

## BACKGROUND

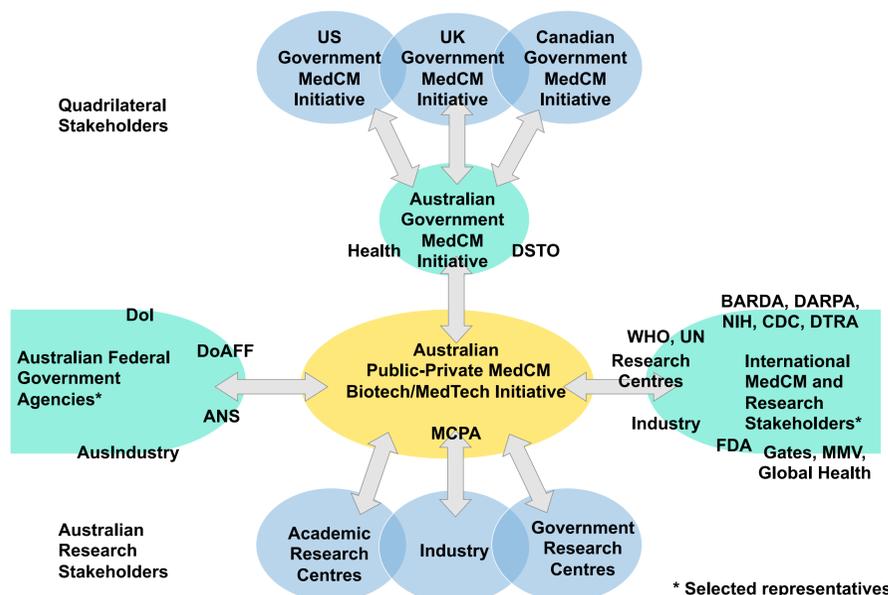
The Medical Countermeasure (MCM) Consortium (MCMC) is a four nation partnership involving the Defence and Health Departments of Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Consortium seeks to develop MCMs, including drugs, vaccines & diagnostics to assist with all-hazard preparedness and response. The emphasis of the Consortium is on Defence-related issues, such as Chemical, Biological and Radiological threats affecting civilian and military populations and has been expanded to include emerging infectious diseases and pandemics.

Within Australia, it became clear that if we were going to be able to meaningfully contribute to the Consortium the Departments would have to actively engage with the biotechnology and medical technology communities.



The Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) commissioned a series of surveys and workshops to understand Australia's capability and infrastructure, both common and unique, which could provide beneficial programs and products to the Consortium.

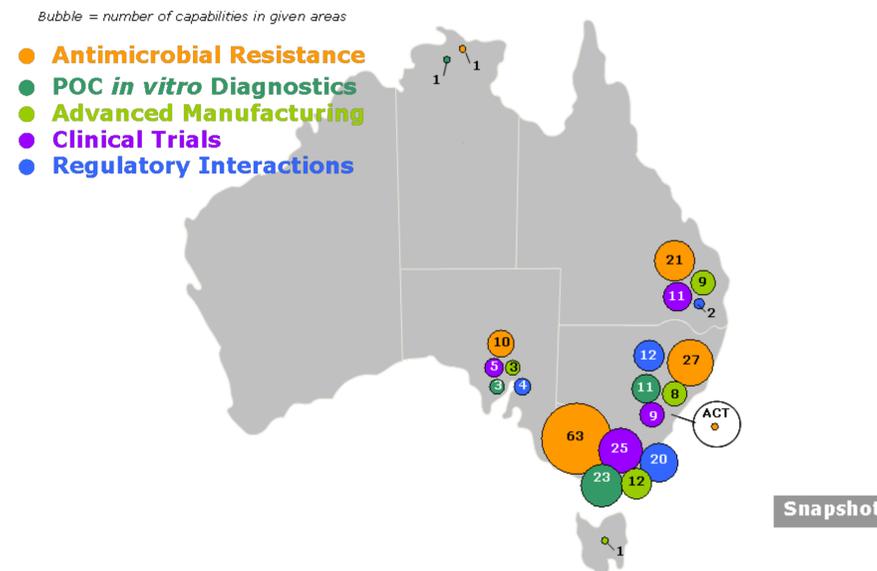
During the initiative, a groundswell of enthusiasm resulted in spin-off activities including the self-assembly of industry, academic, government and research institute stakeholders leading to the establishment of a National Task-force in MCM product development, now known as Medical Countermeasure Products Australia (MCPA).



## OUTCOMES

Analysis of the national landscape provided evidence to suggest that there is a small, dispersed but highly experienced discovery and development community that could be persuaded by Government to align their activities with National priorities.

The requisite capabilities are spread across Australia and industry followed by academia and research institutions, with the highest concentration of capability found in Victoria, then Queensland/New South Wales and South Australia.



## UNIQUE CAPABILITIES

Unique infrastructure in Australia includes, but not limited to AAHL, ANSTO, Synchrotron, MARP, VIDRL, GCEID, Victorian platform technology network and bsl3 laboratory facilities.

## IDENTIFIED ISSUES

1. Emerging infectious diseases are of highest priority as they pose imminent, real and serious threats to Australia's healthcare, economy and security.
2. Australia is geographically positioned as an important sentinel for emerging infectious diseases threats.
3. Australia will leverage existing infrastructure to develop an integrated capability to produce MCM products in line with National priority and established emergency response systems.
4. The aim of MCPA is to reduce Australia's dependence on non-Australian sources of MCM products in times of a crisis.
5. Australia has a history of basic and applied R&D in infectious diseases, including several world leading institutions, researchers and practitioners.
6. DSTO and the National Security Policy team on behalf of the Australian Government are working to ensure that the implementation of MCM product development activities are aligned with National priorities.

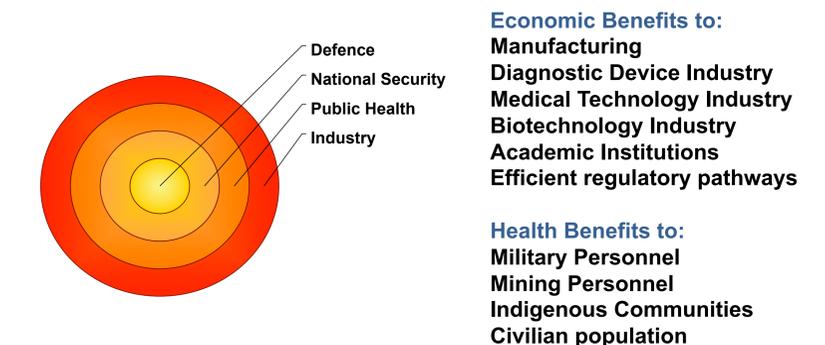
## WAY FORWARD

An initial aim of MCPA is to develop a fit for purpose, sustainable public-private business model to support MCM product development.

The first project to demonstrate national capability by generating measurable, validated and meaningful short term outcomes includes a capability assessment for Australia to support clinical evaluation of antimicrobial candidates to treat *Burkholderia pseudomallei*. This project is important to Australia as *Burkholderia* affects our indigenous population and also has the potential to be manipulated as biowarfare agent.

The Federal government is aware of MCPA and the national efforts to develop a funded program of work, focused on regional threats. Recently, the Australian MCMC was asked by the Assistant Minister for Defence to participate in the new National Security Science and Technology Policy and Plan, which is being developed and will be presented to Cabinet later this year.

This public private partnership benefits whole of government and the whole of the MCM product development sector.



## PARTNERS



\*MCPA Steering Committee members include Felicia Pradera, David Lester, Leigh Farrell, John Lowenthal, Martyn Jeggo, Simon Tucker, Helen Fisher & Craig Rayner. Other MCPA members include Eugene Athan, Carl Kickpatrick, Julie Phillips, Matthew Cooper & Emma Pyers.