

HOW INNOVATION AND SECURITY ARE SHAPING ASIA'S FUTURE - FROM SINGAPORE TO JAKARTA

By George Campbell

Amidst growing tensions and escalations across the globe, the need for diplomacy, strengthening of alliances, and regional stability are becoming increasingly paramount. While the world looks to America and Europe for decisive action, it is important that Australia looks to its regional neighbours to ensure continued international collaboration and cooperation.

I caught up with our Director of Business Development, Ben Corbett, for a deep dive into the key insights from the recent Asia Tech x Singapore and Indo Defence events. Together, we examined the latest developments shaping the satellite industry and unpacked how today's shifting geopolitical landscape is influencing government approaches to space and defence strategy.

What were your general takeaways from both events, and to what extent did current global tensions impact how the shows were conducted or perceived?

BC: The contrast between Asia Tech x Singapore / CommunicAsia and the Indo Defense exhibition was striking. CommunicAsia, once a vibrant and dynamic showcase at Marina Bay Sands prior to 2020, now reflected a more subdued gathering of traditional satellite industry stakeholders—with the notable absence of Viasat. While the presence of emerging players and intensifying competition has reshaped the landscape, it was encouraging to see how companies are actively evolving and adapting to these pressures. The event fostered meaningful dialogue and engagement, highlighting the industry's resilience and commitment to innovation.

In contrast, the mood at the Indo-Defence show was far more buoyant. As Indonesia continues its trajectory of technological modernisation, there is clearly a focus and an appetite on Space & Cyber tech as an important part of the defence landscape.



I think the criticality of sovereign defence capabilities at the moment, given the geopolitical context, made for a heightened awareness of the need for international cooperation. There was a palpable sense that strategic partnerships, particularly in digital technologies, are becoming as vital as traditional hardware. I think the prominence of Space and Cyber in both dialogue and display reflected a broader understanding that resilience now absolutely has to include data, networks, and digital infrastructure - without a doubt.

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As the global space community prepares to converge on Sydney for IAC 2025, this landmark event will spotlight the Indo-Pacific's dynamic space sector—highlighting the region's diverse opportunities and Australia's longstanding contributions to space exploration.

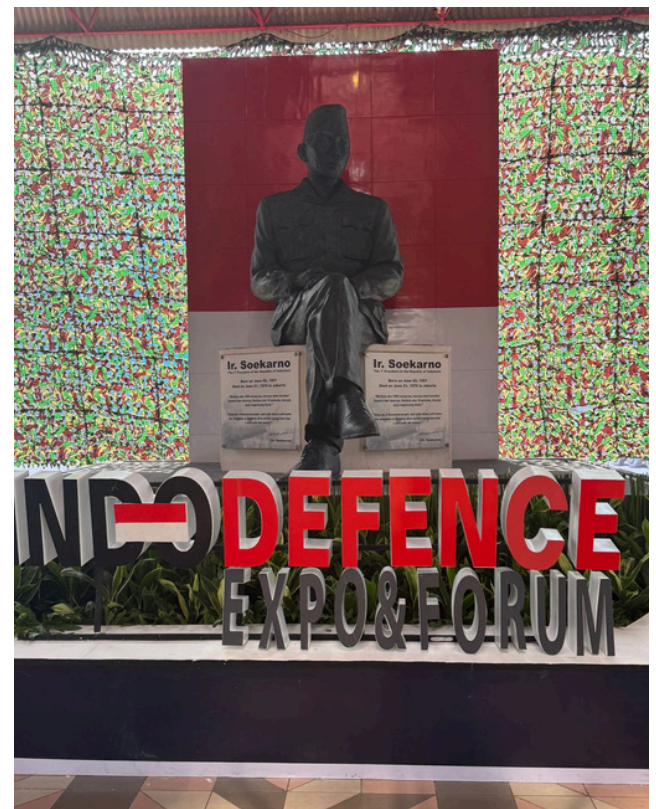
How should Aussie companies interact with our regional neighbours to best demonstrate why we deserve a seat at the table?

With IAC 2025 heading to Sydney, Australia has a real chance to show the Indo-Pacific why we're not just part of the conversation - we're helping lead it. There's growing interest and investment from China, the Middle East (especially the UAE and Saudi Arabia) and Southeast Asia, with companies like Space42 actively building up sovereign space capability and demonstrating the industry potential of AI.

To make the most of this moment, Aussie companies should lean into diplomacy and mutual respect. It's clear that being open, collaborative, and commercially engaged is the way forward. There's a real appetite for international partnerships, and we're well-positioned to offer both technical expertise and strategic value - especially when it comes to regional safety and stability.

Security in the Pacific means different things to different players, so a thoughtful, inclusive approach will go further than hardline messaging. Let's focus on co-developing, co-investing, and co-innovating. That's how we show we're serious about contributing to the region's future, not just our own.

IAC 2025 is our chance to step up, connect, and show the world what Australia brings to the table.



What lessons did you learn from the recent shows and what do you see as the best path forward?

Australia's strengths in the Indo-Pacific space and defence landscape aren't just technical - they're strategic and cultural. We bring a mature, agile industry that's capable of adapting quickly, integrating complex systems, and collaborating across borders. Unlike some larger players, we're not locked into rigid models of engagement. That flexibility is a real asset, especially in a region where many countries are still shaping their sovereign capabilities.

From Indonesia's push for modernisation to the shifting dynamics seen at CommunicAsia, the message is clear: the traditional satellite and defence paradigms are being redefined. Indonesia, for example, isn't just looking to buy capability—it's looking to build it. The partnerships forming between PT Len, Thales, and DefendID show a clear preference for knowledge transfer and local integration. That's a model Australia understands well, and it's where we can add real value.

The lesson here is not to compete with the big primes on their terms, but to offer something they can't: genuine collaboration. Companies like Av-Comm are a great example. As systems integrators, we can help bridge the gap between foreign technology and local implementation. This is something many primes aren't set up to do. Indonesia's challenge of integrating foreign systems with local infrastructure is exactly where Australian companies can step in and make a difference.

Regionally, we're seeing a trend toward hybrid models, like foreign systems managed by local integrators. This isn't just about capability; it's about sovereignty, resilience, and economic development. Australia's ability to support these models through training, co-development, and flexible engagement, positions us as a valuable partner, not just a vendor.

Strategically, the Indo-Pacific is recalibrating. Countries are looking inward, reassessing alliances, and seeking more balanced relationships. Indonesia's central position and its ties to both eastern and western partners make it a key player. Australia, while respected, still has work to do to deepen those ties - especially at the trade and diplomatic level.

The best path forward? Lean into what makes us different. Be agile. Be collaborative. Focus on partnerships that build capability, not just deliver products. And most importantly, engage with respect and a long-term view. The region is open, receptive, and looking for partners who understand the nuances, not just the headlines.

