

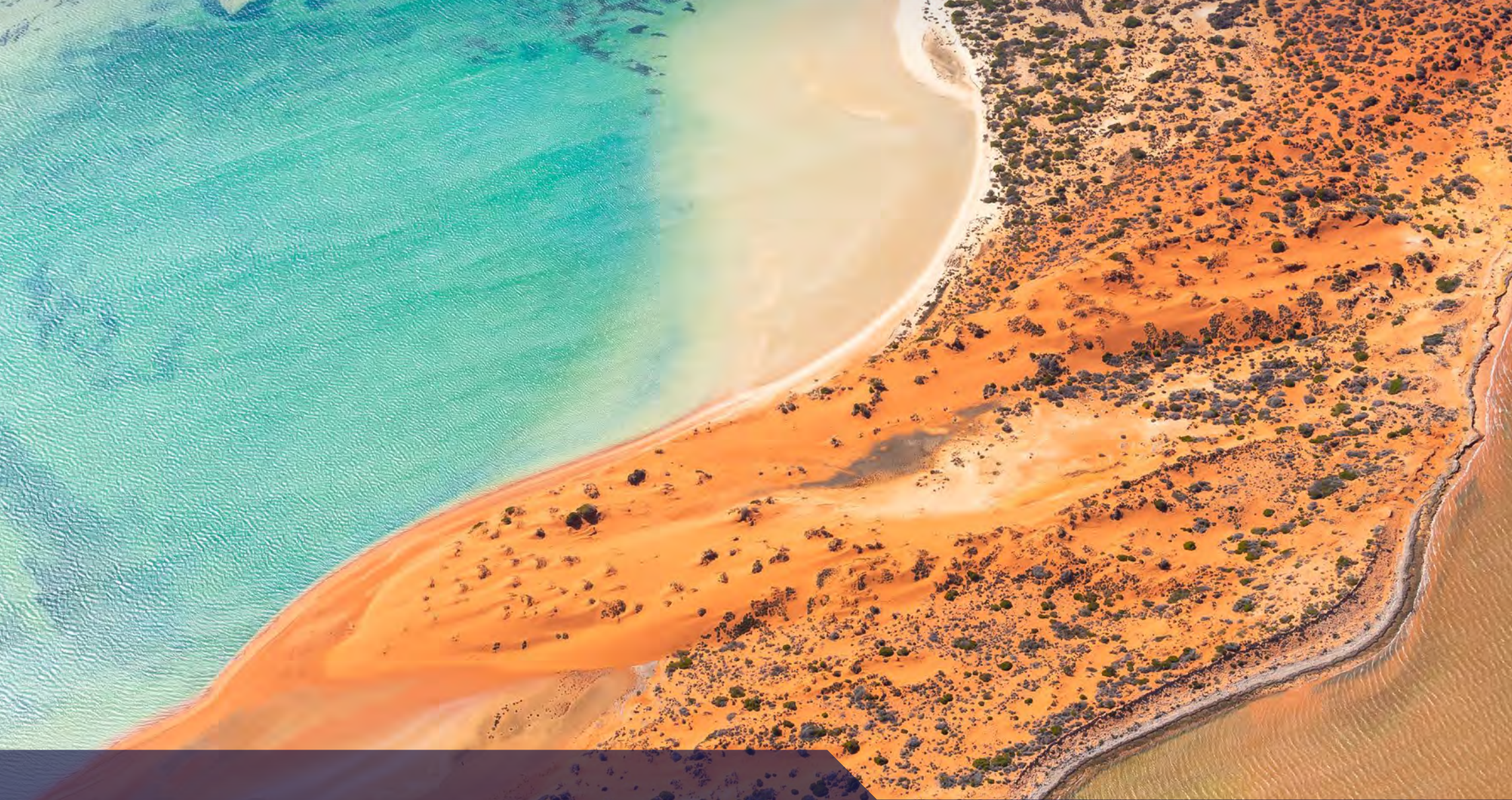


**DEFENCE
WEST** 

WA DEFENCE AND DEFENCE INDUSTRY STRATEGY

2025





Acknowledgement of Country

The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.



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PREMIER'S FOREWORD

Western Australia (WA) is known for its innovation, competitiveness, and adaptability, and is backed by a rich and successful history of supporting Australia's national defence while contributing to the State. Western Australians can take pride in our defence industry.

When our Government came to office in 2017, we committed to a range of actions that would boost awareness of our State's defence industry, through the Defence and Defence Industries Strategic Plan.

WA's geostrategic importance in the region presents an unrivalled opportunity for our State. As the gateway to the Indo-Pacific and a vibrant industrial hub, WA now has a key part to play in the AUKUS trilateral security pact.

Our State will be the homeport and sustainment location for Australia's first sovereign nuclear-powered submarines, host regular visits by our allied partners' submarines under the Submarine Rotational Force – West, and deliver on the Australian Government's commitment for continuous naval shipbuilding. The increased strategic importance of Northern



Australia will position the State to have strengthened capabilities and resilience in our northern bases and broader region, and presents opportunities for exercising multi-domain Australian Defence Force (ADF) capabilities and establishing multi-use testing and evaluation facilities.

The benefits of a thriving WA defence industry will be felt by our local communities and industries for years to come.

A significant number of secure jobs will be created in defence and adjacent sectors in WA, to deliver on continuous shipbuilding and sustainment, and AUKUS objectives.

As the industry advances, it will drive local business development, expand education and training opportunities, and be a catalyst for the upgrade of community services and amenities. The creation of well-paying jobs and the reinforcement of local economies will bring about enhancements to the quality of life for many Western Australians.

The defence industry is playing a critical role in diversifying WA's economy and bolstering its position as the 'engine room' of the national economy. With a strong economy and industrial base, built from a foundation of mining activity in the north, our State has a proven track record of delivering large scale projects and is well-positioned to adapt its advanced construction and engineering capabilities to meet Defence's future needs, with a workforce which has cross-cutting competencies highly applicable to Defence and the defence industry.

Through this Strategy, this State will champion the interests of WA's defence sector by working with industry, the Australian Government, AUKUS partners, and other stakeholders to attract further defence investment and create jobs and opportunities for Western Australians.

I am proud to present this Strategy, which sets out the WA Government's commitment to contributing meaningfully to the nation's defence priorities and needs and advancing the State's defence industry, while ensuring significant benefits for local industries and communities.



Hon Roger Cook MLA,
Premier of Western Australia



MINISTER FOR DEFENCE INDUSTRY'S FOREWORD

The defence industry is one of the fastest growing and most dynamic industry sectors in WA.

Strategically facing the Indian Ocean, home of Australia's largest operational naval base HMAS Stirling, and the future home of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine fleet, WA is on the cusp of a new kind of boom – a shipbuilding and sustainment boom.

WA is set to play a vital role supporting the Australian Government and its closest allies as they respond to an increasingly challenging strategic environment. Most visibly, this will be through our contribution to the AUKUS trilateral security pact and the national naval shipbuilding enterprise.

The AUKUS Optimal Pathway positions WA as the lynch pin to the realisation of a sovereign conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability. We will host increasing visits by American and British submarines under the Submarine Rotational Force – West and we will be the homeport and sustainment location for Australia's nuclear-powered submarines. HMAS Stirling will receive over \$8 billion in related investment.

We are proud that WA has been trusted with a key role in the delivery of our nation's most ambitious defence industry project. We have a history of successfully delivering mega projects.

We have the talent and the ambition to succeed with the AUKUS endeavour, and in so doing capture the significant economic opportunities that will be presented for our defence industry and the people of WA.

We have, for the first time in our State's history, secured a pipeline of continuous naval shipbuilding work. This certainty and security of work will give our industry the impetus to continue to grow and develop cross-cutting skills that will be applicable in both shipbuilding and ship and submarine maintenance.

The Australian Marine Complex will see enormous investment from the Australian Government through the creation of a secure precinct to consolidate defence activities. Along with State Government initiatives on the Western Trade Coast, there will be tremendous opportunities for our construction industry at the Australian Marine Complex.

To grow the workforce to deliver these exciting initiatives, as well as our ongoing sustainment commitments, we have some of the nation's leading universities and training organisations, many of whom are already involved with defence. South Metropolitan TAFE is the nation's leading defence industry

training provider, and has a long history of finding and developing the talent required for mega-projects in the resources industry.

WA is not just focused on supporting the Royal Australian Navy. We remain the home of Australia's premier special forces unit – the Special Air Service Regiment, the very capable Regional Force Surveillance unit the Pilbara Regiment, Army 13th Brigade, and one of only two ADF pilot training schools in Australia. Our northern air bases are critical operating nodes for the Royal Australian Air Force and our allies, and will be substantially upgraded in the coming years.

Our State's defence industry encompasses support across the maritime, land and air domains. WA also has world leading capabilities in cyber, communications, information warfare, and space. The future for our industry is bright.

Our Government came to office in 2017 determined to provide WA with a voice on the national defence stage. We created a defence industry ministerial portfolio, established the office of Defence West, appointed the State's first Defence Advocate, and published the first state Defence and Defence Industry Strategic Plan. These actions coupled with robust advocacy at

national and international level have thrust WA to the forefront of Australia's drive towards building sovereign defence capability.

WA's defence sector is set to grow dramatically in the coming decade and will become one of the largest contributors to the State's economy, second only to resources.



**Hon Paul Papalia CSC MLA,
Minister for Defence Industry**





STRATEGIC CONTEXT

WA continues to proudly support Australia's enduring national interests and Defence priorities. As the gateway to the Indo-Pacific and a vibrant industrial hub, WA plays a crucial role in enhancing our nation's strategic and economic position.

This Strategy builds on the 2018 Western Australian Defence and Defence Industries Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan), which was the first time a WA State Government identified an overarching vision and direction for this vital industry sector.

Since the release of the Strategic Plan, there have been significant developments and strategic shifts at the state, national, regional and international levels.

The AUKUS Optimal Pathway has WA at the centre of the journey to a sovereign conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability. WA has also secured the Australian Government's commitment for continuous naval shipbuilding at Henderson, ensuring a stable and ongoing pipeline of work into the 2040s and beyond.

In the last eight years, the WA Government has effectively advocated for defence industry, providing coordinated State input to the Australian Government's Defence Strategic

Review, the development of the AUKUS Optimal Pathway, the Independent Review into the Navy Surface Combatant Fleet, the 2024 National Defence Strategy, the 2024 Integrated Investment Program and the 2024 Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan.

Defence West has led WA delegations to multiple national and international defence industry events. The Indian Ocean Defence and Security Conference has grown to become a vital mechanism for strategic dialogue and trade exposure for WA companies. The WA Government published the first WA Defence Industry Capability Directory and established the WA Defence Science Centre.




The WA Government is diversifying the State's economy to respond to export opportunities and to drive WA's long-term economic development. This approach to diversification is articulated within Diversify WA, the State's economic development framework, which identifies priority sectors for strategic development that match WA's unique strengths with global trends to achieve growth across the economy. Defence industry has been identified as one of the priority sectors under this framework.

Building on this framework, the Government released Future State: Accelerating Diversify WA which highlights the role of naval shipbuilding, sustainment and maintenance as a key opportunity for growth for the sector. Future State highlights the cross-sector enablers which will accelerate the growth of the opportunities

identified, including key infrastructure and project-ready land; a skilled and productive workforce; science, innovation and technology; policy and regulatory frameworks; investment and trade ecosystems; advanced manufacturing capabilities; and environmental, social and governance frameworks.

Alongside these achievements, Australia's defence and strategic landscape has experienced significant shifts. Challenges and threats to national security continue to evolve in scale and complexity. In response, the Australian Government has released a portfolio of national documents and announcements that articulate new priorities for defence strategy and spending over the coming decades. These provide the Australian framework for defence industry capability, innovation, defence exports, and partnerships.





These developments present an opportunity for the State to reassess its approach to supporting the defence industry, both to optimise the contribution to national defence and to maximise the benefits to WA. This Strategy and its priority actions will help strengthen the State's position as a 'destination of choice' for defence work. They align with the Australian Government Department of Defence's (Defence) focus on the Indo-Pacific, the renewal of Australia's surface fleet, and the delivery of AUKUS Pillar 1 and 2 capabilities. Opportunities for northern WA include supporting the ADF's Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Enterprise, testing and evaluation, and theatre logistics including fuel storage.

Delivering this Strategy will require an agile, integrated, and focused defence ecosystem in WA, underpinned by an enduring defence workforce and industrial base capable of producing innovative, world-class systems and capabilities for Australia's defence needs.

Throughout 2024, the WA Government made a concerted effort to seek advice and consult with stakeholders to inform and develop this Strategy. This included with key local, State and Australian Government agencies; defence industry; Aboriginal corporations; veteran organisations; and universities and vocational education providers, on matters such as workforce, education and training, industry, infrastructure and planning, healthcare, emergency management, transport, and other State priority projects.



This Strategy leverages the State's unique strengths and addresses challenges identified during consultation. It updates WA's whole-of-government priorities for defence industry and specifies actions to support these priorities, effectively advocate for its interests, and capitalise on opportunities as they emerge.

The Western Australian submission to the Defence Strategic Review 2023 identified the need for greater presence in the North West of Australia. Our call for force posture change to address the lack of Army and Air Force combat elements in WA was not addressed in the Defence Strategic Review or the National Defence Strategy. The need for more Defence presence and activity in WA, particularly the Pilbara, remains a point of concern for the State Government.

VISION

Western Australia plays a vital and strategic role in supporting Australia's national security and defence objectives, with a world-class defence industry that diversifies the State's economy and creates tangible benefits for the local community.





This whole-of-government vision requires a coordinated effort, robust community engagement, and productive relationships with the Australian Government and other stakeholders.

OUTCOMES BY 2040

By 2040, WA will:

1. Be the homeport and sustainment location for Australia's conventionally armed, nuclear-powered sovereign submarines delivered under AUKUS Pillar 1, and continue to homeport and sustain Collins class conventional submarines through to retirement.
2. Continue to host Australia's largest operational naval base and provide sustainment for the Navy's surface fleet, including the new Hunter class and general purpose frigates, and deliver highly capable maritime capabilities to the Navy and Army in support of the Australian Government's continuous naval shipbuilding enterprise.
3. Have grown our capabilities across all the other defence domains, and leveraged opportunities presented under AUKUS Pillar 2.
4. Be established as a vital contributor to the nation's Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance production capability including substantial weapons and ordnance stockpile sites.
5. Host robust and resilient defence capabilities in northern WA, aligned to the Australian Government's defence priorities.
6. Have grown the economic and social return of the defence industry for our local communities, WA and the nation.



The following cross-cutting principles will underpin all work undertaken by the WA Government in pursuit of these outcomes:



Champion and leverage the unique strengths of WA's strategic geography as the gateway to the Indo-Pacific region and existing industrial base to optimise outcomes for the State's defence industry.

Commit to growing WA's defence industry and invest in its success.

Support WA communities to benefit from increased defence investment and developments.

Promote the participation of Aboriginal people, businesses and communities in defence activities.

Encourage the involvement of veterans in defence and related industries' workforces to leverage their unique skills and experiences.

PILLARS



1. WORKFORCE

A continuous pipeline of skilled workers is fundamental to delivering current and emerging Defence projects in WA.

Ensuring the State has enough workers with the right skills to deliver these projects requires a coordinated approach across government, industry, and education and training providers.



2. INFRASTRUCTURE

A significant uplift in Defence infrastructure is planned or underway in the State. This uplift will be pursued in parallel with WA Government infrastructure priorities and projects.

Close coordination and alignment of WA projects, Defence projects, and relevant enablers will be required to deliver effectively against both Commonwealth and State priorities.



3. INDUSTRY

The State's industrial capabilities will need to expand to deliver the pipeline of shipbuilding and sustainment work, to compete for entry into US and UK supply chains, and enable broader defence opportunities.

Encouraging adjacent technical and innovative industries and small and medium enterprises supporting mining, and oil and gas to pivot to the defence sector will be a key enabler of WA's industry uplift.



4. COMMUNITY

The engagement of Western Australians will be a key factor in the success of the delivery of AUKUS efforts within the State. The successful integration of US and UK personnel in the State under the Submarine Rotational Force – West initiative will be a key early requirement.

AUKUS and broader Defence initiatives will require the Australian Government and the WA Government to develop new legislation and regulations, and to effectively communicate the associated benefits and opportunities to local governments and the community.



5. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Cultivating an environment that fosters defence-related research, development, innovation and translation is an essential underpinning for a strong and dynamic defence industry.

This environment will enable universities and industry to leverage opportunities under AUKUS Pillar 2 and support key Australian Government defence priorities.



6. VETERANS

The skills and experience of veterans are of immense value to WA's defence and adjacent industries.

Encouraging Defence personnel and their families based in WA to remain in the State after they transition out of the ADF, and advocating for others to move to WA, will be a key mechanism to strengthen our local workforce and industrial capability.

Note: actions underpinning these pillars remain subject to subsequent decisions of Government.



1. WORKFORCE

Over the next decade, 3,000 new jobs will be created to support infrastructure upgrades at HMAS Stirling as part of, and in preparation for, the base supporting Submarine Rotational Force – West and becoming the homeport for Australia's sovereign nuclear-powered submarine fleet.

Sustainment of US and UK submarines under Submarine Rotational Force – West will generate 500 new direct jobs between 2027 and 2032.

Depot-level sustainment of Australia’s nuclear-powered submarines is expected to create up to 5,000 long-term jobs in WA, in addition to the creation of 1,200 new jobs to support continuous naval shipbuilding at Henderson.

These new jobs are on top of the ongoing workforce demand to sustain the Collins class submarines and the Navy’s surface fleet.

To meet these needs, WA must understand its current workforce capability and future workforce requirement, and generate a continuous pipeline of skilled workers. New initiatives are required to meet the increased demand for roles in nuclear sustainment, naval shipbuilding and sustainment, and the defence industry more broadly.

This workforce uplift will require collaborative effort across the WA and Australian Governments, South Metropolitan TAFE and other vocational education and training providers, WA universities and defence industry primes.

The WA Government is committed to supporting workforce diversity and promoting the employment of underrepresented cohorts in the defence industry, including Aboriginal people, youth, and women, and helping veterans gain employment.

The WA Defence Industry Workforce Office will lead the State’s workforce planning efforts in formulating initiatives and strategies aimed at developing and strengthening the State’s defence industry workforce across all five domains of defence capabilities – air, land, space, maritime, and cyber.

Establishing a WA Defence Centre of Excellence will assist in delivering defence training and skills, and building a defence industry workforce pipeline that can deliver Defence’s priority activities conducted in the State, and across Australia.

There is also a need to strengthen the security culture among the WA workforce. This includes enhancing protective security arrangements in our skills and training institutions, supporting an increase in workers securing appropriate security clearances and supporting the growth of secure facilities for access by defence industry and academia.





Actions:

- ✦ Work with the Australian Government and the defence industry to identify current and future workforce needs and skilling priorities.
- ✦ Refresh the Western Australian Defence Industry Workforce Development Plan 2022-2027 to respond to current and future defence industry demand.
- ✦ Promote the broad range of diverse career opportunities available within the defence industry in the State.
- ✦ Enhance efforts to attract workers, including new entrants, existing workers and adjacent industry workers.
- ✦ Establish a Defence Centre of Excellence at South Metropolitan TAFE to uplift WA's defence industry workforce by delivering AUKUS specific skills as a priority to undertake nuclear sustainment work, and skills for naval shipbuilding, sustainment and maintenance activities.
- ✦ Build the future defence industry workforce by developing initiatives that promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics participation in schools, aligned to the National Skills Agreement objectives.

Case Study: Blacktree Technology

Headquartered in Perth, with a facility in Canberra, Blacktree Technology (Blacktree) is a wholly Australian-owned business that designs and manufactures mission critical satellite communications systems, used by military and government organisations to deliver resilient operations in remote and harsh environments.

Its world leading products are delivered direct to air, land, sea and space domains in the ADF and through global Defence Prime organisations to end users in Europe, UK, and the US.

Blacktree's proven sovereign capabilities are the key characteristics of its competitive advantage, offering its partners a vertically integrated, end-to-end turn-key system that is radio-agnostic that can deliver capability in a wide variety of applications. Its equipment, both electronic and mechanical, reliably exceeds its planned life of type, which reduces life cycle costs and uncertainty for clients.

Blacktree has garnered global recognition and solidified its status as a respected and well-regarded brand. This recognition, complemented by its Australian Trusted Trader status, lays the foundation for global market potential, emphasising reliability and compliance in international trade.

Blacktree is a 100% Australian owned and operated company, with all manufacturing activities occurring in-country using materials and components sourced from predominantly Australian suppliers. A strong local supply chain of small and medium enterprises providing quality products and services is critical to the success and resilience of manufacturing in Australia's defence industry and underpins the Sovereign



Industrial Capability intent. It is essential to ensure such companies have visibility of increasing work opportunities to have the confidence to make further investment in their own businesses.

Blacktree is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace. Its vision of growth and expansion are closely aligned to legacy, and current and future technologies being developed. This is underpinned by Blacktree's focus on continually upskilling its existing team members, and searching for subject matter experts in emerging fields.

Over the past five years, the Blacktree team has grown from four employees to 40, with additional roles currently being advertised. Moving into its next strategic plan cycle, opportunities have been identified that will generate further growth opportunities and create more jobs.

Blacktree is planning traineeship and graduate programs to provide supported pathways to gain valuable sector skills and knowledge. Its commitment to supporting defence and space industries is demonstrated by veterans making up 40 per cent of the Blacktree team, with a number of active Defence reservists.



2. INFRASTRUCTURE

WA is home to a range of critical Defence facilities and supporting infrastructure, including the naval base HMAS Stirling; RAAF bases Pearce, Curtin and Learmonth; Army facilities at Campbell and Irwin Barracks; and supporting facilities at Geraldton, Exmouth and in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.



Through the 2023 Defence Strategic Review and 2024 National Defence Strategy, the Australian Government has indicated the increased strategic importance of the north of Australia, including the north of WA. The requirement for the ADF and allied nations to exercise and potentially operate from the north in a sustained and resilient manner indicates the requirement for ‘hardening’ of bases and an understanding of the current and required capacity of infrastructure and facilities. The State’s investment and development of critical and resilient infrastructure and facilities in regional WA will be integral to supporting our regions.

WA’s vast landmass, uncluttered airspace and coastline of more than 10,000 kilometres offers significant opportunities for exercising multi-domain ADF capabilities, including alongside our nation’s allies to rehearse for joint and multinational operations. The State’s vastness also provides opportunities to establish world class multi-use testing and evaluation facilities to accelerate the acquisition of world leading equipment capability, particularly Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) and Counter UAS capabilities.

The ADF’s Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Enterprise is of particular importance in meeting Australia’s defence and resilience needs. WA has significant knowledge, skills, land, and infrastructure that will be considered for

utilisation in the manufacture, transportation, storage, testing and evaluation, sustainment, and disposal phases of the GWEO capability life cycle.

The State-owned Australian Marine Complex at Henderson is a key asset underpinning current shipbuilding and sustainment efforts. Its importance will grow as the scope of shipbuilding, and ship and submarine sustainment work increases.

Defence activity in WA will significantly grow over the next two decades, particularly in the State’s north and along the Western Trade Coast (major industrial precinct in Perth’s south metropolitan area between Munster and Rockingham). The State Government believes it is essential that ADF force posture be adjusted to reflect the importance of WA to the nation’s economy. More Army and Air Force combat elements should be located in the western third of the continent.

The WA Government will collaborate with the Australian Government to develop the infrastructure required to deliver on national defence and security priorities, including supporting the establishment of a consolidated Defence Precinct at the Australian Marine Complex, and upgrading HMAS Stirling and RAAF Bases Curtin and Learmonth.

The State will work closely with the Commonwealth and industry to minimise disruption to, and impost on, commercial users of the Australian Marine Complex during the establishment of, and transition to, the Defence Precinct. To manage the resourcing requirements of these projects, together with other cumulative impacts in the region, there will need to be strong staging, collaboration, and prioritisation. Defence infrastructure priorities will be pursued in parallel with WA Government priority projects, including Westport and the transition of the Western Trade Coast into a Global Advanced Industries Hub.

Ensuring that State planning for infrastructure and services, including power, water and transport, are aligned to emerging requirements of Defence as well as the ongoing requirements of adjacent industries and communities will be critical.



Actions:

- + Facilitate the Australian Government’s plans to consolidate the Henderson Precinct, to deliver an uplifted shipbuilding and sustainment capability.
- + Collaborate and coordinate with the Australian Government on the identification and scheduling of Defence infrastructure projects, to ensure alignment and deconfliction with priority projects in the State.
- + Work with the Australian Government to assess and minimise the cumulative environmental impacts of defence and other projects and activities.
- + Prioritise the development of enabling community infrastructure in areas such as housing, education, public transport, roads and healthcare, necessary to support increased defence activities in WA.
- + Develop opportunities to invest in critical and resilient infrastructure, and maximise benefits from dual use of existing infrastructure, to support Defence’s priorities and improve sovereign capability.
- + Work with the Australian Government and other states and territories to develop a Regional Infrastructure Plan.



Case Study: Australian Marine Complex

The Australian Marine Complex (AMC) at Henderson is a world-class centre of excellence for manufacturing, fabrication, assembly, technology, repair and maintenance for key sectors including defence, marine and resource industries.

The WA Government is committed to the continued development of its Strategic Industrial Areas and has funded the ongoing development of the AMC since its establishment in 2003.

In response to the economic impact of COVID-19, the WA Government committed \$87.6 million of investment to fast-track upgrade projects as part of the Western Australian Recovery Plan. This investment not only addressed immediate economic challenges but also promoted long-term growth in the defence and maritime sectors.

The AMC upgrades were designed to meet the expanding requirements of Defence, including the Royal Australian Navy's plans to expand its fleet. Key improvements included the construction of a new vessel transfer path, wharf extension and approach road intersection upgrades. These enhancements

will support larger vessels including the future Hunter class and general purpose frigates, and ensure that the AMC can continue to support complex naval sustainment and upgrade activities.

This work was led by Defence West and DevelopmentWA, and was aligned to national Defence priorities while boosting the local economy. Delivery of these projects demonstrated the State's ongoing commitment and ability to meet the current and future needs of Defence.

The infrastructure projects at the AMC created direct construction jobs as well as indirect employment opportunities, providing a significant boost to the local workforce and helping sustain long-term economic stability.

The State Government's investment in the AMC is a primary example of targeted action to drive economic recovery, support national defence needs and create jobs. Collaboration between the WA Government and Defence ensured efficient project delivery with lasting benefits for both the defence industry and the State economy.



3. INDUSTRY

WA has a long and respected history of delivering ship and conventional submarine sustainment and building smaller naval vessels. This provides a sound base for the industrial uplift required to deliver the range of larger and more complex vessels to the Navy and the Army, and to undertake sustainment of allied and Australian nuclear-powered submarines.



The State's defence industry operates beyond just the maritime domain, with world class capabilities in other domains, including expertise in unmanned and autonomous systems, cyber, communications, information warfare and space.

The WA Government is committed to assisting the growth of industrial capability to deliver continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment, as well as to contributing to broader defence priorities, including under AUKUS Pillars 1 and 2. This will include working with the Australian Government to leverage our ongoing relationships with the UK and US to grow the State's defence industry.

The expanding Australian and allied Defence presence in WA and the increased focus on establishing resilient and

secure supply chains, present significant opportunities for the State's small and medium enterprises. The WA Government will help ensure local industry is aware of defence-related opportunities, promote local companies, and leverage the State's strong international reputation and capability to create growth opportunities.

WA is home to advanced and highly technical companies that support the energy and resources sectors. Many of their core skills and capabilities, and experience in delivering large-scale projects, are directly relevant to the defence sector. The WA Government will promote and encourage them to diversify towards defence related work. This translation of expertise and experience will be a focus of the State's defence industry uplift.

Actions:

- + Promote WA's defence industry to enter national and global supply chains (particularly the US Virginia Class submarine production supply chain) and support arrangements for AUKUS Pillar 1 and Pillar 2.
- + Assist industry, particularly small and medium enterprises, to build the skills and attain the licences required to be competitive and operate in a nuclear context.
- + Support the State's defence industry to access current and emerging opportunities, aligned to the Australian Government's priorities.
- + Encourage adjacent technical and innovative industries to enter the defence sector.
- + Advise of upcoming developments to the defence industry, to allow adequate capacity and time to respond.

Case Study: VEEM Ltd

VEEM Ltd. is a 55-year-old Australian company listed on the ASX, known for its world-class manufacturing and engineering, particularly in the marine and land defence sectors.

For over 30 years, VEEM has been a trusted partner of Defence, starting with valve servicing for Oberon class submarines. It also plays a crucial role in the manufacturing and maintenance of key components for Collins class submarines and other Defence assets.

VEEM holds comprehensive ISO accreditations and DISP accreditation at Level 2 (Secret), reflecting its commitment to quality, security, and governance, and its ability to meet the stringent requirements of the defence industry.



The company operates from a 15,000m² facility in WA, which houses one of the largest non-ferrous foundries in the country. This advanced foundry, with 12 furnaces and a 16-tonne casting capacity, produces complex components for Defence vessels, including valves, propellers, sonar components, and shaft lines. It also offers full computer numerical control and manual machining, fabrication, and dynamic balancing for components up to 25 tonnes.

VEEM has a long history of supporting the Royal Australian Navy, supplying nearly all of the cast components for Collins class submarines. This include over 2,500 valves per submarine, as well as critical parts like silencers, sea water strainers, and propeller hub pressure caps. Additionally, VEEM manufactures propellers, fasteners, and smaller components for Defence vessels.

Beyond submarines, VEEM has contributed to the construction and maintenance of surface ships, such as Canberra class amphibious ships, Hobart class destroyers, and Hunter class frigates. The company has also produced ride control castings for Austal Ships.

VEEM's innovation is evident in its recent work with HY-80 steel castings, a material commonly used in the US submarine program. After the Sea Air Space Exposition in Washington DC, VEEM



began trials with HY-80, casting test plates and Collins class valve bodies, which were later showcased at the Indian Ocean Defence and Security exhibition.

As a proudly Australian company with 35 years of collaboration with Defence, VEEM continues to innovate in defence manufacturing, ensuring its products meet the highest standards of quality and reliability. Its strong reputation as a dependable partner is reinforced by its proven track record, industry-leading capabilities, and commitment to supporting Australia's defence objectives.



4. COMMUNITY

Continuous shipbuilding and sustainment, and AUKUS, will bring secure jobs for generations. Local communities will experience growth and associated improvements in services and amenities. Our communities will experience the benefits of a growing defence industry, particularly those near the Western Trade Coast.



The Australian Government's defence activities as well as WA's defence industry represent a significant opportunity to share economic and social benefits with Aboriginal people throughout the State, including in the State's north. The WA Government is committed to early engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal communities to understand and support their diverse interests.

In support of Submarine Rotational Force – West, US and UK defence personnel and their families will move to WA and integrate into local communities. The WA Government is committed to supporting the Australian Government with their successful transition and ensuring their access to required information, services and support.

Local governments and the community will be engaged and kept informed about planned defence developments in the State. This will include updates on how these developments may impact them and the benefits they are set to gain.

To ensure that Defence initiatives and developments are implemented appropriately, new Australian Government regulations and protocols will likely be required, particularly to promote and regulate the nuclear safety of activities relating to nuclear-powered submarines. The WA Government will work with the Australian Government on the development and implementation of these regulations and ensure associated State regulation and legislation is put in place to further safeguard our people and the environment.

The safety of Western Australians is the highest priority of the WA Government. Although our AUKUS partners have safely operated conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines for over 60 years, the WA Government will ensure emergency management capabilities and arrangements are in place to safeguard the community.

Actions:


- + Facilitate the Australian Government’s community engagement activities to build social licence for defence activities in WA.
- + Coordinate the State’s policy and service delivery to support the integration of US and UK personnel and their families to WA through Submarine Rotational Force – West.
- + Support the Australian Government on the development of Commonwealth and State nuclear protocols and safety regulations.
- + Enhance WA’s emergency management capabilities and arrangements, in line with Commonwealth nuclear regulations under AUKUS.
- + Develop and update any associated State regulations and legislative frameworks.
- + Ensure an enduring support for Defence endeavours and capabilities in WA.

Case Study: AUKUS Optimal Pathway

WA has a critical role in the AUKUS Optimal Pathway for Australia’s acquisition of its own sovereign nuclear-powered submarine capability.

The Optimal Pathway is phased and conditional, with the first and arguably most important milestone to become sovereign ready. Australia will achieve this through embedding naval and civilian personnel in our AUKUS partners’ navies and industrial bases and increasing foreign nuclear-powered submarine port visits leading up to a rotational presence of nuclear-powered submarines at HMAS Stirling through Submarine Rotational Force – West (SRF–West).



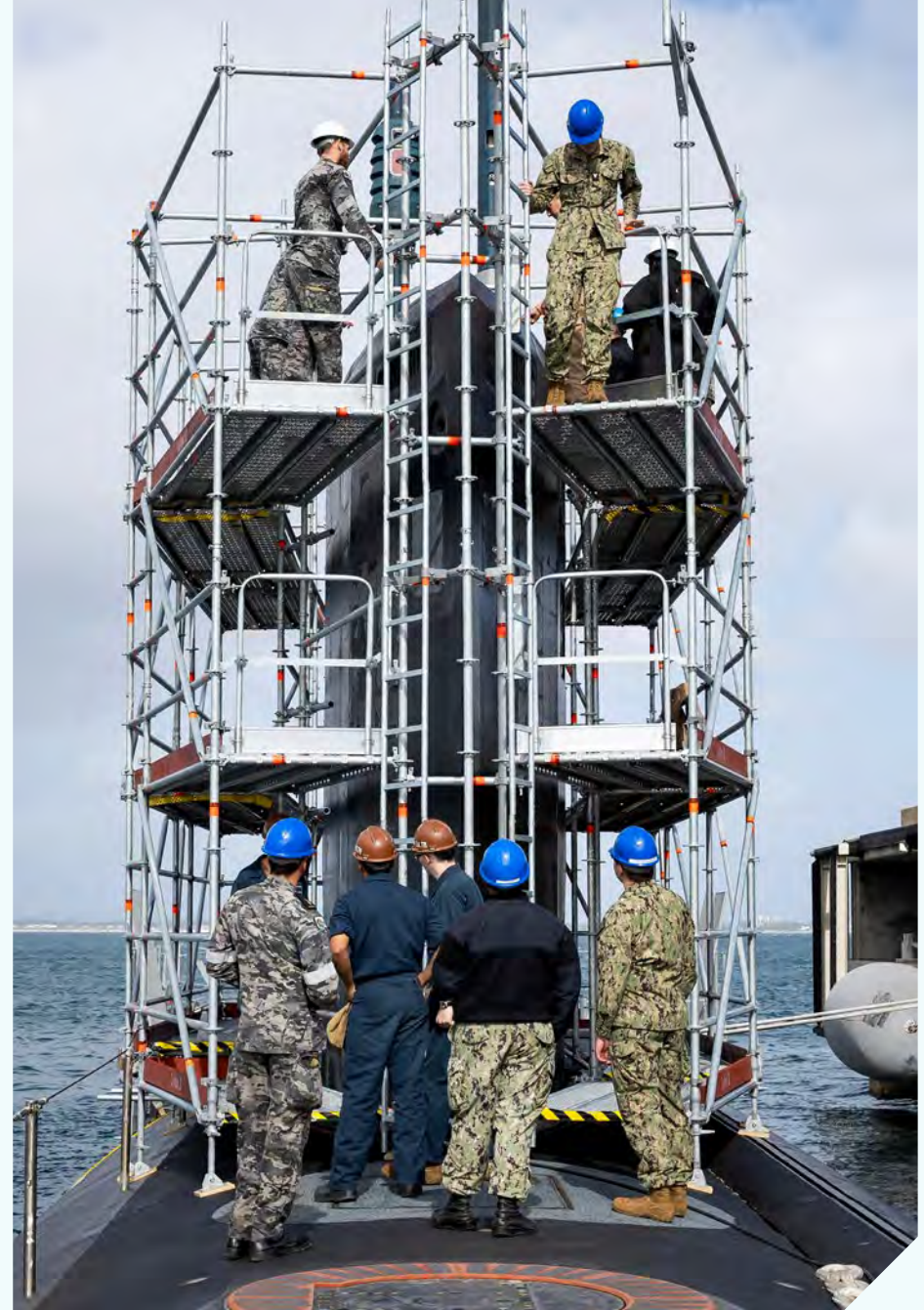


SRF–West will see US and UK military and civilian personnel and their families arrive in WA where they will live in our communities for several years, helping uplift our workforce and technical capabilities, ultimately to prove we are responsible nuclear stewards.

The WA Government is committed to supporting our AUKUS partners arriving through SRF–West, ensuring they have access to all necessary services and to assist them to integrate into our community. The benefits for community extend well beyond deepening our cultural connections, with the economic contributions to local businesses and tourism.

The importance of the success of SRF–West cannot be overstated, being akin to an “apprenticeship” where Australia can only advance along the Optimal Pathway once we have demonstrated our competence to safely and securely steward Australia’s future sovereign nuclear-powered submarine fleet.

The Optimal Pathway calls for Australia to homeport our sovereign Virginia Class submarines in WA by 2032. The State Government will collaborate with the Commonwealth, Defence and industry to build capacity to sustain and maintain Australia’s sovereign nuclear powered submarines by this time.





5. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The WA Government is dedicated to cultivating an enabling environment for the development of defence-related research, technology, and innovation.





The recent release of the Western Australian Innovation Strategy and development of the 10-year Science and Technology Plan aims to enhance WA as a global leader in innovation, science and technology and intersect with capabilities and benefits in defence applications. A strong and dynamic defence industry, supported by skilled small and medium enterprises, relies on a solid foundation of education, research, innovation, and translation.

The State's Defence Science Centre plays a crucial role in supporting the national Defence enterprise by fostering collaboration among state university researchers, industry leaders, the Defence Science and Technology Group, the Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator and Defence end-users.

The Defence Science Centre will continue to support local universities and industry, including developing international partnerships in relation to new opportunities presented under AUKUS Pillar 2, which focuses on developing advanced capabilities. These include undersea capabilities, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence and autonomy, advanced cyber, hypersonic and counter hypersonic capabilities, and electronic warfare.



Actions:

- ✦ Through Defence West's Defence Science Centre, facilitate collaboration between universities, industry and technology sectors to advance Defence priorities under AUKUS Pillar 2, the National Defence Strategy and Defence's Innovation, Science and Technology Strategy.
- ✦ Establish national and international partnerships to broaden the State's defence research and development capabilities and increase access to global markets.
- ✦ Facilitate the development of a collaboration hub, to foster cooperation and innovation across sectors and accelerate the translation and commercialisation of research aligned to Defence priorities.
- ✦ Forge strategic partnerships between Team WA universities and industry to enable the integration of advanced technologies that enhance production and sustainment capabilities, and streamline processes for Defence.

Case Study: Immersive virtual-reality parachute training (ParaVerse)

Virtual Simulation Training has been applied across various professional disciplines including healthcare, military, mining and metallurgy. Early attempts to enhance military parachute training with immersive virtual reality (IVR) had limited visual and forced-feedback fidelity, resulting in less authentic simulations and minimal training variability. Novel enhancements in this space have made training through these platforms far more user-friendly, accessible and fit-for-purpose.

An IVR enhanced parachute training tool for military applications was created in collaboration between Edith Cowan University's Simulation and Immersive Digital Technology Group, Defence's Special Operations Command (SOCOMD), Murdoch University, and Curtin University, and funded by the WA Defence Science Centre. This system allows users to plan and practice parachute training by recreating descents in virtual reality.

The team consulted with the ADF's Special Operations Command advisory group to understand the core functionality required from the application. They used real-world topography imagery, allowing users to perform virtual parachute jumps in specific locations worldwide without needing to travel or to use an instructor.



Dr Brennan Mills, a Senior Lecturer at Edith Cowan University who led this work stated “this was a great example of a co-design-based project. None of the project team had ever jumped out of an aeroplane before, let alone understood the core functions required to put together a simulator like this, so having good access to SOCOMD expertise was imperative to drive the project.”

Adverse weather conditions often limit real-world training opportunities. ParaVerse software can replicate conditions such as snow, rain, and cloud and allows for the manipulation of wind speed and direction. This enables trainees to practice jumps into difficult or dangerous terrain and in dangerous weather conditions, reducing the risk of injury they would otherwise face.

Virtual training also results in significant cost savings by reducing the need for aircraft and aircrew resources. The application runs on a desktop or laptop PC using an immersive VR headset and hand-held controls, ensuring portability.

ParaVerse won the Emerging Technology Award and the Collaborative Innovation Award at the Indian Ocean Defence and Security Conference 2024 Innovation Awards, and the Innovating Government Award at the WA 2024 INCITE Awards gala.



6. VETERANS

There are close to 60,000 veterans who have served in the ADF and have transitioned into different fields in the WA community.



They bring a broad range of skills and experiences into the employment sectors they join. Each year, hundreds more highly skilled personnel leave the ADF in WA.

The WA Government is committed to continuing to support and promote the wellbeing of veterans and their families. This includes commemorating the service and sacrifice of Australian service personnel and facilitating their participation in the community and workforce.

The WA Government recognises that the skills and experience of veterans can be of great value to the State's defence and adjacent industries, assisting with industry workforce uplift.

The State will be promoted as the preferred location for veterans when they transition from the ADF, and pathways to employment within the defence industry will be enhanced.

Actions:

- + Promote WA as an attractive destination for veterans by providing support and opportunities to leverage their skills, experience and knowledge.
- + Work with training and educational institutions to provide clear transition pathways for veteran skills development and participation in the defence sector.
- + Refresh the Western Australian Veterans and Families Strategy.
- + Support programs and initiatives that improve outcomes and positively contribute to veterans living in WA through the Anzac Day Trust.
- + Support the Australian Government to deliver the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.



Case Study: Veteran Transition Portal

Veterans face unique challenges when it comes to finding stable employment post-service, or in the case of veterans' families, employment opportunities while their spouse is serving in the ADF. Despite these challenges, veterans can offer employers tremendous capacity and ability when leaving the ADF.

Veterans are goal-orientated, focused, highly skilled, and adaptable workers who can provide teams with leadership and drive. They can also offer companies familiarity and understanding when dealing with Defence or the defence industry, something that is becoming more and more relevant in WA with AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines and the continuous naval shipbuilding programs.

RSLWA and Working Spirit, a WA veteran charity, have collaborated on a State Government initiative to get more WA veterans and their families into work throughout the State.

The Veteran Employment Portal provides potential employers of veterans and their families a one stop shop for prospective employees here in Western Australia.

Approximately 300 businesses have signed up to the service thus far, connecting over 250 veterans with employment opportunities. The Portal is open to former and serving ADF members, including reservists.

The Portal was made possible with a \$623,595 grant from the WA Government to RSLWA and Working Spirit via the Anzac Day Trust in 2023.





REPORTING AND IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recognising the importance of meaningful and measured advancement towards the Strategy's vision, the WA Government will develop a detailed implementation plan to guide its actions. The implementation plan will be developed by Defence West with input from local, State and Commonwealth Government agencies, industry and community groups to ensure that implementation of the actions is undertaken effectively and efficiently.

Under the implementation plan, State Government agencies will be assigned leading and supporting roles in the delivery of specific actions, in line with the Strategy's whole-of-government nature.

To ensure that actions are completed, the implementation plan will assign key performance indicators and associated timeframes to each action.



PROGRESS REPORTS AND ACTION UPDATES

An update on the progress against this Strategy will be provided on a biennial basis. This update will include progress reporting on each action and refreshed actions for the following two years as required.

This reporting structure will help foster accountability and transparency, and ensure the Strategy remains agile by outlining changing circumstances and identifying upcoming challenges and opportunities for WA in pursuit of the vision.





www.wa.gov.au/defencwest