

## DEFENCE

Australia spends in excess of \$22 billion per annum on Australian Defence Organisation (Defence) activity, with that expenditure forecast to increase annually by 3.5%. Australia will be looking increasingly to the spatial sector to leverage from its expertise and research capabilities.

The past decade has seen considerable changes and enhancements to the use of spatial information within Australia's national Defence and Security agencies, contributing to the rapid increase in the volume, availability, and sophistication of spatial data acquisition and access mechanisms. Among many examples, these changes can be seen in the centralisation of spatial data procurement, storage and dissemination processes, the integration of spatially referenced Full Motion Video (FMV), and the adoption of next generation radar satellite derived imagery. The increased complexity and depth of information available has been matched by a growing appreciation of the value and necessity of spatial information within existing and proposed future decision making frameworks and processes.

As spatial data and information becomes more embedded in decision making frameworks, there is greater expectation to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its availability and use. However, the conditions of increased use and dependence upon spatial information have revealed several key issues and limitations obstructing the continued development and improvement of spatial information. These issues are largely concerned with the management, storage and use of spatial information data, and are closely tied to the theme of more efficient and effective use of information and communications technologies (ICT).

This period of enhanced spatial information usage coincides with a key decision that Australia will have to make regarding space based observation and surveillance. While Australia does not own any space-based infrastructure that would permit (free and) unhindered access to imagery and geospatial information, there are some 60 other nations, many within South-East Asia, that can do so for their own purposes. In this regard, Australia needs to reconsider the level of autonomy that it wishes to exercise over access to, and control of, space based derived information that critically contributes to our Defence and Security capabilities, including for reasons of national sovereignty.



### Further information

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