

Advancing Industrial Partnership and Capability Development

India-Australia Defence Industry Business Roundtable

1230-1400 hours | Sydney, Australia | Friday, October 10, 2025

Background and Context

1.1 The India-Australia defence partnership has evolved into one of the most dynamic bilateral defence relationships in the Indo-Pacific, anchored by the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) established in 2020¹. This transformation reflects both nations' shared commitment to maintaining regional stability and addressing common security challenges, particularly in the maritime domain, where both countries face evolving threats to their strategic interests.

1.2 The defence cooperation framework is underpinned by several landmark agreements that have created the institutional architecture for deeper collaboration. The Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), signed on 4 June 2020, enables mutual access to military facilities and logistics support², whilst the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue mechanism, with its inaugural meeting held on 11 September 2021 in New Delhi³. It provides regular high-level strategic consultations between foreign and defence ministers. Most recently, the Air-to-Air Refuelling Agreement signed on 21 November 2024 further enhanced operational interoperability⁴, demonstrating the partnership's evolution from basic cooperation to sophisticated capability integration.

1.3 Military-to-military engagement is accelerating through multiple joint exercises: naval AUSINDEX, army AUSTRALIND, trilateral and quadrilateral exercises including Malabar (with the United States and Japan), and most notably, India's debut in Talisman Sabre 2025, the largest and most sophisticated multinational warfighting exercise hosted by Australia. For Talisman Sabre 2025, India joins with 18 nations and 35,000 personnel in complex, integrated operations, signalling a significant milestone in multilateral defence integration and Indo-Pacific security cooperation.

1.4 Australia's designation of India as a "top-tier security partner", outlined in its National Defence Strategy 2024⁵, reflecting Canberra's strategic prioritisation of New Delhi in the Indo-Pacific security architecture. Also, the two countries continue to expand collaboration in areas such as maritime domain awareness, autonomous systems, and cyber technologies, under carefully negotiated agreements and frameworks.⁶

1.5 Despite this robust governmental framework, the defence industrial partnership faces significant structural challenges that limit its potential for transformative collaboration. Current cooperation remains largely transactional, focused on platform acquisitions rather than collaborative development and manufacturing. Australian defence companies, whilst technologically advanced, often lack sufficient scale for major platform production, whilst

¹ Please see the Joint Statement on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Republic of India and Australia on the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India Website, June 04, 2020

² Australia and India sign Defence arrangement, 4 June 2020, Australian Department of Defence

³ Joint Statement on Inaugural India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, 11 September 2021, New Delhi, Australia Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴ Please see Media release "Milestone in air interoperability with India", Australian Department of Defence, 21 November 2024

⁵ Australia's National Defence Strategy Document 2024, Pg. No. 49, para 7.27

⁶ Please see PIB press release "9th India-Australia Defence Policy Talks held in New Delhi", 17 March 2025

Indian firms possess manufacturing capacity but seek advanced technologies and system integration capabilities.

1.6 Furthermore, regulatory frameworks, especially export control regimes, have improved through bilateral agreements but still create barriers to seamless industrial cooperation. Further harmonisation is needed to enable joint R&D, and systematic engagement between SMEs is essential for innovative capability building. Such issues impede the creation of a resilient, self-reliant defence industrial ecosystem, preventing both nations from fully leveraging their complementary strengths.

1.7 Against this backdrop, [CUTS International](#), in partnership with the Ministry of Defence, India, the [Newland Global Group](#) of Sydney as industry execution partner, and the [Australia-India Business Council](#), are hosting this high-level Defence business roundtable to bridge the existing gaps between government intent and industry reality. By convening ministers of both nations and leading industry representatives, the event aims to generate actionable pathways for transforming the current transactional industrial relationship into a robust, strategic partnership capable of delivering advanced capabilities and strengthening the broader Australia-India defence architecture.

Objectives

2.1 Foster direct engagement between defence manufacturers from both nations to identify concrete areas for industrial collaboration, joint ventures, and technology partnerships.

2.2 Facilitate dialogue between government officials and industry leaders to address regulatory barriers and streamline approval processes for defence industrial cooperation.

2.3 Establish lasting mechanisms for defence industrial dialogue and project collaboration, guided by ministerial direction and remarks at the discussion.

Event details

Event Title: *Advancing Industrial Partnership and Capability Development*

India-Australia Defence Industry Business Roundtable

Date: 10 October 2025

Time: 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM (Australian Eastern Daylight Time)

Venue: Conference Hall, Hotel Shangri-La*(TBC)

Format: Closed-door discussions with restricted participation to ensure substantive, industry-focused discourse

Secretary General, CUTS International, will emcee the roundtable discussion. He would introduce speakers, keeping the program on schedule and ensuring smooth transitions.

12:30-14:00 – Roundtable Discussion

Principal Guests and Co-Chairs:

- Hon'ble Defence Minister of India
- Hon'ble Assistant Minister for Defence of Australia (TBC)

Participants

- Australian & Indian Defence Companies
- Senior representatives from select chambers, academics and think tank representatives specialising in defence industrial policy and ecosystem.

Session Framework*

Time (AEDT)	Session	Key Elements	Speakers/Participants
12:30 – 12:38 (4 minutes each)	Opening Remarks	Welcome address and objectives of the roundtable	Secretary General, CUTS International and CGI, Sydney*
12:38 – 12:58 (10 minutes each)	Ministerial Keynotes	Strategic overview of Australia–India defence partnership and industrial cooperation	Defence Minister of India & Assistant Minister for Defence of Australia*
12:58 – 13:43 (45 minutes)	Open Roundtable Discussion Strategic & Industry Current state of bilateral defence industrial engagement; priority areas for capability development Company presentations (brief, 3–4 mins each) – Identification of complementary strengths – Opportunities for JVs, R&D and tech transfer		Indian and Australian defence companies
13:43 – 13:49 (3 Minutes each)	Ministerial Closing Remarks	Concluding and closing remarks	Defence Minister of India & Assistant Minister for Defence of Australia
13:50 onwards	Refreshments and networking		

Expected Outcomes

The roundtable is designed to produce both tangible and intangible outcomes that advance bilateral defence industrial cooperation through:

- Establish a shared understanding of priority areas for India-Australia defence industrial collaboration.
- Identify potential synergies between Indian manufacturing capacity and Australian technological expertise.

***Tentative** (depending on the Minister’s schedule, minor adjustments may occur)

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