

Michael Shoebridge

Director

Strategic Insights Australia

Since September 2022 Michael Shoebridge has been the Director of Strategic Insights Australia, and immediately prior to that ASPI's Defence, Strategy and National Security program.

He was a senior executive in the Defence organisation and has worked for 25 years in different parts of Australia's national security community. His career has centred on the connection between strategy, capability and resources in national security.

Michael has been deputy in two defence intelligence agencies (DIO and ASD), ran the Defence, Intelligence and Research Coordination Division in the Prime Minister's department, and was the senior policy representative for Defence in Australia's Washington Embassy.

He has worked with Ministers in two Commonwealth Ministers' offices.

As head of Minor War Vessels Branch in the then Defence Materiel Organisation, Michael led Defence's tendering and negotiation for the Navy's Armidale Class Patrol Boats and the delivery and support of the minehunter and hydrographic ships.

Michael led the team that produced the 2013 Defence White Paper, and also brought the Australia-US Defence Trade Treaty into force in 2012, along with negotiating and delivering the new risk-based approach for defence exports in the Defence Trade Controls Act 2012 and implementing Allan Hawke's Woomera Review.

In his last role in Defence, Michael established and led the Contestability function, which provides independent assessment and advice to the VCDF and Investment Committee on all Defence's major investment proposals. This function is key to rebuilding the trust of Ministers and central agencies (primarily the Prime Minister's department and Finance) in the Defence organisation's ability to deliver complex investment proposals as the defence budget grows

Career snapshot

Feb 2018 - now: Director of the Defence, Strategy and National Security Program at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

Feb 2016 - Feb 2018: Head of Contestability Division in Defence's Strategic Policy and Intelligence Group. Established the new contestability function as part of the First Principles Review. The new function has credibility and influence with senior Defence leadership across the organisation, with central agency stakeholders, and supports Ministerial decision making.



Mid 2014 - Feb 2016: Deputy Director, Intelligence, Australian Signals Directorate. Led intelligence production in support of Ministerial and senior official decision makers on national security issues and in support of ADF operations. Engagement with foreign partners and domestic agencies.

May 2011 - mid 2014: head of Strategic Policy, Defence. The 2013 Defence White Paper is the only White Paper produced by Strategic Policy Division, not by a standalone team. Michael also implemented the Defence Trade Treaty with the US, and the Woomera Area legislation.

2009 - 2011: Defence intelligence and research coordination division in the Prime Minister's department under PMs Rudd and Gillard.

Deputy Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation – led the production of intelligence assessments for the 2009 Defence White Paper.

Feb 2005 - mid 2007: Counsellor Defence Policy, Australian Embassy, Washington. Senior Defence policy officer, working with the Pentagon and State Department during the redeployment to Afghanistan and the Iraq surge.

End 2003 - Jan 2005: Head of a new Capability Assessment Branch in the Department of Finance: created the new function for Finance advice on major Defence capability proposals going to Government for decision.

2002 - 2003: Director General Minor War Vessels, Defence Materiel Organisation. As Director General, he led a team of around 180 people in 7 different locations to:

- run Navy's minor projects to get rapid capability improvements,
- run the tender and contract negotiation for the \$365m Armidale Class Patrol Boats, deliver the last two Huon Minehunters, and
- sustain the hydrographic launches and ships.

From April Fool's Day 1996, Michael worked for Minister Ian MacLachlan for 2.5 years as his Departmental Liaison Officer, including getting him prepared for Question Time every parliamentary sitting day.

He worked for Minister Bruce Scott as his Defence adviser for a year (1999) before being seconded by Defence to the UK Ministry of Defence in London.

Education: Michael has a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Economic from the University of Sydney, and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the University of Technology, Sydney.

Michael is married to Margaret Deerain and has three children: Gabrielle, Leah and Dominic.