

## Introduction

The Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies is the senior professional development and educational institution of the Australian Defence College. It is responsible for providing students with the knowledge and skills required to operate at the strategic level in a modern security environment. It is also responsible for leading developments in Defence's learning environment, manages Defence publications and research, and delivers courses on leadership and ethics.

The Defence and Strategic Studies Course is our marquee activity. This year-long master's-level course is designed for senior military officers and government officials engaged in national security matters. The course is attended by Australian and international officers and officials who focus their learning energies on defence and security issues in a complex strategic setting. This group of practitioners brings substantial intellectual weight to the national security debate and it is therefore appropriate that the best analyses are published in the *Indo-Pacific Strategic Digest*.

The range of papers in this edition of the *Digest* reflects research submitted by students of the 2016 and 2017 Defence and Strategic Studies Courses, and other officers' opinions on key issues. The papers have been chosen for publication based on their scholarly attributes and strategic relevance. The topics relate to Australia's area of primary and enduring strategic interest—the Indo-Pacific region—and have relevance to Australia's policy interests. International students have authored several of the papers in this edition. Their perspectives are important contributions to learning during the course and are now able to be shared with readers of this *Digest*, providing excellent balance to the Australian perspectives. I am pleased to offer both to you.

On behalf of all staff and students, I commend these readings to you.

For further information about the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies' publications, please visit <<http://www.defence.gov.au/adcc/publications/publications.html>>

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Principal

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