



# 2026 NATIONAL DEFENCE STRATEGY

The 2026 National Defence Strategy (NDS) continues to deliver the Government's approach to addressing Australia's most significant risks based on the concept of *National Defence*.

## Australia's strategic environment

We have entered a more dangerous and unpredictable era, characterised by a more overt struggle among states where thresholds against the use of force are being eroded.

- ▶ intense strategic competition
- ▶ compounding security challenges
- ▶ coercion and the use of force as more prominent features of statecraft
- ▶ technological advancement and the changing character of war, including advances in AI and autonomous systems

## The 2026 NDS builds on the foundations of the 2024 NDS by:

- ▶ increasing Australia's self-reliance over the longer term
- ▶ growing Australia's sovereign defence industrial base
- ▶ improving ADF and whole-of-nation preparedness and resilience
- ▶ strengthening bilateral and multilateral security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific

## The Government has directed the ADF to maintain the capacity to:

- ▶ Defend Australia and our immediate region
- ▶ Deter through denial any potential adversary's attempt to project power against Australia through our northern approaches
- ▶ Protect Australia's economic connection to our region and the world
- ▶ Contribute with our partners to the collective security of the Indo-Pacific
- ▶ Contribute with our partners to protecting and upholding global rules and norms

## Building on the foundations laid by the 2024 NDS, the Government is investing:

- ▶ An additional \$14 billion over the next four years and \$53 billion over the next 10 years in the 2026 Integrated Investment Program through Defence funding, net proceeds from estate divestment and alternative financing where feasible and there is value for money
- ▶ This increase is historic, taking the total additional investment from the 2024 NDS and 2026 NDS to \$30 billion over the next four years and an additional \$117 billion over the decade to 2035–36

## Key Concepts

### National Defence

*National Defence* is a coordinated, whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach that harnesses all arms of Australia's national power to protect our security and advance our interests.

### Strategy of Denial

The Strategy of Denial aims to deter any conflict, prevent any potential adversary from coercing Australia, support regional security and prosperity and uphold a favourable regional strategic balance.

### Integrated, focused force

The ADF must be integrated across all five domains – maritime, land, air, space and cyber – as well as with international partners. It must be focused on Australia's most significant strategic risks.

### Self-reliance

Self-reliance means enhancing Australia's ability to employ and sustain credible military power to defend Australia in a crisis or conflict, including when support from allies or partners may be limited.