Professor Tanya Monro began her role as Chief Defence Scientist in March 2019.

Professor Monro was previously Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation and an ARC Georgina Sweet Laureate Fellow at the University of South Australia.

Professor Monro was the inaugural Director of the Institute for Photonics and Advanced Sensing (IPAS) from 2008 to 2014 and was also the inaugural Director for the ARC Centre of Excellence for Nanoscale BioPhotonics (CNBP) at the University of Adelaide. Her research is in the field of photonics, with a focus on sensing, lasers and new classes of optical fibres.

Professor Monro obtained her PhD in physics in 1998 from The University of Sydney, for which she was awarded the Bragg Gold Medal for the best Physics PhD in Australia. In 2000, she received a Royal Society University Research Fellowship at the Optoelectronics Research Centre at the University of Southampton in the UK, and is also an inaugural Bragg Fellow of the Royal Institution of Australia (RiAus).

Professor Monro is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science (AAS), the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE), the Optical Society of America (OSA) and the Australian Institute of Physics. She is a member of the Prime Minister's Commonwealth Science Council (CSC), and a Board Member of the Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the South Australian Defence Advisory Board, and the South Australian Economic Development Board.

Her awards include: the Prime Minister's Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year (2008), South Australian Scientist of the Year (2010), South Australia's Australian of the Year (2011), and the Eureka Prize for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Scientific Research (2015).