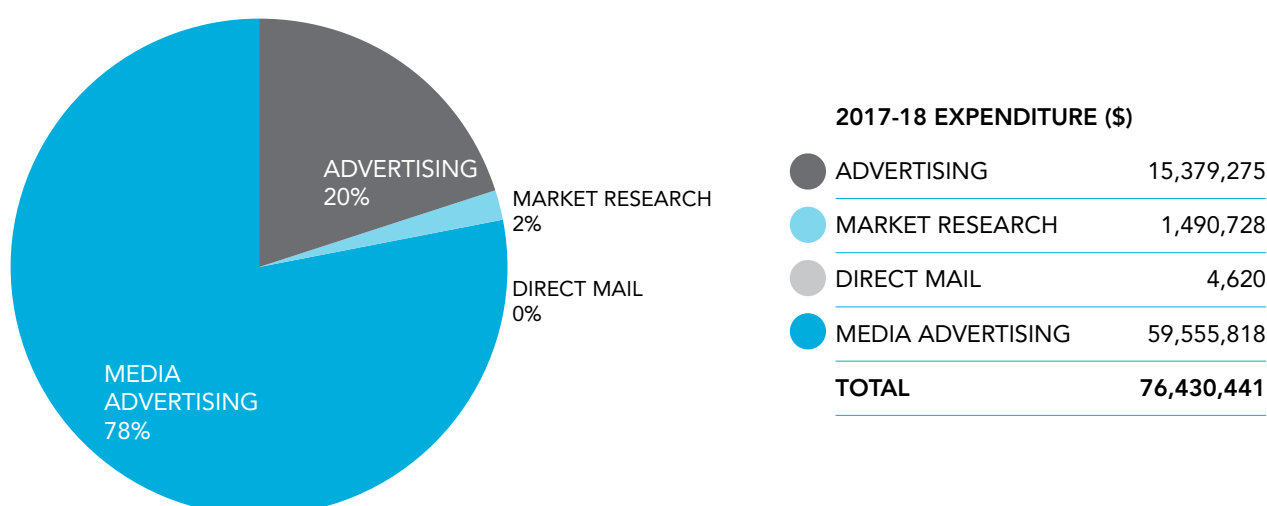
Civil-military relations in the domestic Australian context: The ADF and the public

The processes of militarisation in Australia have occurred within the context of evolving policy and economic expansion. However, the ADF has also taken more direct action in recent years in reaching out to the Australian public, through boosting media engagement, renewal of community and outreach programs, and increasing levels of the legislative framework for the domestic involvement of the military.

These efforts culminated in 2020, with the extensive involvement of the military in responding to the Australian Bushfires and in the ongoing participation in Coronavirus quarantine enforcement across Australia. Traditionally, domestic disasters and emergencies are managed and operated by the specific states, and usually do not include major involvement of the Commonwealth Government and consequently, the military. Throughout 2020, however, ADF's participation on the domestic level has been an entirely integral and socially legitimised part of operations, with positive public feedback supporting further involvement.

The active promotion of positive public opinion on military presence in the domestic sphere is also a product of aggressive marketing. According to the Australian Government's Transparency Portal, in 2017-2018, the Department of Defence invested in publicity and recruitment campaigns more than any other Commonwealth agency. Defence had the highest single-department advertising budget for that year,⁷⁴ spending more than \$76.4 million on advertising alone. This included immense media presence (more than \$59.5 million) and extensive market research (\$1.49 million) (See Figure 5.). Defence's sizeable investment in advertisement has again demonstrated proportional and absolute growth. In 2010-2011, advertising spending was less than half its present value, totaling \$36.2 million. Since 2010 and despite fluctuations, publicity budgets have trended towards substantial growth. In 2011-2012, Defence advertising and market research expenditure rose to \$42.9 million; in 2013-2014 it increased again to \$65.3 million; in 2015-2016 it increased to \$70.7 million; and growing again to \$76.4 million in 2017-18.⁷⁵ The budget decreased to \$59.8 million in 2018-2019, but the overall increase in vigorous military marketing in Australia is clear.

FIGURE 5: DEFENCE ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH 2017-2018



Source: Annual Report 2017-18, <https://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/17-18/>

74 <https://www.transparency.gov.au/>

75 All information extracted from the 2010-2020 Annual reports, <https://www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/>

Community engagement and the ADF

In addition to maintaining strong media presence, the ADF has invested human resources in community engagement and outreach programs. Over the last few years, the military renewed previous existing programs and introduced a wide range of new ones, meant to increase the ADF's civilian involvement in rural areas and disadvantaged communities across Australia. A large number of these programs are targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and offer ongoing medical assistance, ADF preparatory, and pre-recruitment youth pathway programs. The programs were largely introduced in conjunction with the Department's The Defence Reconciliation Action Plan (D-RAP) launched in 2019; a plan that outlines the ADF's commitment to the Australian Government 'Closing the Gap' Strategy; and are set to contribute to the Government's efforts at enabling and encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's participation in Australian society and institutions.⁷⁶

The Indigenous Pre-Recruitment Program (IPRP) is a preparatory program for Indigenous Australians who have already been admitted to military service, in either the regular Force or in the Reserves. It is a six-week residential course held in rotation at HMAS Cerberus, Victoria, Kapooka, NSW, or RAAF Wagga, NSW, with the main focus on improving candidates' physical fitness and "resilience" in meeting Defence's requirement for service. The Army Indigenous Development Program (AIDP)⁷⁷ on the other hand is a 5-month program, targeted at Indigenous youth who do not meet ADF entry standards. The program is held at Cairns, Queensland, Kapooka, NSW, or Batchelor, Northern Territory, and in practice, is meant to replace high school education. Alongside physical training essential for future recruitment, participants receive education in language, literacy and numeracy, and are "trained" in leadership, self-confidence and self-awareness. As the information page for the AIDP suggests to prospective participants, "[y]ou'll leave the course with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make a great start in the ADF."⁷⁸

Through the programs, the ADF is not offering recruits just a stepping stone into military service. Essentially, the military is operating here as if it were a "welfare and community services" organisation. An example of this change in perspective is the Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP), established in 1997, as an Army program that focuses primarily on welfare aid. A joint initiative of the Department of the Prime Minister, Cabinet and the Australian Army, the program assigns ADF health professionals to indigenous areas in order to provide medical assistance within local communities.⁷⁹

The military's engagement with Australian social causes is a positive initiative on first examination, but one has to coincidentally wonder about the motivation behind the redirection of resources and reshaping of agenda. When a combatant institution exhibits a change in structure and encourages collaborations with welfare services, it also suggests a shift in priorities. Social initiatives can then become an effective means for unmediated communication with the public and in reinforcing a positive public image.

The ADF's increasing engagement with the Australian public is evident outside the context of indigenous communities as well. In 2015, the ADF renewed the ADF Gap Year program, after it was directed to restart the scheme by Government in 2014. This constituted the second time that the program was introduced to the Australian public in the last decade. The previous 'Gap Year' was initiated in 2007 and concluded in 2012, drawing a total of 2,495 participants, and was the first iteration of a military 'apprentice'/exposure-program in Australia since the 1970s. The regeneration of the program was successful. Directed at young Australians aged 17-24, it offers Year 12 (or equivalent) graduates a one year paid-service opportunity in any of the three Branches.⁸⁰ In its first round, the program had 260 places, which quickly increased to 445 places in 2016 and 495 in 2017. While participation rates were not available for later years, given its 90% increase rate in three years, it is safe to assume that it will reach its original aim of 1,000 participants by 2022.⁸¹

76 [https://www1.defence.gov.au/jobs-careers/indigenous/defence-reconciliation-action-plan#:~:text=Defence%20Reconciliation%20Action%20Plan%20\(DRAP,'Closing%20the%20Gap'%20strategy](https://www1.defence.gov.au/jobs-careers/indigenous/defence-reconciliation-action-plan#:~:text=Defence%20Reconciliation%20Action%20Plan%20(DRAP,'Closing%20the%20Gap'%20strategy).

77 It is important to note that while the name suggests a prime association with the Army, the program is directed at all three Branches, and takes place both in Army and Navy facilities.

78 All information about the IPRP and the AIDP were extracted from ADF official pages, <https://www.army.gov.au/our-people/army-indigenous-community/army-indigenous-initiatives>, <https://www.defencejobs.gov.au/indigenous/ways-to-join>, <https://www.army.gov.au/our-people/community-engagement/army-aboriginal-community-assistance-programme-aacap>.

79 <https://www.army.gov.au/our-people/community-engagement/army-aboriginal-community-assistance-programme-aacap>

80 In the first year of the program, positions offered were only in the Australian Army and Airforce.

81 All information regarding the Gap Year program was verified in https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2017/April/Gap_Year_progress

Normalising the military presence in the domestic space: Participation of civil society

The ongoing investment in Defence publicity and the ADF's increased social involvement appear to be matched by public opinion and reflected in notably positive social attitudes towards the military in Australia. Furthermore, the last few years have seen high rates of public attendance at military-related events and an overall expression of acceptance of ADF's presence in the domestic sphere. Imagery of the military is becoming more common in the civilian world thanks to targeted marketing, which correlates with Australians' positive attitudes towards the ADF and the normalisation of domestic militarisation. Certainly, Australians appear to be voting with their feet, and are actively pursuing opportunities to attend and participate in ceremonial events that include and are often specifically dedicated to military representations and symbols.

The best indication of just how normalised civilian participation in military events in Australia can be seen by looking at the attendance at major ceremonies in recent years (prior to COVID). According to news outlets, participation in the Gallipoli Dawn Services in Australia skyrocketed in 2015, with more than 120,000 people attending the centenary dawn service at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, about 85,000 visited the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, and up to 30,000 participated in the Martin Place dawn service in Sydney.⁸² Attendance at the 2015 was exceptionally high due to the centenary of the landings at Anzac Cove, but it was by no means unusual. In 2019, attendance was high as well, with 35,000 participants in the Australian War Memorial service, 25,000 in Melbourne and an additional 10,000 joined the dawn service at the Point Danger cliffs in Torquay, Victoria.⁸³ 2020 saw cancellations of all communal dawn services due to Coronavirus regulations. Yet (while exact numbers are not available), many people across Australia participated from their own homes in generally spontaneous individual initiatives, in what was referred to as 'Light up the Dawn' events. Likewise, the Facebook "event" offered as an alternative to the official events was hosted jointly by different RSLs,⁸⁴ and saw a response rate of 55,300 people.⁸⁵ The Australian public's active participation in military-themed events, particularly in a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrates the level of acceptance of militarisation in society.

The popularity of the ANZAC Day Dawn services are not a singular occurrence. Undeniably, the myth of the Anzacs has earned a sacred status in Australian culture, and both influences the way that the modern military is viewed, as well as offering a lens through which Australian history is understood.⁸⁶ But military displays in the domestic space are far more integrated, and are by no means limited to the ceremonial. ADF heavy equipment and armoured vehicles are now often used in State parades and civilian expositions across Australia, and are considered to be popular public entertainment. For example, the Queensland Flag Raising Ceremony in 2017 included an ADF display with a 21-gun salute and a RAAF flypast.⁸⁷

In the civilian sphere, ADF Open day and air show events have become common pastime activities. In addition to biennial ADF hosted air shows that are held at different bases in Australia, the RAAF also participates in flypasts at civilian competitions and events, displaying its most up-to-date acquisitions. In 2019, the RAAF participated in the Edinburgh Air Show, for the first time in 12 years.⁸⁸ In November 2020 alone, RAAF has staged 6 flypasses,⁸⁹ including participating in the 'Superloop 500' Supercars racing Championship held in Adelaide, South Australia. The event included an air show by RAAF FA-18

82 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-25/thousands-attend-anzac-centenary-service-at-lone-pine-gallipoli/6421740>

83 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-25/anzac-day-2019/11045646>

84 For example, the SA/NT RSL, <https://rslsa.org.au/light-up-the-dawn/>

85 <https://www.facebook.com/events/your-home/anzac-day-2020-light-up-the-dawn/1369894726549555/>

86 Lake, Marilyn and Reynolds, Henry *What's Wrong with ANZAC? The Militarisation of Australian History* (1st ed.). University of New South Wales Press, 2010.

87 From the QLD cabinet and ministerial directory <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/79894>

88 <https://www.airforce.gov.au/exercises/edinburghairshow2019>

89 <https://www.airforce.gov.au/news-and-events/events>

Hornets, and a display by Army armoured vehicles⁹⁰. This is just a small portion of all of the shows staged by the RAAF, and by ADF in general, in the recent past, let alone across the last decade. Australians tend to seek participation of the military in micro-events as well. According to the ADF, regional Joint Operational Support Section (JOSS)⁹¹ offices entrusted with coordinating civil-military relations throughout the country receive hundreds of requests annually for support and involvement in events from schools, associations, veteran and social clubs, and interested bystanders.

Embracing militarisation: Public opinion and national polling

The ADF's increased role in the domestic space has been widely received with affirmative feedback by the Australian public. Public attitudes towards the military remained overwhelmingly positive, despite Defence's increased budget, industry, and involvement in society. Recent polls conducted by the Lowy Institute show that as a whole, Australians support regional military involvement and deployments of a humanitarian nature (aid). In comparison, most Australians oppose the use of the military in large-scale and combatant conflicts. This is crucial to the point of militarisation within Australia. The more Defence is understood as a "do gooder" rather than as a combat force, the more it may be considered a legitimate stakeholder in society.

For example, in 2017 and 2019, 77% of Australians supported the use of the military in the protection of law and order in the Pacific. In 2017, 81% supported military intervention in case of humanitarian support. These numbers resonate with trends identified over a decade ago. In 2005, 91% of Australian voiced support of ADF's involvement in peacekeeping missions.⁹² While these statistics do not directly target domestic involvement, they do capture the public's favourable attitudes towards the ADF. In a related manner, when asked about Defence spending in 2019, 31% of people said that the government should increase spending, and 47% believed that the government is spending about the right amount on defence. Compared with the statistics from the 2013 polls, it appears that Australians as a whole understand and overwhelmingly support defence spending.

The culmination of militarisation: Rising domestic involvement in 2020

In 2019-2020, the militarisation processes reached a crescendo with the highest-to-date levels of ADF involvement in domestic operations in Australia. The ADF had always provided aid in some capacity during times of domestic crisis, with this involvement increasing in the last decade and rising considerably in 2020. The magnitude of the immersion of the military in the 2020 Bushfires and Coronavirus efforts are a direct result of Defence's increasing place in the public space, with little apparent attempt by the Commonwealth Government to enhance a domestic civilian capacity to deal with crises. More so, it is a result of the overall public acceptance of the military as a legitimate actor in domestic affairs.

Positive public opinion and the ADF's assistance to state disaster taskforces in 2020 are interrelated, and are reflected in the outcomes of the 'Black Summer' Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.⁹³ The Commission presented 80 recommendations, some with vast implications for the use of the ADF in domestic events. Among them is the simplification of the Australian Government Disaster

90 <https://www.airforce.gov.au/operations/flying-operations/air-force-fa-18ab-classic-hornet-hit-skies-above-superloop-adelaide-500>

91 <https://www.defence.gov.au/ceremonial/ceremonialrequests.asp>

92 All statistics were withdrawn from the Lowy Institute Annual Polling Reports, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/polling>

93 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, Final Report. <https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-11/Royal%20Commission%20into%20National%20Natural%20Disaster%20Arrangements%20-%20Report%20-%202020%205Baccessible%5D.pdf>

Response Plan and the Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) thresholds, weakening the obstructions in place for military intervention in domestic contexts. Further, generalising the use of cost-waivers for ADF assistance cost-recovery payments in 2020 has increased the disposition of state and territorial governments to request military support. While the Royal Commission states that the ADF should not be seen as a first-responder,⁹⁴ the context of the recommendations suggests otherwise. Particularly, the undertaking of the DACC under the Commonwealth Government's executive power implies a significant amendment to existing legislation, in that legislation may be suspended for the use of ADF forces on Australian soil⁹⁵. The recommendations of the Commission have already been extended to the Coronavirus efforts as well. The Defence Legislation Amendment (Enhancement to Defence Force Response to Emergencies) Bill 2020 was confirmed late 2020⁹⁶ and nominally streamlines the process for calling out ADF Reserves, including for the purposes of responding to natural disasters or emergencies, and provides ADF, Defence personnel and foreign forces with immunity from criminal or civil liability while responding to civil emergencies and disasters. The full implications of these legal changes are yet to be tested on domestic soil, and raise concerning questions about the scope of 'civil emergencies', and the roles of the ADF and the police should there be circumstances possibly involving violence.

Increased military aid in Australia 2010-2020

ADF aid in domestic events is only offered following a formal request and once local, state and Commonwealth agencies announce they have exhausted available resources. Still and despite assumed bureaucratic obstacles, ADF involvement has always been common. However, the extent of aid peaked in 2020. Between July 2005 and June 2013 alone, Defence recorded at least 275 cases of military support provided under the DACC agreements,⁹⁷ and between 2010 and 2020, the ADF participated in a total of 6 major operations⁹⁸ within Australia. It is important to stress that the number of domestic military operations remained relatively similar to that of previous decades. Yet, the degree of involvement by the ADF in domestic emergencies has significantly increased since 2010.

According to the Chief of Joint Operations at the time, Lieutenant-General Evans, an approximate total of 1,900 ADF personnel of all three Branches, full-time and Reserves, participated in Operation Queensland Flood Assist 2010-2011. This was the largest ADF deployment on record in response to a natural disaster. 700 soldiers were deployed in Operation Navy Help Darwin in 1974, about 1,500 were deployed in the 1974 Brisbane Floods, and about 800 were deployed in Operation VIC Fire Assist 2008-2009.⁹⁹ The 2010-2011 numbers were topped and were almost doubled in 2020, as illustrated in Figure 6.

94 Ibid.

95 As of November 2020, this has not yet been legislated, but will necessarily involve amendments to the Defence Act 1903. Source: https://www.pm.gov.au/media/reforms-national-natural-disaster-arrangements?fbclid=IwAR1dLA_2QpkyBP7BAEdMmHKIRXcC-OPLN-a6l1EHGFAkP1MOGDmpDXytSR4

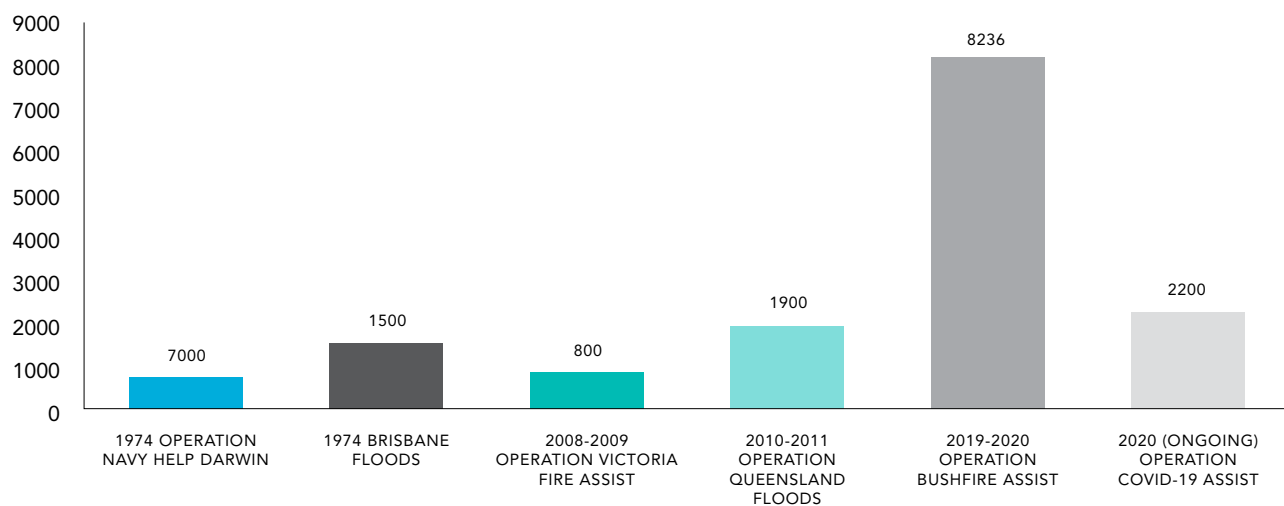
96 The Defence Legislation Amendment (Enhancement to Defence Force Response to Emergencies) Bill 2020 was confirmed 17 December 2020. <https://aph.gov.au>

97 ANAO, Emergency Defence Assistance to the Civil Community, 2014.

98 Operation Queensland Flood Assist 2010-2011, Operation Yasi Assist 2011, NSW Bushfire Assist 2013, North Queensland Flood Assist 2018-2019, Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-2020, Operation Covid-19 Assist.

99 <https://www.abs.gov.au/>, https://defence.gov.au/annualreports/08-09/2008-2009_Defence_DAR_04_v1s3.pdf

FIGURE 6: ADF PERSONNEL DEPLOYED IN RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC NATURAL DISASTERS



Source: Australian Defence Force

*2020 Op Covid-19 Assist data is correct as of June 2020

In Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-2020, a historic record of 8,236 ADF personnel, including a call-out of about 2,500 Reserves,¹⁰⁰ participated in the emergency, response and recovery operations, working both on the front-line and within civilian communities in support.¹⁰¹ This was the largest mobilisation of military forces within Australia to date, often referred to in the media as “Australia’s war”.¹⁰² The Taskforce mobilised massive ADF platforms, including the RAAF C-17 Globemaster, C-130J Hercules and C-27J Spartan, and the designation of HMAS Canberra as a humanitarian assistance vessel. Similarly and as of the June 2020 Department of Defence official update,¹⁰³ Operation COVID-19 Assist has already seen the mobilisation of more than 2,200 military personnel,¹⁰⁴ with an understanding that the Taskforce is only expected to grow as there is ongoing involvement of the ADF in hotel quarantine throughout the country. This is particularly true with the aftermath of the Board of Inquiry reviewing the COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Program in Victoria,¹⁰⁵ which has led to the replacement of private security guards with ADF for some quarantine hotels.

The motivation behind the Inquiry and the revelation of the former Victorian Police Commissioner’s misleading information regarding the State’s refusal of ADF support for hotel quarantine, reflect the militarisation processes in Australian policy, economy and society discussed in this Report. The fact that public expectation for military intervention in domestic emergencies has become integral to the way these events are addressed is a direct outcome of increased militarisation and the normalisation of the military in Australia in the last decade. It is therefore of no surprise that Defence Budget for 2020-2021 remains steady.

100 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, Final report

101 <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/lreynolds/media-releases/operation-bushfire-assist-concludes>

102 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-07/australia-bushfires-adf-operation-bushfire-assist/11931704>

103 June 2020

104 <https://www1.defence.gov.au/about/covid-19>

105 <https://www.quarantineinquiry.vic.gov.au/about-hotel-quarantine-inquiry>

While this means that the budget was not necessarily increased, it was also not decreased. In a particularly sensitive time where the rest of the Australian economy is facing some hardship due to the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic, consistency in defence funding implies that military spending will continue to climb as a percentage of spending of Australian GDP.

But is it not simply the increased resources being allocated to the ADF, that is of concern, it is the visibility and the 'normalising' of ADF's use domestically and their acceptance by the public of this 'normalisation'. The more that military personnel are seen on the streets, at airports, at quarantine hotels or responding to floods and bushfires, the more it seems to be 'normal' for the military to be undertaking such tasks and the more it will be seen as acceptable. There will probably always be times when the domestic crises are so severe that extra assistance is needed, particularly in terms of heavy equipment or evacuation facilities.

However, the critical question remains: Does the normalisation of militarisation strengthen our domestic civil society, or does it contribute to an increased dependency on a well-funded military infrastructure and personnel to address disasters, fires and pandemics to the detriment of capable, well-resourced and resilient civilian responses across Australian communities?

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The future of militarisation in Australia

The aim of this Research Report was to describe the extent of militarisation in Australia between the years 2010 and 2020. The multi-layered processes of the normalisation and legitimisation of military involvement in Australia are assessed here through an economic, political and social prism in order to understand the underlying dynamics and motivations. Militarisation in Australia is examined through the increased military spending and Defence expenditure, Commonwealth and State policies that promote military domestic intervention, an ever-expanding defence industry, the mythologising of Australian history, ADF's engagement with the Australian public, and contemporary extensive marketing.

THE REPORT RECOGNISES AND HIGHLIGHTS THREE CENTRAL THEMES OF MILITARISATION IN AUSTRALIA:

- 1 Defence policy aligned with consistent budgetary increases;
- 2 defence industry and military-industry growing linkages; and
- 3 military-civil society connections in the domestic sphere.

These are promoted through extensive Defence marketing across Australian society, which is in turn reciprocated through favourable public social polling. Defence's growing presence in the Australian economy, society, government and culture is especially apparent in ADF involvement in domestic emergencies. Increased militarisation processes have resulted in increased deployment of military personnel in domestic operations in 2020, and in the vast participation of the military in Bushfire Assist Taskforce and Operation COVID-19 Assist.

Due to the complexity and scope of the source material analysed, this Research Report has refrained from conducting broad comparisons between Defence Budgets and Budgetary Statements and other Government Departments in Australia. Additionally, analysis of private sector entities was restricted due to availability of open-source information. Instead, the Report offers a thorough and in-depth analysis of Defence's varying programs, sections, and policies across the years. In addition, it includes detailed comparisons between case-specific Defence acquisitions and their alternative spending options in civilian Departments. This comparison was provided to illustrate the magnitude of Defence spending and expansion in Australia, and ultimately, their potential social cost. At this point, it should be noted that while Defence data is easily-accessible, departmental changes, program overlaps and projects merges make the evaluation of trends across years particularly difficult. As the influence of the military across different sectors of society growth, more areas become relevant for investigation.

Future research should therefore expand on the commentary made in this Report, and further examine the nature of military domestic involvement in Australia, through academic, economic, social, cultural, official and nonofficial ties, on the Commonwealth, the state and the regional level. If future policy and legislation grows permitting more domestic intervention by the ADF in Australia, so will the normalisation of military economic dominance and the availability of military symbolism within society could also be expected to increase. The inferences, layers and linkages between these processes are key to understanding the often subtle processes of militarisation.

This Research Report provides an important beginning to uncovering the multiple layers of militarisation in Australia, and offers a platform for further discussion, research, policy analysis and advocacy. This platform will need regular updating and “tracking” of militarisation.

In addition, there are many questions that are raised by the implications of these findings about how Australia needs to find more equitable and just ways to strengthen human rights, true security and to build resilience and capabilities in our communities all across Australia.

- 1 *Does the normalisation of militarisation strengthen our civil society, or does it contribute to an increased dependency on a well-funded military infrastructure and personnel to address disasters, fires and pandemics in Australia to the detriment of the capability and resilience of Australia’s civilian responses and communities?*
- 2 *What is the policy coherence between the size and budget of the ADF, the role they play domestically and in the military industry and the role of the military as a major economic stakeholder in determining Australia’s future?*
- 3 *Is the expansion of military budgets and personnel, increasing industrial and arms development, and expansion into the domestic sphere, contributing to the development of a parallel set of “military” policies; operating as a separate entity; or is there a coordinated attempt at genuinely increasing Australia’s security through comprehensive interlocking policies that contribute towards both domestic and international security?*
- 4 *What are the peaceful alternatives to military solutions being offered to security in our region?*
- 5 *What are the economic alternatives to manufacturing weapons?*
- 6 *What is the role of the military in Australia now, given the close integration into domestic civilian activities?*



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