

Australia's Defence

Towards a New Era?

Edited by
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Introduction by Brendan Taylor

When Professor TB Millar produced *Australia's Defence*—the book from which the current volume draws its inspiration—almost fifty years ago, it was literally the first of its kind. Very little if anything had been written on the subject, aside from a handful of official and unofficial histories of the two World Wars and the Korean War. Public debate on the subject of Australia's defence was next to non-existent. There were no think tanks or academic institutes dedicated to the study of the subject. It would take the foresight of Millar, and his boss and English derided namesake JDB Miller, to found the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University in 1966, the year after *Australia's Defence* was published. As Millar has written elsewhere, Australia's defence at that time 'in the government's view, was not a matter for public inquiry or debate; the public should simply accept the Defence provisions which the Australian government, in its superior wisdom and knowledge, provided'.¹

Half a century on, the scope of public debate on the subject of Australia's defence is radically different. Issues of defence policy are vigorously contested amongst leading defence intellectuals—many of whom have previously served in senior positions in the Australian government or the military—on the opinion pages of mainstream