

# Shield AI to Acquire Australia's Sentient Vision Systems, Establish Shield AI Australia



The acquisition enhances Shield AI's software suite and expansion into Australian market, the company said. *Shield AI* SYDNEY – Shield AI Inc. announced a definitive agreement to acquire Sentient Vision Systems, an Australia-based leader in AI-enabled real-time situational awareness, pending customary closing conditions and regulatory approval.

The companies will merge AI expertise and operational understanding to deliver superior intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities for today's rapidly changing defense and security environment. In August 2023, the companies announced the joint development of a ViDAR-enabled wide area motion imagery (WAMI) solution called "Sentient Observer," which Shield AI plans to fly this year.

"The combination of AI pilots, Sentient Observer and teams of affordable drones like the MQ-35 VBAT will provide the same land and maritime domain awareness that today's \$40 million and \$180 million Group 5 drones and crewed aircraft like the P-8 provide, at a fraction of the price. The DoD has asked for an all-seeing eye over tens of thousands of square miles, 24/7, without the need for GPS or communication links. For Shield AI, Sentient Observer is the final piece of that puzzle. The DoD can begin augmenting and replacing their legacy solutions for a distributed, low cost, low risk solution that doesn't break the bank if an aircraft is shot down," said Brandon Tseng, Shield AI's president, cofounder, and former Navy SEAL.

“This acquisition unites Sentient’s ViDAR and our Hivemind AI pilot, creating the world’s most advanced AI-piloted ISR sensor package,” said Ryan Tseng, CEO of Shield AI. “Considering the imperative of covering vast maritime areas, especially in the Pacific, joining forces with Sentient was a strategic choice given their expertise in optical radar solutions. The integration of WAMI on V-BAT will revolutionize our offering, enabling Group 3-sized aircraft to perform tasks that previously required larger, costlier aircraft, significantly enhancing our customer’s operational capabilities.”

This news follows several significant milestones for Shield AI’s growth in the Australian market. In February, V-BAT received certification for Australian operations from Australia’s Civil Aviation Safety Authority. Shortly thereafter, in partnership with Shield AI’s Australian partner, Toll Aviation, the companies launched the inaugural Australian V-BAT training course.

“What stood out to us about Shield AI is that they are the only company in the world with an operational AI pilot, and therefore have the technological expertise and maturity to really deliver on the AI technology workstream underlined in AUKUS Pillar 2. The innovation breakthrough combining our computer vision AI-enabled ViDAR and Shield AI’s Hivemind will increase situational awareness, enabling quicker more effective decision making and help to save lives,” said Sentient’s CEO, Mark Palmer.

ViDAR is Sentient’s AI system, which uses an electro-optic or infrared sensor to detect and classify targets in the imagery stream that would be invisible to a human operator or to a conventional radar. Shield AI’s flagship product, Hivemind, is an AI pilot that enables teams of intelligent aircraft to operate and complete missions autonomously in high-threat environments, without the need for remote operators or GPS.

Hivemind is an aircraft-agnostic autonomy stack similar to the self-driving technology found in cars. It has flown six aircraft, including quadcopters, the MQ-35A V-BAT, the F-16, and Kratos MQM-178 Firejet. Later this year, it will fly Kratos' XQ-58 Valkyrie. Shield AI has accumulated more autonomous flight hours executing fighter jet maneuvers, like dogfighting, than any company in the world.