



AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY DEFENCE NETWORK

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Dear AIDN members,

As President of AIDN National, I write to you all to share my thoughts (and the opinions of AIDN nationally) on recent events.

Like myself, you may have been dismayed by the recent resignations of the Defence Teaming Centre in South Australia, and more recently AIDN Victoria.

Many of you have asked the question why? As I am not privy to the internal decision making of these organisations, I have relied on their public pronouncements.

The Defence Teaming Centre (DTC) stated that membership of AIDN no longer fitted their current business plan, and their intention to develop into a nationally-focused defence industry organisation in Australia. AIDN Victoria indicated that it could do a better job in representing the interests of its members from outside the AIDN National umbrella.

Our National Committee has considered how to best respond to their resignations and feel the best approach is to remain focused on the fundamental reason for AIDN's existence, which is to continue to deliver its representation of the SME community through advocacy, promotion, and education.

The focus of the advocacy in the future will be to ensure that the range of policies announced by the Government delivers for SMEs. Part of this will be to ensure our members are aware of the opportunities that can come from the policies.

To be effective, representation needs to be delivered consistently and with longevity on a national basis. During the time that AIDN has represented the SME community, the strength of the various states within AIDN have varied but the AIDN structure has ensured that it has produced a common message. This cannot be replicated by shifting alliances between individual states which lack that binding structure and be subject to perceptions of individual state and territory-based agendas. The importance and relevance of a national approach have been reinforced in recent years with the emphasis from the Government wishing to hear one voice from industry and the reaction against state and territory-driven lobbying for projects.

AIDN's response has been to strengthen its national approach without diminishing the reliance on the Chapters to deliver services to our members. The National Committee has been working very hard for some months on a range of new initiatives and reforming its structure. These include changing the Constitution to a more effective Board-based structure and developing a process for national memberships and implementing a national website which better supports and informs our members.

At the same time, AIDN would like to maintain a single Defence Industry approach. It has been working with Ai Group for the SME voice to improve its reach by establishing a forum for the SMEs to discuss issues and develop a standard policy response. It has also taken steps to reach out to DTC and AIDN Vic to establish ways to co-operate and collaborate.



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The AIDN National and Chapter representatives will continue to represent SME's and be the voice of SME's for the defence industry. The association continues to work closely with our members to ensure they perceive real benefits from their membership. Each state/territory Chapter also works closely with AIDN National to promote and advocate for our members and firmly believe in AIDN National's ability to provide Defence with the one voice.

As President, I have personally spoken to representatives of each state and territory Chapter, and we collectively agree on a secure future for AIDN National and AIDN members, and we look forward to continuing to present a loud and clear united voice as well as implementing new initiatives for AIDN members.

If there are any issues that you would like to discuss or ask questions about please contact me at president@aidn.org.au, or raise them with your local state or territory Chapter.

If we continue to focus on effectively assisting our members to grow, I believe AIDN and its members have a bright future together.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Forbes
AIDN National President