



Australian  
National  
University

Centre for  
European  
Studies

**Russian activities and Australian interests in the Indo-Pacific:  
From national security to national resilience**

March 25, 2025, The Boathouse, Canberra

**Program**

0830-0900 Registration

0900-0915 Welcome – Anne McNaughton, ANUCES Director  
(Introduction of Jon Richardson, Rapporteur)

0915-0925 'A shared security landscape: Europe and the Indo-Pacific' – opening remarks by  
HE Gabriele Visentin, Ambassador of the European Union

0930-1045 Roundtable: Australia's Russia problem

This roundtable sets the scene for the conference by examining why Australia is likely to have an enduring problematic relationship with Russia. It considers Russia's domestic political, economic and demographic environment in the context of how it pursues its interests, taking in military force, hybrid war, political warfare and economic coercion as ways to maximise Russian power. In doing so it seeks to determine 'what Russia wants' as part of its Indo-Pacific agenda, and how that challenges Australian preferences for a stable balance of power upheld by institutions, rules and international law.

Moderator: Peter Sawczak

Panellists / topics:

- Kyle Wilson (Putin's Russia and After)
- Stephen Fortescue (Russia's economy and polity)
- Vasyl Myroshnychenko (Russia's information agenda in the region)

1045-1115 Coffee break

1115-1230 Panel 2: Australia, regional order and the new axis of upheaval

This panel extends the theme of the first session by focusing more specifically on how Russia and China are seeking to transform existing regional orders. While each nation has different motives – with China seeking to supplant the US-led order, and Russia attempting to wreck it – the panel considers the implications of their attempts at regional upheaval for existing multilateral structures, power alignments, and the strategic preferences of key regional actors. With an Australian focus, but also

drawing upon Japanese and European perspectives, the panel examines how to construct robust alternatives to Chinese and Russian preferences in the shared strategic space of the Euro-Pacific.

Moderator: Matthew Sussex

Panellists / topics:

- Mats Ström (Russian military power)
- Michito Tsuruoka (Russia in Asia)
- Margaret Twomey (Russia in the Pacific)

1230-1345: Lunch with keynote presentation by Mikhail Zygar – Russia’s global strategy

1345-1500: Panel 3: Information operations: subverting national resilience

The penultimate panel aims to more clearly identify how to reinforce national resilience against information operations and other activities (such as lawfare, grey zone operations and hybrid war). It asks how Australia and its partners might be able to craft more coherent strategic narratives, as well as take a more proactive approach to address disruptive sub-threshold behaviour most commonly typified by Russian behaviour, but which is increasingly being adopted by other potentially hostile powers.

Moderator: Sascha Dov Bachman

Panellists / Topics:

- Göran Larsbrink (Russian subversion activities)
- Alexandra Chalupa (Russian election interference)
- Mikhail Zygar (Holding Russia accountable – the need for cross-regional resolve)

1500-1530: Afternoon tea

1530-1645: Round table: So what, now what? The case for enhanced Russia literacy in Australia

The conference concludes by considering the next steps that will be needed to shore up national resilience, regional order, and strategic stability. In particular it makes the case for enhanced knowledge-sharing between those countries with considerable existing Russia expertise, and those with expertise on China. In an Australian context, this will require a sustained refocus on Russia, and targeted reinvestment in Russia literacy after years of decline.

Moderator: Will Partlett

Panelists: / Topics

- Mick Ryan (Russia’s future wars)
- Isabella Currie (Russia and the war of ideas)
- Mark Edele (Russia literacy in Australia)

1645-1700: ‘In a nutshell’ – rapporteur Jon Richardson and closing remarks (Matt Sussex and Peter Tesch)