



## **ITEA Southern Cross Chapter**

**Reference:** ITEA\_SCC\_2023-01

**To:** The Chair, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

**Subject:** Defence Capability Assurance and Oversight Bill 2023 Submission

### **Background**

The International Test and Evaluation Association (ITEA) Southern Cross Chapter (SCC) is an Australian (AS) based affiliate of ITEA (Headquartered in the US), representing a diverse membership of AS, UK, NZ, Canadian and European Defence and Industry Test and Evaluation (T&E) professionals, academia and interested parties.

ITEA's primary role is that of a global technical society, with a Charter to promote a diverse range of T&E offerings including contemporary T&E thought leadership, professional development and training through seminars and conferences, professionalisation through its Certification Program, and the publishing of technical papers through its Quarterly Journal.

In responding to the proposed Bill, the ITEA SCC Committee (hereafter 'the Committee'), sought comment and feedback from all current financial members and associates. ITEA SCC members have professional education and training in test and evaluation of systems, along with decades of experience not only in Australia but internationally. ITEA SCC undertakes professional development of our junior Testers in new methods and techniques across the air, land, maritime, and cyber/information domains. Many of the ITEA SCC members have extensive experience with the acquisition and T&E with complex system in both the military and civil environment to provide the organisation with credence on this issue.

It was noted that many of the SCC's members are current or former serving Defence Force or Public Service members, who may have considered themselves conflicted with the proposal and its target, and others may be intending their own individual responses. However, the Committee decided that, as a peak professional body, it should provide in-principle commentary and feedback to assist with the debate and discussion of the proposed Bill. Ultimately, the Committee felt this overall approach would ensure a representative and balanced response.

The Committee has also provided written advice to ITEA US HQ, informing of its intention to respond and that any views expressed are localised and don't require broader ITEA US/International scrutiny or approval.

ITEA SCC also wishes to highlight that any views expressed are not intended to denigrate or lessen the many and extensive efforts of the many professional Testers over the last few



decades to improve Australia's ability to field and use operationally the Defence Capabilities acquired. Such work has sought to collaborate with our Allies and partners to share key information and tactics, techniques and procedures for example in order to improve our combat effectiveness and interoperability during operations together.

### **Key Comments and Feedback**

In formulating the following details and response to the Bill, the Committee thought it important to note:

- There is broad ITEA SCC understanding regarding various testing, delivery and funding models adopted by other agencies and organisations such as the US Test Resource Management Centre (TRMC) and the US Directorate of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E). Whilst considered as exemplar models for an opportunity to learn, benefit and potentially apply suitable scale to an AS Capability Assurance Agency, these organisations and their associated charters, resourcing and structures et al were not universally agreed across our membership community within the time available to prepare this submission and will not be specifically commented on. For example, the US DOT&E model wherein approval must be reached based on Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E) before starting Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) may not be suitable for Australia's strategy. However, testing during earlier prototyping with end user input has been proven to significantly reduce the risk of cost overruns and schedule delays as rectifying issues early in the development cycle is typically simple to implement, a philosophy endorsed by ITEA SCC. . Likewise, the benefits of leveraging contemporary partnerships and agreements such as the Memorandum on T&E Program (MTEP) or AUKUS to share testing knowledge, techniques and data would support improved capability delivery and decision-making. There are many opportunities that would help ensure Defence Capabilities are operationally suitable and should be explored in more detail as the Bill progresses. ITEA SCC also understands that several other professional societies do intend to provide some further discussion points and recommendations for your consideration.
- The Test and Evaluation continuum and assurance of Capability supports the whole of the Capability Lifecycle (including Developmental, Preview, Acceptance and Operational Test) and needs to include a Systems-of-Systems based approach. Systems-of-Systems is the complex environment of validating that the capabilities within and across the services and with our allies operate as designed.
- ITEA SCC does note that Australian T&E policy, governance and resourcing, does not match that of our principal Allies and partners. This has been noted by several ANAO and other reviews into Defence Capability management. This is one of the reasons the Bill was ostensibly raised, to ensure a robust and transparent capability assurance framework to support capability managers and decisions makers. This is supported in principle by ITEA SCC.
- Our response is formulated on a reasoned review and principle-based response to the proposed Bill.

Table 1 below outlines specific ITEA SCC commentary in response to the key sections outlined in Part 1 Clauses 3 and 4, which constitute the ‘essence’ of the Bill.

**Table 1 – Response to the Defence Capability and Assurance Oversight Bill**

Section	ITEA SCC Comments
Part 1, Clause 3(a)	Agree in principle with the objective
Part 1, Clause 3(b)	Agree in principle with the objective
Part 1, Clause 3 (c)(i)	Agree in principle with the objective
Part 1, Clause 3 (c)(ii)	Agree in principle with the objective
Part 1, Clause 3 (c)(iii)	Agree in principle with the objective
Part 1, Clause 3 (c)(iv)	Agree in principle with the objective
Part 1, Clause 4	The ITEA SCC is a diverse industry group whose membership includes currently serving and retired Defence members through to industry professionals with no personal ties to Defence. ITEA SCC is unable to comment or provide a recommended position as to whether the Inspector-General / and Regulator function should be independent of the Department of Defence (DoD) and as such is not subject to direction by either the Secretary or Chief of Defence Force (CDF), or ... whether defence can self-regulate.
Part 1, Clause 4, Lines 13-14	Agree in principle with the objective

<b>Section</b>	<b>ITEA SCC Comments</b>
Part 1, Clause 4, Lines 15-21	<p>ITEA SCC does not have any evidence to object to the establishment of an Agency as several models across the national interests of the ITEA membership base have been instituted. The evidence suggests that independent T&amp;E and the verification and validation (V&amp;V) of defence capabilities needs to be independent and resourced appropriately with trained and experienced personnel, test and training ranges and so on.</p> <p>ITEA SCC does not have any evidence to object to the establishment of Defence Capability Assurance Regulatory function.</p> <p>ITEA SCC supports opportunities for growing the AS Defence Industry through partnerships.</p> <p>ITEA SCC does recommend considerations regarding the need for suitable independence of any Industry Partner.</p>
Part 1, Clause 4, Lines 22-26	<p>ITEA SCC does not have any evidence to object to the establishment of an Inspector-General Capability Assurance.</p> <p>ITEA SCC has no evidence to comment on the question of whether the Inspector-General and Regulatory function should reside inside or outside the DoD.</p> <p>ITEA SCC does support the independence and transparency of the T&amp;E / Verification &amp; Validation function across the entire capability lifecycle.</p>
Part 1, Clause 4, Lines 27-31	<p>ITEA SCC agrees in principle with the establishment of a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence, and the specific stated functions contained therein.</p>

The ITEA SCC is grateful for the opportunity to provide a submission on the proposed Bill and looks forward to being an active participant in the continuing dialogue and debate. It is vital that we collectively achieve the best Australian Defence Capabilities within an integrated force possible with greater assurance as we head into an uncertain future.

ITEA SCC believes that we should be able to agree on an Australian solution, which exploits the many opportunities available to us, and optimises outcomes for the funding and resources required to achieve that.