

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Defence



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Overview

- Defence is a Commonwealth Sovereign issue. The mission of the Department of Defence is to defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia’s security and prosperity. Defence serves the Government of the day and is accountable to the Commonwealth Parliament to carry out the Government defence policy.
- Government defence policy is articulated in the 2020 Defence Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan. The Defence Corporate Plan 2021-25 articulates the Department of Defence execution of that policy. Naturally these directions follow the strategic guidance from the Government to create Defence capability that can influence the Indo-Pacific region and support foreign policy – For example relationships with China and United States of America.
- Defence is supported by civilian Defence Industries. In Australia Defence Industries may relate to Defence Procurement of new equipment or the Defence Supply Chain that sustain existing platforms. For example purchase of new submarines is Defence Procurement. Sustainment of the cyclic submarine docking is part of the Defence Supply Chain.
- In WA there has been articulation of State policy to develop Defence Industries. following Commonwealth policy. The WA Government, through the Defence West, has a focus to develop the Defence Industries, Defence sustainment and Defence Supply Chain to support Commonwealth Defence expenditure that is primarily Naval following the 2017 Naval Shipbuilding Plan and the development of Fleet Base West (HMAS Stirling). This report should be read in conjunction with the Defence Industries Profile.

Industry Developments and Workforce Challenges

- The Defence presence Western Australia's, which includes HMAS Stirling, RAAF Base Pearce and Campbell Barracks (Army), is well established. Over 7800 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel operate in Western Australia including Royal Australian Navy's (RAN), Army, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), civilian and Reservists¹. This number is forecast to grow. The largest number of personnel are based at HMAS Stirling – Garden Island, with the activities there involving the greatest Defence Industries support. HMAS Stirling has emerged as the major fleet base on the Indian Ocean with half of the RAN fleet based permanently in Western Australia, including all six of the Collins-class submarines.
- Following the initial strategy identified in the WA Plan for Jobs, Defence West was established to champion the interests of the Western Australia Defence Industries and create job opportunities for Western Australians. Defence West, through extensive consultation, both nationally and locally, has developed the *Western Australian Defence and Defence Industries Strategic Plan*, which identifies six key strategic actions including:
 - Supporting a strong and enduring defence presence
 - Growing the State's Defence industries capability and contribution
 - Developing strategic infrastructure
 - Building research and innovation partnerships
 - Advancing education training and skills and
 - Supporting veterans and their families.
- The West Australian Defence industries provide essential capability, services and support to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) with more than 3000 workers employed by both small and medium enterprises operating in this sector.²
- One of the major actions already undertaken has been the establishment of the WA Defence Industry Workforce Office. Originally based at the South Metropolitan (SM) TAFE Naval Base Campus this has relocated to the State Workforce Planning with Policy, Planning and Innovation at the Department of Training and Workforce Development. Over 18 months the WA Defence Industry Workforce Office conducted extensive consultation with the key stakeholders engaged in shipbuilding and repairs for the Navy in Western Australia. The State Government have produced two major documents.
 - *Blue Collar Workforce Maritime and Anti-Submarine Warfare Defence Capability Stream 2020-2025*
 - *White and Grey Collar Workforce Maritime and Anti-Submarine Warfare Defence Capability Stream 2020-2025*.
- Actions already taken by the State Government include:
 - The establishment of the WA Defence Industries Workforce Office and the new \$2.4 million South Metropolitan TAFE Naval Base Campus the Naval Shipbuilding College strategically located adjacent to the Australian Marine Complex (AMC).
 - Engineering apprenticeships relating to shipbuilding have been funded for half price through the Skills Ready State Government initiative.
 - There have been skill sets offered in relevant Defence Industries areas such as Introduction to Cybersecurity (fee free).

Supply and demand for skills

- Approximately 850 Defence personnel form the Naval submarine workforce. The introduction of Australia's future Attack Class submarines will require this workforce to more than double across the next two decades.³ Characteristics in high demand for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) include resilience and personal discipline.⁴
- A 38% increase in applications has been identified by the ADF in Western Australia, the second largest of all States and Territories. This has been attributed to the direct impact of COVID- 19. Applicants have come from those industries most impacted such as aviation, tourism and logistics, with women making up a significant percentage of the applications.⁵
- There has been an increase in the number of reservists since the beginning of 2020. This is in part attributed to the high visibility of the ADF through their assistance to bushfires and flood relief operations and partly a program to strengthen the Army 13th Brigade in WA. The Federal Government have now announced that reservists who have lost their civilian jobs due to the COVID-19 crisis would be offered more hours with the ADF.⁶

VET or university courses in Western Australia

- To boost the focus of women with STEM skills in the future Defence Industries workforce, Defence has awarded scholarships to two women studying at ECU in science and information technology.⁷
- In Western Australia, the VET sector has been engaged in the training of the Australian Defence Force, especially SM TAFE and their relationship with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). This includes the development of customised training and working with both TAFE and industry to give the RAN personnel placements with suitable partners to build knowledge and skills.⁸
- Due to the classified nature of Defence related activities a considerable amount of training is conducted in house. However there is awareness and access to nationally recognised training activity that could be of use within Defence e.g. TAFE qualifications such as the TLI50420 - Diploma of Materiel Logistics and Higher Education engineering qualifications.
- A State Government initiative has seen the establishment of the Certificate III in Defence Industry Pathway Program between Defence, South Metro TAFE and Programmed. This course will place 120 'Gray Collar' workers into the WA Maritime Defence Industry Supply Chain in the Henderson region in 2022. This successful pilot will be extended nationally in 2023.

International, National or State training issues

- The growing focus on cyber security by the Australian Defence Force has meant an increased need for high level training in both the VET and university sectors. This will include a need for experienced data analysts to operate within the Defence sectors. Defence has introduced a 12 month Australian Defence Force Cyber Gap Program. Several private companies have produced no fee cyber training initiatives. The company WithYouWithMe has contracted with Defence to train digital workforce to support cyber initiatives.^{9 10}

Industry Workforce and Priorities

- The Australian Defence Force has forecast growth in its workforce and will require highly skilled personnel with cyber security, STEM, logistics and IT skills. This need has seen engagement with the university sector in Western Australia and nationally to ensure a future ready workforce will be available.

Defence Veterans – Industry Overview

- For Defence Industry a veteran is a person who has served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who is available as workforce. It is estimated that in Western Australia there are more than 30,000 veterans with 350 to 450 Defence personnel leaving the force each year.¹¹ Approximately half of new veterans already have jobs to go to. The remainder may be available for work or may be transitioning for welfare reasons and not fully able to work. It is not known if those that transition direct to employment undertake roles that reflect their skills. Obviously workforce is available in the form of serving Defence members families, Defence veteran families and Defence Reserve Forces personnel.
- In WA competition for transitioning Maritime Defence personnel is strong given the global mobility of the Maritime workforce and the growth of WA Maritime Defence Industry projects. The WA Defence footprint is small nationally: the 2021 census has WA with 4496 current regular and 2413 reserve serving members compared with NSW data of 18007 and 6506 respectively. However the concentration of Royal Australian Navy personnel in HMAS Stirling Naval Base makes Rockingham second only to Townsville QLD and North Canberra ACT with 2240 currently serving ADF members compared to 4960 and 2610. Rockingham has the third highest numbers of previous service members with 4720.¹²
- Government support to transfer the skills of Defence veterans to civilian roles is an ongoing project at Commonwealth and State level. The WA Government has established a Defence Industry Veterans Employment Scheme (DIVES) scholarship program. The Department of Defence has established a Joint Transition Authority (JTA) to support ADF members and families transition to civilian life. The JTA has contracted the employment agency Right Management. Naturally the Department of Defence must respond to the findings of The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide established 2021.
- Defence established the Joint Transition Authority (JTA) in 2021 to guide Defence Force personnel returning to civilian life. This unified the efforts of RAN, Army and RAAF. Private and not-for-profit organisations support veterans, partners and families as they leave the ADF. Some are welfare organisations, some are employment organisations and some are both. For example the SkillsBuild initiative of IBM and the advocacy group Solider On aims to give 3,000 veterans and their families opportunities to learn new digital skills with a focus on cybersecurity. The program will connect veterans to workplaces and jobs. In WA in 2022 there has been a successful collaboration between RSLWA and Working Spirit. This has created an employment service with welfare links for veterans transitioning from the full-time ADF, Reservists, partners, families and retired veterans.¹³

- Defence West have identified a gap in the mapping of existing Defence personnel skills and experience against civilian qualifications and job roles. A variety of mechanisms address this shortfall including:
 - Developing a matrix of skills based on rank and trade
 - Mapping identified skills against qualifications and job roles
 - Identifying shortfalls for those transitioning out with reskilling and upskilling opportunities
 - Working with industry stakeholders, especially those who support Defence, to identify structured pathways and
 - Establishing a pipeline for veterans to enter the civilian workforce.
- The LDSC has committed to work with Defence West and stakeholders to facilitate the above.

References

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 - 7 Medianet Release, Minister for Defence & Minister for Defence Industry – Scholarships grow Defence's talent pool, 22 August 2020
 - 8 Industry consultation 2020
 - 9 WithYouWithMe <https://www.withyouwithme.com/>
 - 10 <https://www.digitalprofession.gov.au/australian-defence-force-cyber-gap-program>
 - 11 WA Defence and Defence Industries Strategic Plan 2018
 - 12 2240 people in regular ADF service accounting for 2.6% of the population of Rockingham. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/australian-defence-force-service> 2021 Service with the Australian Defence Force: Census
 - 13 Human Resources Director, IBM to retrain 3,000 veterans on cybersecurity, 20 August 2020