



**SECURITY &
DEFENCE +**

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY | KING'S COLLEGE LONDON | UNSW SYDNEY

THE ATHENA SERIES: WOMEN IN STRATEGY CONFERENCE, CANBERRA

MONDAY 7 APRIL 2025

UNSW CANBERRA AT THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE ACADEMY

PROGRAM

09:00 REGISTRATION

09:30 INTRODUCTION

Professor Emma Sparks, Rector, UNSW Canberra

10:00 PANEL 1 - PIONEERING LEADERSHIP IN STRATEGY, SECURITY, AND DEFENCE

Justine Greig, Deputy Secretary Defence People, Department of Defence

Jacinta Carroll, Assistant Secretary Strategy and Governance, Headquarters Joint Capability Group, Department of Defence

Dr Cathy Moloney, Australia Vice President, The Asia Group

Danielle Cave, Director of Executive, Strategy and Research, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Moderator: Professor Verity Firth AM, Vice-President Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement, UNSW

11:00 COFFEE BREAK

11:15 PANEL 2 - GEOPOLITICS, GRAND STRATEGY, AND GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Professor Bec Strating, Director, La Trobe Asia, La Trobe University

Dr Raji Pillai Rajagopalan, Resident Senior Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Dr Miranda Booth, Lecturer, Contemporary Defence and Strategic Studies, UNSW Canberra

Moderator: Dr Sally Burt, Lecturer, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, UNSW Canberra

12:15 LUNCH

13:15 FIRESIDE CHAT

Dr Marigold Black, Director Research, Norfolk Advisory

Karen Schilling, ACT Defence and Advanced Technology Industry Advocate

Moderator: Brigadier (R'td) Dr Ian Langford, Director, Security & Defence PLuS

14:00 PANEL 3 - WOMEN'S PATHWAYS INTO DEFENCE AND INCLUSIVE MILITARY REFORM

Rear Admiral Letitia Van Stralen AM, CSC, RAN, Head of People Capability, Royal Australian Navy

Brigadier Caitlin Langford, Director General, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Department of Defence

Susan Hutchinson, PhD Candidate, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, Australian National University

Moderator: Jennifer Parker, Expert Associate, National Security College, Australian National University; Adjunct Fellow, UNSW Canberra

15:00 COFFEE BREAK

15:30 PANEL 4 - WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND THE CRITICAL CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME

Lieutenant General Michelle McGuinness CSC, Australia's National Cyber Security Coordinator

Cheryl Durrant, Executive Member, Australian Security Leader's Climate Group

Mikaela James, Acting Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement, Australian Submarine Agency

Moderator: Professor Debi Ashenden, Director, Institute for Cyber Security, UNSW

16:30 CLOSING REMARKS

PROFESSOR DEBI ASHENDEN

Professor Debi Ashenden is Director of the Institute for Cyber Security at UNSW. She previously held the DST Group-University of Adelaide Joint Chair in Cyber Security. In addition, she is a Visiting Professor at Royal Holloway, University of London. Professor Ashenden's research interests are in interdisciplinary approaches to solving complex cyber security problems – particularly in finding ways of 'patching with people' as well as technology. She is currently researching how to fuse behavioural science with cyber deception, the security implications of MLOps, and the socio-technical aspects of designing complex military systems. She was previously Head of the Centre for Cyber Security at Cranfield University at the Defence Academy of the UK and was a member of the UK Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Defence Science Expert Committee. She has worked extensively across the public and private sectors for organisations such as the UK MOD, GCHQ, the Cabinet Office, the Home Office, Euroclear, Prudential, Barclaycard, Reuters, and Close Bros. She has published numerous articles on cyber security, presented at a range of conferences, and co-authored *Risk Management for Computer Security: Protecting Your Network & Information Assets*.

DR MARIGOLD BLACK

Dr Marigold Black is a professional researcher, an intellectual historian, and a geopolitical strategist. She is the Director Research of Norfolk Advisory, an Australian strategic and legal advisory firm which works at the intersections of law, geopolitics, and security with a focus on sovereign resilience and governance in Australia and the near regions. Her main research and publication areas are defence, national security, sovereignty, applied philosophy, and international history. Dr Black received her doctorate from the University of Sydney. Her research focus was on conceptions of international law and sovereignty in the era of the American Declaration of Independence, building upon earlier research on the intellectual history of the US Department of State. Dr Black was a Research Fellow with the Laureate Research Program in International History at the University of Sydney, and a Future Strategies Research Fellow with the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University. During her ANU fellowship, she was seconded to the Australian Army Research Centre to work on the Future Force Concept and the development of the Army's intellectual capabilities. More recently, Dr Black was

a policy researcher with the RAND Corporation where she conducted research and policy work for the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Navy, and the Departments of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Home Affairs.

DR MIRANDA BOOTH

Dr Miranda Booth is a Lecturer of Contemporary Defence and Strategic Studies at UNSW Canberra. Her research examines contemporary defence policy, strategic narratives, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the Asia-Pacific. As a co-investigator on a Department of Defence Strategic Policy Grant project, *Pacific Maritime Security Coordination: Partnerships, Priorities and Possibilities (2024–2026)*, Dr Booth provides insights and recommendations to enhance targeted and coordinated maritime security assistance. She has engaged with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the East Asia Summit Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation, the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the Northern Territory Government, and think tanks including ASPI and AP4D. She co-convenes Foundations of Modern Strategy and convenes Australian Defence Policy at the postgraduate level.

DR SALLY BURT

Dr Sally Burt is a Lecturer in Cyber Security in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at UNSW. Her background is in the diplomatic history of US-China relations. Dr Burt's research focuses on contemporary Sino-US strategic competition, the diplomatic context of cyber relations, grey-zone activities, and the strategic use of information and political warfare. She also researches the use of cyber-enabled mechanisms to engage in international relations and statecraft, such as deterrence and coercion, attribution, cyber governance and the conduct of influence campaigns. Dr Burt's expertise in cyber security comes from this context. Dr Burt has been an author and editor of several books, published journal articles, reports and has presented internationally to conferences and summits. She has been a Visiting Fellow at the University of Florida and at West Point Military Academy in New York.

JACINTA CARROLL

Jacinta Carroll was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in 2008 and has served in a variety of defence, intelligence, policy, and national and international security roles. Her career has been primarily in the Australian Department of Defence and Attorney General's Department, where she has worked in strategic and international policy, strategic logistics, education and training, litigation, and operations. Carroll returned to Defence in 2023, working in Space Command, and in 2025 took up her current role establishing a new strategy and governance branch in Joint Capabilities Group, which is responsible for space, cyber, logistics and national support. Carroll's defence experience is complemented by over a decade of intelligence and corporate SES roles in the Attorney-General's Department including investigations, personnel security, border

security and information technology, and experience in the think-tank and university sectors, and being a consultant to government. As Director National Security Policy and Senior Research Fellow at the Australian National University's National Security College, and inaugural Head, Counter-Terrorism Policy Centre at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Carroll became well-known in Australia and internationally as a strategic adviser, regular media commentator, and keynote speaker. She also served as an expert witness to Australian federal and state, and New Zealand government inquiries. Carroll is a member of the military reserve, where she is an intelligence officer in the Royal Australian Air Force, currently posted to the Air Force's Air and Space Power Centre.

DANIELLE CAVE

Danielle Cave is Head of Executive, Strategy and Research at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). She has worked in the fields of international security and foreign policy - across government and non-government - since 2005. She has led diverse and large teams focused on a range of global issues impacting Australia's place in the world. In her current role she leads a variety of teams and functions including the Executive Director's office, large strategic projects, contestability, communications and she oversees research output across the organisation. She has led and continues to work on major ASPI initiatives including the Critical Technology Tracker, the Sydney Dialogue and some of ASPI's major China projects. Previously, Cave held a number of roles at ASPI both in senior leadership and as a senior analyst. Prior to ASPI she worked in the Australian Government for the then Office of National Assessments and AusAID. She also worked at the Lowy Institute for International Policy and was a Google Fellow. Her research and analysis has been published and cited widely, including in the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Foreign Policy, Reuters, Associated Press, Australian Foreign Affairs and across other global media outlets.

CHERYL DURRANT

Cheryl Durrant has over 30 years' experience in the national security sector with the Australian Department of Defence and Australian Army. During this time, she led the Australian Defence Global Security and Energy Sustainability Initiative and hosted the Office of the Defence Climate Advisor. Since leaving Defence, Durrant has continued working in the Climate and Security space and guest lectures on this topic at the Australian National University. She speaks and writes regularly on the need for a just and comprehensive approach to climate security. Durrant is an Executive Member of Australian Security Leaders Climate Group and a member of the Global Military Advisory Group on Climate Change.

PROFESSOR VERITY FIRTH AM

Professor the Hon. Verity Firth AM is the Vice-President Societal Impact, Equity and

Engagement at UNSW. She is a Professor of Practice at the School of Education, Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture. Professor Firth has over twenty years' experience at the very highest levels of government and education sectors in Australia, including as Pro Vice-Chancellor Social Justice and Inclusion at the University of Technology Sydney (2015-2022). Professor Firth was NSW Minister for Education and Training from 2008-2011, NSW Minister for Women from 2007-2009 and Chief Executive of the Public Education Foundation from 2011-2014. Between 2009 and 2011, Professor Firth was the Member for the state seat of Balmain. Before her parliamentary career, she worked as a lawyer and was Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney.

JUSTINE GRIEG

As Deputy Secretary Defence People, Justine Grieg is responsible for people strategy, policy development and service delivery to support the 100,000 strong integrated Australian Defence Force and Defence Australian Public Service workforce. This includes leadership of Defence's overarching culture, mental health and wellbeing strategies, development and implementation of the Defence Strategic Workforce Plan, and stewardship of Work Health and Safety across the enterprise. In June 2023, Grieg was awarded a Public Service Medal for outstanding service to Defence and in senior policy roles. Justine has had a long-term professional interest in organisational culture, leadership development and workplace inclusion. Grieg's qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts (Hons Psychology, ANU), a Master of Science (Occupational Psychology, University of London) and a Master of Arts (Strategic Studies, Deakin University).

SUSAN HUTCHINSON

Susan Hutchinson is a civil-military professional with experience in government, military and non-government organisations. Her research focuses on women's experiences of conflict and instability. Hutchinson is the Executive Director of Afghan women's rights NGO Azadi-e Zan, and the architect of the Prosecute; don't perpetrate campaign calling for the investigation and prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide perpetrated by Islamic State. Hutchinson's PhD looks at the operationalisation of the suite of UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security by the Australian Defence Force.

MIKAELA JAMES

Mikaela James is Acting Head Policy, Strategy and Engagement at the Australian Submarine Agency. She previously worked as the Assistant Secretary Policy, Engagements and Agreements in the Nuclear Powered Submarine Taskforce in the Department of Defence, where she was responsible for strategic advice to the Government on the AUKUS nuclear powered submarine endeavour and international policy and engagement. Prior to this, she worked as a senior adviser to the then-Minister

for Foreign Affairs covering the IndoPacific, the US Alliance and AUKUS, Southeast Asia and ASEAN, and the Russia/Ukraine conflict. She also worked as a senior adviser to the then-Minister for Defence covering capability, industry, international and strategic policy issues. She has held several roles in the Department of Defence including Director for US Alliance Policy in the International Policy Division and First Secretary (Defence) in the Embassy of Australia in Washington, DC. James graduated with Excellence from her Masters in Security and Defence Management from UNSW, and received First Class Honors for her Bachelor of International Studies at the University of Sydney. She has a Diploma in Oral Communication and speaks French.

BRIGADIER CAITLIN LANGFORD

Brigadier Langford entered The Royal Military College, Duntroon in July 1994 having completed a Bachelor of Science from the University of Canberra. She graduated into the Medical Corps and has undertaken generalist and personnel positions throughout her service. Brigadier Langford was deployed at short notice in 2007 to the Northern Territory as the Executive Officer and Health Planner for JTF 641 on Operation OUTREACH. She then deployed to Iraq in 2008 to command an inter-agency team responsible for the screening, planning and relocation of locally employed employees and their families from Southern Iraq to Australia. For her service, Brigadier Langford was awarded a Chief of Defence Force (CDF) Gold Commendation and a CDF Group Gold Commendation. Brigadier Langford was promoted to Director General of the newly established Mental Health and Wellbeing Branch at the end of 2022. The Branch is the lead for Mental Health and Wellbeing across the Defence enterprise. Brigadier Langford is responsible for the development of a joint Defence and DVA Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Suicide Prevention.

BRIGADIER (RTD) IAN LANGFORD

Brigadier (Rtd) Dr Ian Langford, DSC and Bars, is Executive Director of Security & Defence PLS. He has 30 years of experience as a senior officer in the Australian Defence Force, culminating in strategic roles such as Director-General Future Land Warfare and Head of Land Capability. Dr Langford commanded the 2nd Commando Regiment, as well as multiple Special Operations Task Groups in Afghanistan, Iraq, and on domestic counter-terrorism duties. He has received three Distinguished Services Crosses and retired from the Army as a Brigadier in 2022. Dr Langford has a PhD from Deakin University, is a non-resident fellow of the Irregular Warfare Initiative, and is published widely as an author and essayist.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHELLE MCGUINNESS

Lieutenant General Michelle McGuinness, CSC, is Australia's National Cyber Security Coordinator, appointed in February 2024. She has held senior appointments across intelligence, interagency and international engagement roles including multiple

appointments within the US, most recently as Australia's first Deputy Director for Commonwealth Integration at the Defense Intelligence Agency. Other senior appointments include Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Defence Force and Director General, Counter-proliferation and Terrorism at the Defence Intelligence Organisation. Lieutenant General McGuinness graduated from UNSW Canberra with a Bachelor of Arts (Politics and Bahasa Indonesian) in 1996 and a Master of Arts (Strategy and Policy) in 2009. She has served at the ADFA campus as the operations officer in 2008 and had the privilege to return as the Commanding Officer and Chief Instructor between 2014-2015. In 2018, Lieutenant General McGuinness was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross.

DR CATHY MOLONEY

Dr Cathy Moloney is Australia Vice President at The Asia Group (TAG), a Washington based Geo-political Advisory firm with 13 offices across the Asia-Pacific. She is on the Executive Committee of Women in Nuclear (WiN) Australia, and a member of the Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN). Dr Moloney is a specialist in Australian foreign policy, defence and national security, including nuclear and strategic policy, forging a highly successful career spanning industry, government, and academia. Dr Moloney's previous roles include Deputy Director of the Defence Strategy and National Security Program at ASPI; Director and Senior Advisor at the Centre for Defence Research, Australian Department of Defence; SME to the ADF Joint Warfare Development Branch and Office of the Chief of Defence Force; and Editor of the Australian Journal of Defence and Strategic Studies. Dr Moloney is also a Vice Chancellor Award winning lecturer and convenor in International Relations and Security. She holds a PhD in Nuclear Policy and International Relations from Griffith University, a Master of International Politics from the University of Melbourne, and a Bachelor of International Relations from Griffith University.

JENNIFER PARKER

Jennifer Parker is an Expert Associate at the National Security College at the Australian National University, and an Adjunct Fellow in naval studies at UNSW Canberra. She also holds the position of Nancy Bentley Associate Fellow in Indo-Pacific Maritime Affairs at the Council on Geostrategy. Parker has over 20 years of service with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), specialising as a Principal Warfare Officer and completing advanced training in Anti-Submarine Warfare with RAN. She has extensive operational experience from the Middle East to the Caribbean, and most areas in between. She has undertaken a series of naval appointments nationally and internationally in areas including force design strategy, career management, international exercise planning and operations.

DR RAJI PILLAI RAJAGOPALAN

Dr Rajeswari (Raji) Pillai Rajagopalan is a Resident Senior Fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) in Canberra. Previously, she was Director of the Centre for Security, Strategy and Technology at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. She has extensive expertise in security and strategic affairs, particularly space security, nuclear policy, and Indo-Pacific geopolitics. Dr Rajagopalan has served as Technical Advisor to the UN Group of Governmental Experts on arms control and strategic technologies. She was also Co-chair for the "Strategic Technologies" thematic group in India's Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP 2020) initiative. She regularly provides expert commentary in international media and has published widely on security and technology policy. Her work focuses on great power competition, emerging technologies, and their implications for national and international security. She has advised policymakers and contributed to high-level discussions on space governance, deterrence, and strategic stability.

KAREN SCHILLING

Karen Schilling is the ACT Defence and Advanced Technology Industry Advocate and a Director of the Canberra Cyber Hub, leading efforts to strengthen Australia's Defence, Advanced Tech and cyber workforce and industry capabilities. She has over 20 years of experience in the Defence industry, including service as a Logistics Officer in the Royal Australian Air Force. Schilling co-founded and successfully grew Sigma Bravo, a Canberra-based Defence contractor specialising in mission system support services. After a successful company sale in 2017, Schilling was appointed to the ACT Government's Defence Industry Advisory Board, contributing her extensive business and military expertise to support innovation and job growth in Canberra. Schilling's leadership continues to drive the growth of defence, advanced technology and cyber businesses across the region.

PROFESSOR EMMA SPARKS

Professor Emma Sparks took up the position of Dean and Rector at UNSW Canberra in January 2022. Before joining UNSW, she was Director of Programme Portfolio Delivery at Cranfield University's Defence and Security School in the UK, where she oversaw education and research programs supporting defence and government sectors. Her expertise includes systems engineering, human performance in defence, and innovation in military and security technologies. She has led multi-disciplinary research projects, collaborated with defence organisations, and contributed to policy discussions on engineering education and technological advancements. Professor Sparks holds a PhD in Engineering and is a Chartered Engineer and Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. She has published research on defence technology, human systems integration, and engineering leadership. At UNSW Canberra, she focuses on expanding research impact, industry collaboration, and engineering education for national security

applications. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and, in 2018, was awarded Top 50 Women in Engineering (Telegraph awards).

REAR ADMIRAL LETITIA VAN STRALEN AM, CSC, RAN

Rear Admiral Letitia ('Tish') van Stralen, AM, CSC, RAN completed a Bachelor of Laws at QUT and joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1995 as a Maritime Warfare Officer. Her seagoing postings included HMA Ships Tobruk, Darwin, Newcastle and Brisbane. Rear Admiral van Stralen transferred to the Navy Legal branch in 2003. She performed legal roles across several Headquarters with a particular focus on operations law. Rear Admiral van Stralen subsequently undertook a number of non-legal roles, including the Executive Officer in HMAS Creswell, Chief of Staff to the Chief of Navy and Director of Navy Career Management. Operationally, she deployed to the Middle East in 2006 as the Legal Officer Commander Task Force 158. Rear Admiral van Stralen holds a Masters in Military Law and completed the Defence Strategic Studies Course in 2021. She was promoted to Commodore in 2022 as Chief of Staff Navy Headquarters, and then Director General Navy People. In December 2024, she was promoted to Rear Admiral and appointed as Head of Military Personnel.

PROFESSOR BEC STRATING

Professor Bec Strating is the Director of La Trobe Asia and a Professor of International Relations at La Trobe University, Melbourne. Her research focuses on Asian regional security, maritime disputes, and Australian foreign and defence policy. She is the author of *Girt by Sea: Reimagining Australia's Security and Defending the Maritime Rules-Based Order* (2020) and has co-edited *Blue Security in the Indo-Pacific* (Routledge, 2024) and *The Politics of Global Ocean Regions* (Palgrave, 2025, forthcoming). Professor Strating has published extensively in leading academic journals, co-edited two special journal issues and led or participated in over 20 externally funded research projects, securing close to \$3 million in funding. She currently leads the DFAT-funded "Blue Security" network, which focuses on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. She is an affiliated researcher at Georgetown University, a member of the East-West Center Council on Indo-Pacific Relations, an expert affiliate at the Australian National University's National Security College, and President of the Women in International Security-Australia's steering committee. She also serves on the editorial boards of the Australian Journal of International Affairs and the Journal of Maritime and Territorial Studies.

ABOUT SECURITY & DEFENCE PLUS

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