



De Stefano & Co opens Melbourne office

Defence security advisory firm De Stefano & Co has officially opened its Melbourne office in August 2026, marking the company's second Australian office and an important step in its national growth strategy.

"Congratulations to De Stefano & Co on the occasion of the opening of their new office in Melbourne. Given Victoria's central role in our nation's defence industry, this is the place to be! Victoria's new Premier, Ben Carroll, has declared at the very outset of his premiership that he's 'a Premier who backs AUKUS' and that further developing defence industry here will be a priority for his government. Premier Carroll understands the opportunities - and he understands Victoria's strengths," Victorian Defence Industry Advocate, David Feeney, said.

The expansion will solidify its presence in Victoria and further support demand across the state's growing defence, aerospace, cyber security and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Victoria is home to the ADFs most significant training bases - HMAS Cerberus, RAAF Base East Sale and the Puckapunyal Military Area. Our regions are integrated into our

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defence industry too, with Thales in Bendigo, Hanwha in Geelong and NIOA in Benalla. The weapons systems of the future are being developed for the ADF here by companies such as Sypaq and AIM Defence," Feeney said.

Founded in South Australia in 2015, De Stefano & Co has supported government, as well as Prime Defence contractors and industry organisations operating in defence, national security and other highly regulated sectors.

"Opening an office in Melbourne marks a significant milestone in our ambition to become Australia's 'go-to' in Defence security. In a relationship-driven industry, being close to clients and having boots on the ground matters. Establishing a permanent presence in Victoria allows us to better understand client pain points, strengthen partnerships and provide the high-touch support organisations need as they navigate the increasingly complex security requirements mandated by Defence and government agencies," De Stefano & Co, CEO & Managing Director, Emilio De Stefano, said.

As outlined in the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the expansion comes at a pivotal time for Victoria's burgeoning defence sector - the second largest in the country - responsible for generating \$2.4 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2024 - 25.

"We're investing in Victoria with a long-term perspective. Our focus isn't on immediate returns, but on building enduring relationships, growing sustainably, and contributing meaningfully to the state's Defence and security ecosystem. We know Victoria is a powerhouse when it comes to land-based programs, aerospace and advanced manufacturing more broadly, but we're also seeing the state play an increasingly important role in areas such as guided weapons and explosive ordnance (GWEO), quantum and cyber," De Stefano said.

The timing of De Stefano & Co's expansion also aligns with Premier Ben Carroll's call for Victoria to secure a greater share of AUKUS opportunities, leveraging the state's strong defence, advanced manufacturing and research capabilities.

Located on Melbourne's Bourke Street, the new premises places De Stefano & Co within close proximity to Defence, Prime contractors and the defence and advanced manufacturing supply chain participants that it supports.

According to the company, looking ahead, De Stefano & Co is focused on the long-term growth of its Victorian operations, with the state expected to account for more than 30 per cent of its work in Defence security by mid-2027.

Establishing a permanent presence in Victoria will provide greater access to some of the largest manufacturing precincts in the country, and one of Australia's strongest talent pools.