

DS

Luncheon Seminar

Thursday 26 March 2026

at the National Press Club

16 National Circuit, Barton

24 February 2026

Speaker: Professor Clive Williams MG

*Director of the Terrorism Research Centre
and former Australian Army & Defence intelligence officer*



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"Australia's Strategic Circumstances – a Personal View"

From the President

There was a time when references to terrorism were always related to events far from our shores. While the Global War on Terrorism, initiated by the United States in response to the 9/11 attacks, involved Australian assets in operations overseas, it wasn't until the outrage at Bondi on 14 December 2025 that most Australians considered that terrorism had spread to our shores. Now we are seeing unconfirmed media reports that ASIO may have as many as 18,000 people on its terror watch list. We are living in a very different strategic dynamic to the traditional red on blue threats of the Cold War.

In this context I am very pleased that Professor Clive Williams MG, Director of the Terrorism Research Centre, has accepted our invitation to speak at our next lunch, and provide informed insights that we are unlikely to receive from the relevant government agencies. As well as his prepared address, Professor Williams is well-placed to provide sensible responses to such topical questions as the likelihood of, or at least the challenges associated with de-radicalising those who have been in contact with extreme ideology.

Meanwhile, traditional security threats remain. The war in Ukraine continues with its ever present potential to spill over into other parts of Eastern Europe; the Middle East, remains ever unstable, most notably with uncertainty about future developments in Iran (that may have occurred by the time you are reading this edition of DS); and as we have seen in media

reporting, China continues to adopt an [assertive posture](#), its ambitions with respect to Taiwan clear, if not the timing for such action that it might take.

Closer to home, recent announcements of direct interest to Air Force include the arrival last month of the first of an expected four [MC-55A Peregrine](#) Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare aircraft, to be operated from RAAF Edinburgh by No 10 Squadron; and the long anticipated release of the [Defence Estate Audit](#). The detail contained in the audit report is well worth reading, especially with respect to the Air Force's heritage at [Point Cook](#). While the report indicates full divestment of the birthplace of the Australian Flying Corps and subsequently, the Royal Australian Air Force, it states that:

“options will be explored with future owners to manage heritage obligations as a condition of sale. Subject to the divestment process, the [RAAF] museum would be able to be retained on site as part of the condition of sale.”

[RAAF Glenbrook](#) is another interesting inclusion in the list of Air Force bases scheduled for full divestment. Here the audit report indicates that:

“Consistent with the government response to the Estate Audit, consolidation of all domain headquarters to a single location will be informed by further analysis.”

We will watch that process with great interest, noting the rationale that led to the creation of Headquarters Joint Operations Command at Bungendore. Those of us who served through the implementation of the Defence Efficiency Review will remember how Army was so much better than us at protecting its turf. Let's see if the lessons from that bruising experience have been retained in today's Air Force. In short, watch this space!

So much to think about between now and when we next meet on Thursday 26 March, when I look forward to seeing those able to attend our lunch and hear from Professor Williams. In the meantime, I encourage you to monitor our website for earliest advice of any changes to our program and any other news.

Stay well,

Ian

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