



**Dr Ron Sulman, *Ideas and Action, Theory and Practice, Social Licence and Nuclear Submarines***

#### **Abstract**

Ideas and theories matter. They drive action. But practical experience precedes ideas and theories and a combination of emotion and rationality inform our reactions to 'life'. It is 'lived experience'—the 'felt' life—that drives beliefs and assumptions that in turn provide the foundation for explanatory and predictive frameworks that combine with our instinct for survival to drive the way we act in the world personally, socially and nationally. However, human society, emotion and rationality has a 300,000 year history; the human being is a product of a genetic history that extends over millions of years, but our 21<sup>st</sup> Century society understands itself and acts in accordance with ideas and theories formed principally in the last three thousand or so years. Politically and geopolitically, nation states are acting on ideas formed less than one thousand years ago. Many political theories, for example socialism, communism, modernism, and neoliberalism are from the last fifty to one hundred and fifty years. Today, radical social, cultural, technological, and geopolitical change is affecting all components of Australian and global society. Established social ideas regarding trust, collaboration, the grounding of values and sources of ethical authority are being severely tested by radically new technologies, scientific knowledges, communicative processes, and geopolitical conflicts. Social licence, social cohesion and social resilience are now thought to be fundamental requirements for national defence. But how is social solidarity achieved? How might Australia become 'secure'. This presentation will offer some ideas around those questions.

**Prof Brian McKinley, *An Outline of the Political-Strategic World of Australia's Future***

#### ***Submarines***

#### **Abstract**

The world is experiencing revolutionary times. The revolutions in question are, moreover, relatively unusual because they are more than political (whereby the personnel are changed in fully-fledged socio-economic systems); they are systemic; the extant systems are being, or have been dismantled and replaced, and new, radically different constructs are put in place of those that previously existed. But the process remains in flux. The result is that Australia now lives in a time of global, multi-dimensional, strategic crisis in which the customary habits of mind and action will not suffice; the challenges it poses for nation-building, national sovereignty, security, and prosperity make fundamental changes to thinking and acting imperative.

**Prof David Lowe, *The people-policy nexus in Australian security policy***

**Abstract**

Australians have engaged only fitfully with big, gnarly questions about how to meet security threats. For the most part, governments have not demanded that they engage beyond narrow frames of interpreting the world: dangers that are compared with two world wars, tried and tested alliances that date to these earlier conflicts, and values that are under threat. But there are signs that this will no longer do in 2025, signs that more comprehensive exchanges between government and Australians' views on how they feel secure/insecure are needed. This paper makes the case for further work in this direction. We might recover the rich history of Australian governments being able to think laterally as well as nurturing alliances; and of wielding soft or smart power in ways that involve the broader public. The world in which nuclear submarines are being foreshadowed demands greater connection between the Canberra bubble and Australian citizens for reasons that go both to social licence and to adroit security policy