

NSW Veterans Employment Program Report

October 2022 - September 2023

Message from the NSW Minister for Veterans

The Hon. David Harris MP



As the NSW Minister for Veterans, I applaud the achievements of the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Employment Program (VEP) in supporting veterans finding meaningful employment opportunities.

As a key pillar of the NSW Government Veterans Strategy, we know the importance of veteran employment post transition from the Australian Defence Force. NSW was the first state to commit to supporting veterans through an employment program and still leads the way in securing opportunities within the public sector, as well as promoting veteran employment to the private sector.

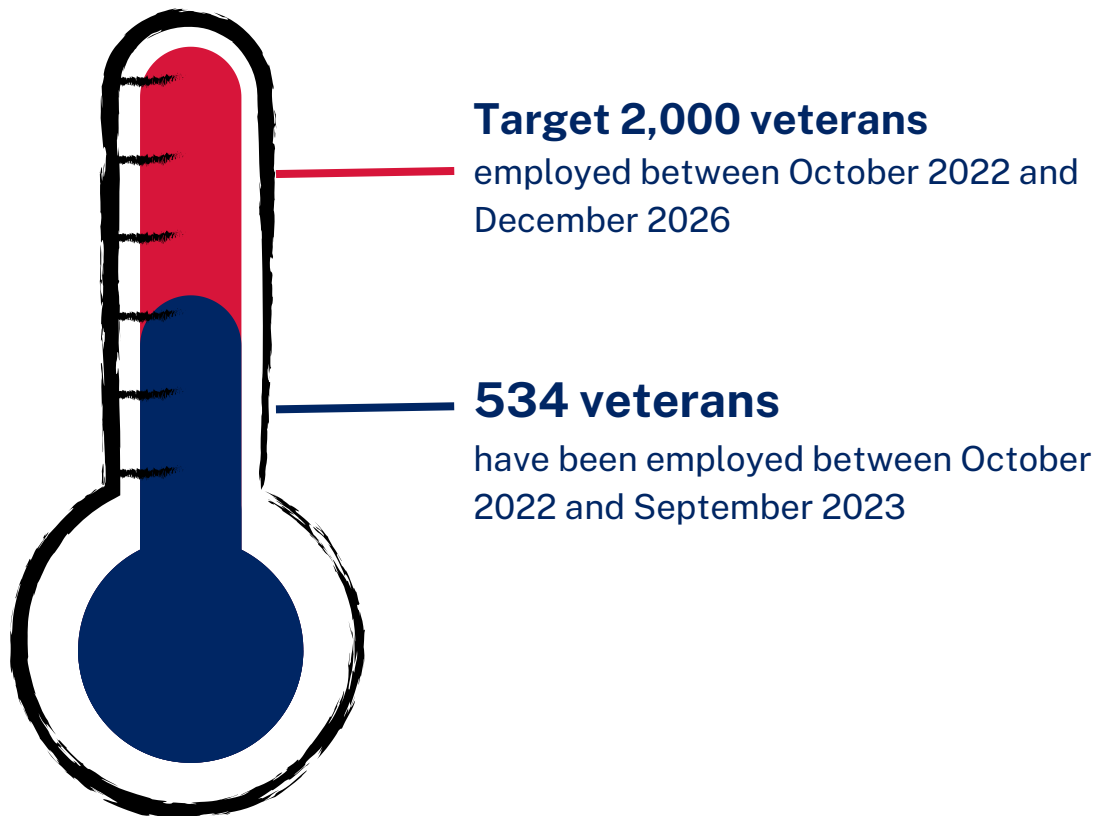
I am pleased to acknowledge that 534 veterans were employed across the NSW public service through to September 2023, exceeding the twelve-month target set at 500. The program remains on target to hire 2,000 veterans into new roles within the NSW Government by December 2026, of which I am particularly proud.

The program continues to communicate with veterans about roles in the public sector, as well as increasing its network of collaborators who advocate for the transferable skills of veterans. VEP continues to add useful tools and learning opportunities for veterans and this year has launched a series of videos to help veterans transitioning to civil employment.

This program is instrumental in helping veterans enjoy a better transition from military service to civilian life, and the NSW Government gains the skills, knowledge and experience of our former Defence personnel. I congratulate the VEP team and NSW Office for Veterans Affairs for these successes.

I look forward to continuing to support the defence community, their families and war widows in 2024.

Program overview



The NSW Government was the first state to commit to supporting veterans through an employment program. The NSW Veterans Employment Program (VEP) was launched in May 2016 with a key objective of creating an awareness of veteran employability. VEP sits within the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs (OVA) in the Department of Communities and Justice.

An initial figure of 200 veterans, chosen as a target number of veterans to hire during the Centenary of Anzac, was surpassed with 831 veterans employed in new roles to September 2018. In the four-year period (October 2018 to September 2023), the program saw 1,626 veterans hired in new roles, significantly exceeding the period target of 1,000. In November 2022, the Premier committed to a four-year extension of the Program with a new target of 2,000 veterans employed in new roles within the NSW Public Sector by December 2026.

The program has achieved its 12-month target of 500 veterans employed in new roles, with 534 veterans employed through to September 2023. There were 269 veterans hired during the period April to September 2023, in addition to the 265 veterans employed in the initial six-month period October 2022 to March 2023. VEP remains confident in meeting the target of 2,000 veterans hired in new roles by December 2026.

Program timeline

2026

Target 2,000 veterans

employed between November 2022 and December 2026.

2023

534 veterans

have been employed between October 2022 and September 2023.

2022

30 September 2022

1,626 veterans employed in the NSW Public Sector since October 2018. The NSW Government sets a new target to hire an additional 2,000 veterans by 2026.

2018

11 November 2018

VEP celebrates the successful employment of **831 veterans** in the NSW Public Sector. The NSW Government sets a new target to hire an additional 1,000 veterans by 2023.

2016

VEP launched in May 2016

with the goal to hire 200 veterans during the Centenary of Anzac.

Target tracking

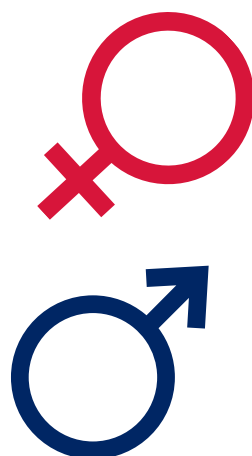
During the twelve-month reporting period (1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023) the data provided by the NSW Public Service Commission is missing responses to the tracking question, “Have you ever been a full-time member of the Australian Defence Force, or a Reservist on Continues full-time Service”. This is because data items, such as veteran identification and status as an external or internal candidate, are dependent on applicant input and there is an unknown margin of error. Hires may also be understated where data is not entered by recruiters, impacting numbers and success rate. This has been considered when interpreting the data, as outlined below.

The data from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 was missing approximately 20 per cent of responses and the data from 1 April to 30 September 2023 was missing approximately 45 per cent of the self-identified question. However, working with the data available, 11,787 job applications were submitted by veterans during the twelve-month period, with a success rate of 4 per cent. This success rate was down 2.1 per cent in the past twelve months, however it still remains higher than the NSW general population application success rate of 3 per cent for the period.

Job levels won have remained consistent during the period with most veterans joining the public sector at entry level (6.3 per cent), as individual contributors (81 per cent) and team leaders (4.3 per cent). Veterans have also won Manager positions (7.4 per cent), and Senior Executive and Director roles make up 0.9 per cent of positions won by veterans. This also reflects previous reporting of success rate versus applications of 0.8 per cent for both levels.

VEP has identified the main barrier to higher ranks filling senior executive roles is generally based around specific levels of experience required for more senior roles in the public service. For example, specific experience dealing with commercial contractors, procuring large infrastructure projects, or specific knowledge of cluster-related issues. All the above information will be reviewed in the next period as more data becomes available.

The gender breakdown for the hiring period saw 27 per cent female veterans and 73 per cent male veterans win roles. This figure is interesting as about 20 per cent ADF personnel are female. It is interesting to note women had 4.2 per cent application success while men had 3.4 per cent.



27% female

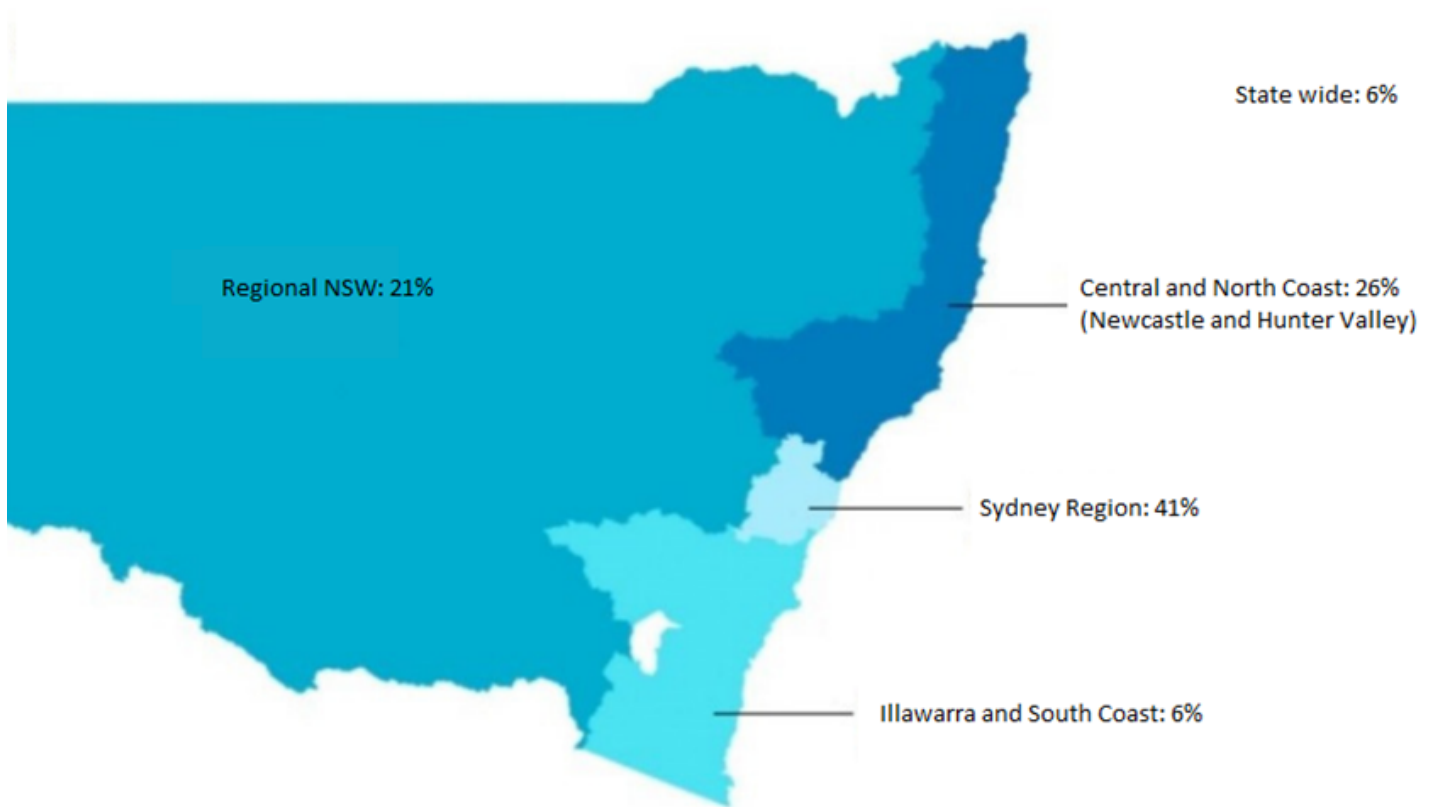
4.2% application success.

73% male

3.4% application success.

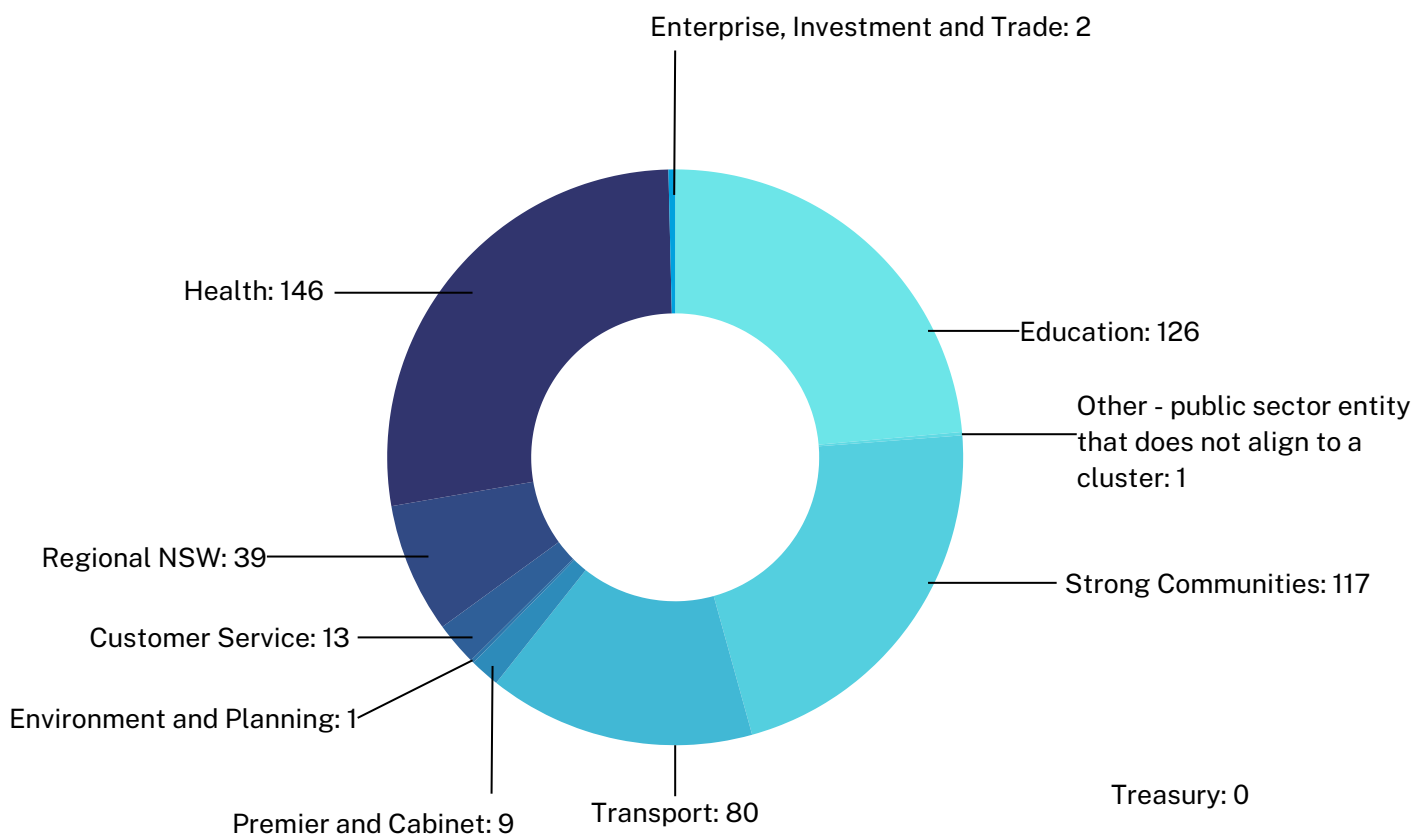
Of positions won, 72 per cent were full-time, 9 per cent part-time, 19 per cent casual. Only 3.5 per cent of veterans winning roles identified as having a disability during the twelve-month period. The percentage break down by NSW location was:

- Central and North Coast – Newcastle and Hunter Valley 26 per cent
- Illawarra and South Coast, 6 per cent
- Regional NSW 21 per cent
- Statewide 6 per cent
- Sydney Region 41 per cent.



Veteran hires per cluster

The two largest clusters in NSW Government are Health who employ approximately 35 percent of the 430,000 workforce and Education who employ approximately 31 percent. In the past twelve months Health was the largest employer of veterans with 146 (27%) and Education came in second with 126 (24%). Stronger communities which accounts for approximately 15 per cent of the workforce saw 117 (22%) veterans employed while transport has approximately 8 percent of the workforce and saw 80 (15%) veterans employed. It is interesting to note the disproportional size against veterans employed which would put Transport as the number one employer of veterans against its cluster size.

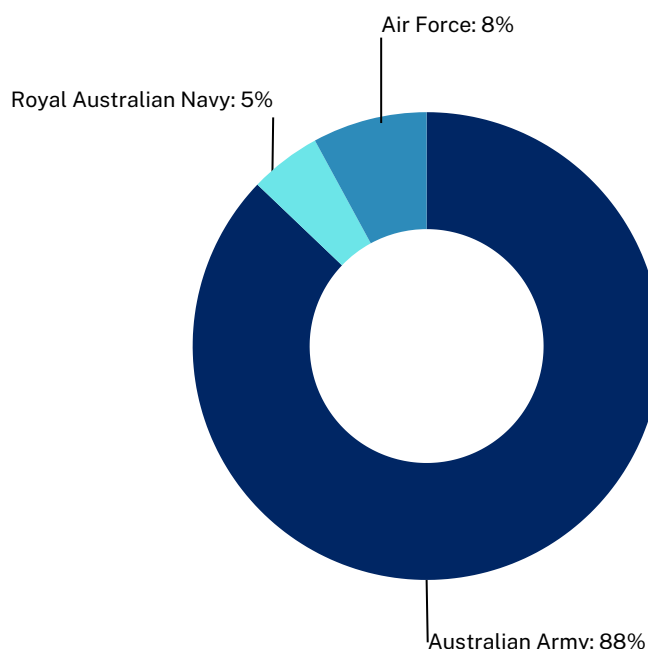


Cluster	Hires
Health	146
Education	126
Stronger Communities	117
Transport	80
Regional NSW	39
Customer Service	13
Premier and Cabinet	9
Enterprise, Investment & Trade	2
Environment and Planning	1
Treasury	0
Other - public sector entity that do not align with cluster	1
Total	534

The Public Service Commission's (PSC) 2023 People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) results have given us further insight to veterans working in the public sector. Of an approximate 430,000 workforce the PMES received 204,846 (47.6%) responses against the question, "Have you ever been a serving full-time member of the Australian Defence Force, or a reservist on fulltime continuous service?"

Of the respondents to the question, 3,871 answered "yes" and 193,643 answered "no", with 7,332 "preferred not to say". It is interesting to note there were 960 more veteran respondents than surveyed in the 2022 PMES (2,911). Of the total 3,871 veteran respondents, 16 per cent have worked in the public sector for 10-20 years and 11 per cent have been employed for more than 20 years, higher than the public sector average. 19 per cent of veteran respondents had been employed in the NSW Public Sector for less than 12 months while 14 per cent had been employed for 1-2 years. From this sample, Stronger Communities employs 38 per cent of veterans, which includes all the NSW uniformed emergency management organisations, Corrective Services NSW and the Office of the Sheriff. The Health cluster employ 24 per cent of veterans and Education employ 12 per cent of veterans.

This year for the first time the PMES asked a specific question regards Australian Defence Force Reserve service. Of an approximately 430,000 workforce the PMES received 205,259 (47.7%) responses against the question, "Have you ever been a serving full-time member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) or an ADF reservist?" The question had drop-down boxes to understand Reserve Service by Service. 2,177 Reservists responded to the survey with 112 from the Royal Australian Navy, 1,885 from the Australian Army, and 180 from the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve.



Of these Reservists, 162 had served less than one year, 817 one to six years, 319 six to eleven years, 148 eleven to sixteen years, 78 sixteen to 20 years, 135 twenty years plus and 471 had retired from Reserve service. In future VEP will try and get a break down of Reservists employed by cluster within the NSW Public Service. Concurrently VEP is working with the ADF Reserve Employer Support cell who are working to identify where ADF Reserve personnel are employed in the public and private sector.

Stakeholder Engagement

NSW Government Veterans Networking Event



On the Friday before Anzac Day (21 April 2023) VEP hosted its second annual NSW Veterans Networking Event for the program's champions at the Anzac Memorial. The event was a great opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate ADF veterans employed within the NSW Public Sector. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to network between veterans and current NSW Government employees. It was great to welcome the Minister for Veterans, The Hon. David Harris MP, who stayed for the entire event.

During the event, the Sheriff of NSW (Ms Tracey Hall PSM) announced a commitment from the Office of the Sheriff to launch its own mentoring/buddy support system for veterans moving into roles within the Office of the Sheriff. VEP looks forward to hosting this annual event on 19 April 2024 at the Anzac Memorial.

Education NSW (Veterans Skills program)

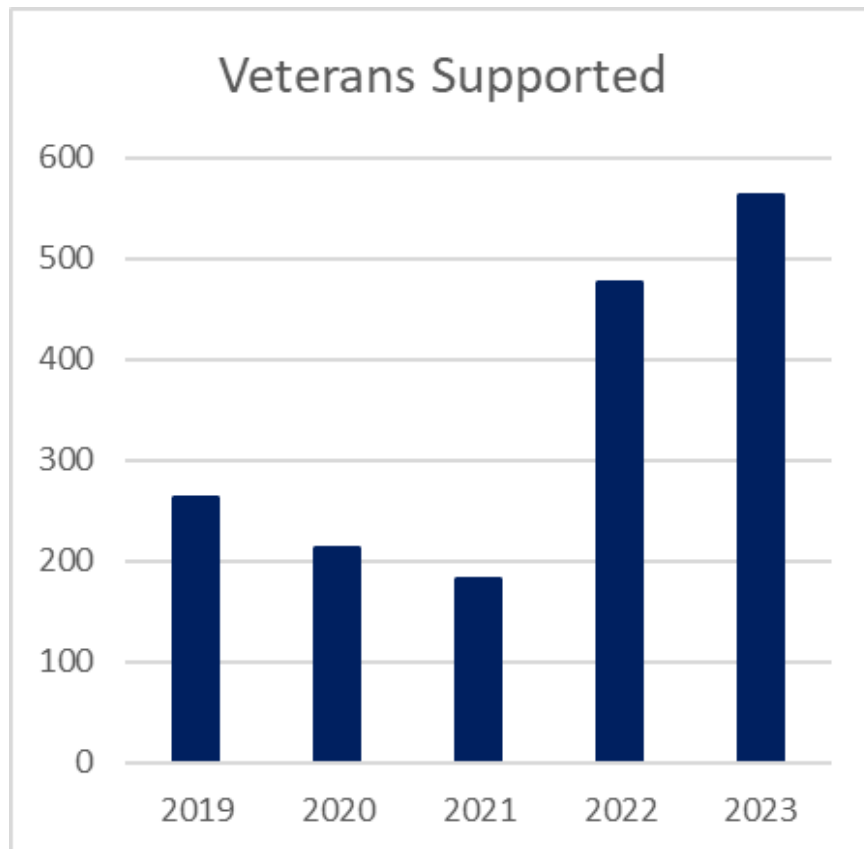
The Veteran Skills program was launched on 31 May 2021 to provide veterans and their recognised spouse/partner access to fee-free or heavily subsidised training under the NSW Job Trainer program. Courses are offered at approximately 370 Registered Training Organisations throughout NSW. If applicants only require a part qualification to be 'job ready' to pursue a civilian career path, that will also be supported. This year 753 veterans (558) and spouses/partners (195) have enrolled in full qualifications with the most popular courses being Project Management, Training and Assessment, Leadership & Management. 465 veterans (423) and spouses/partners (42) have enrolled in part qualifications, most opting for leadership/management, machinery and vehicle operation business and swim instructor/lifeguard.

Veteran enrolment numbers continue to climb, however due to the current fee-free campaign being delivered by the federal & state Governments, there is no requirement for a veteran to declare their status as a veteran. This has likely resulted in many enrolments for veterans not being recorded.

There is now a waiver in place for veterans and partners, so as fee free places run out, these cohorts will be able to continue to access fee-free vocational training from the NSW Skills List.

TAFE NSW

Our partnership with TAFE NSW continues to grow and they collect important data to track how their Ranks to Recognition Program (R2R) is progressing. R2R assists veterans to transition into the civilian workforce. This program includes customised career advice, career counselling, skills assessment, recognition of prior learning, and training gap analysis. The program has extended and is now also offering these services to veterans' spouses and recognised partners.



TAFE NSW has supported 560 veterans who have registered under the Ranks to Recognition program in 2023, with 51 per cent successfully proceeding to enrol at TAFE NSW. 40 per cent of veterans (224) were referred to Counselling and Career Support, while 60 per cent (336) sought course guidance from the Ranks to Recognition coordinator. The top courses for veterans include Diploma of Project Management and Diploma of Leadership and Management, followed by Certificate IV in Community Services and Certificate IV in Project Management Practice. Overall, 59 per cent of veterans at TAFE opted for online study through TAFE Digital to assist with their transition and the flexibility of studying while employed.

TAFE NSW also launched its 'Teach at TAFE' campaign in 2022, which gives veterans the opportunity to become a teacher at TAFE campuses around NSW. A 'Teach at TAFE' information session took place on March 29, 2023. Twelve veterans attended, receiving insights into Teaching at TAFE NSW and the Teacher Recruitment Program. The session facilitated connections between veterans and TAFE NSW teaching staff, who shared their experiences and guided veterans on the application process for teaching positions. An update will be provided in the next report.

Defence & Aerospace, Industry and Investment Partnerships, Investment NSW

Defence & Aerospace, Industry and Investment Partnerships, Investment NSW invited VEP to the Indo Pacific International Maritime Exposition 2023 which was held at the International Conference Centre Sydney on the 7-9 November. VEP was invited to speak by Investment NSW to approximately 65 attendees from Small to Medium Enterprises in NSW regarding the employment opportunities for Veterans in NSW Government and the private sector. The presentation was well received with a lot of questions and discussion points.



The primary question was, “where do we find veterans?”– the answer remains Right Management, the contracted Commonwealth provider of career coaching to transitioning ADF members as well as the partners of serving ADF members. Right Management provides professional career coaches, the Job Search Preparation workshop and have a Job Connections team who link members to roles/organisations that match each person’s career goals. Organisations can brief the team on available roles, for their ‘Active Candidate Brochure’ that they are happy to share with any organisation looking for ‘veteran ready to employ’ candidates. They can be contacted via email at jobconnections@right.com .

Veterans Employment Workshop



VEP continues to deliver the Veterans Employment Workshop. The workshop gives veterans practical knowledge on the NSW Government job search and application process. Participants are provided with resources and given practical scenarios to practice and gain confidence when applying for roles. Data has shown once a veteran completes the workshop, they have a 75 per cent chance of securing a role within 6 months of completing the workshop. Of those veterans who do not gain employment, the majority decide to continue with their service and use the workshop as part of their future transition. VEP is grateful for these ADF members attending because they become a communication channel within Defence. A total of 29 veterans attended in 2023.

ADF Member and Family Transition Seminars



Over the past six months, the VEP team have been able to attend seven face-to-face ADF Member and Family Transition Seminars where we have spoken to hundreds of veterans about working in the public sector and what VEP can do to assist them. We have also attended 12 virtual seminars and, following the success of the design and build of the VEP virtual booth, there are now ten NSW Government agency booths engaged in the virtual transition seminars with more to follow in the future.

VEP continues to support Service NSW with updates to the veteran-specific online directory. The directory outlines NSW-based programs, services and concessions available to veterans and their families to aid their transition from military to civilian life and to assist with the cost of living.

Royal Australian Navy

At the invitation of the Deputy Fleet Commander, VEP spoke to the East Coast Royal Australian Navy Commander and Executive Officer Designate course, at Fleet Base East. VEP endeavours to support veterans who have already determined they are leaving Defence and encourages veterans to serve on in the Defence Reserve to maintain ADF capability. NSW Government has a magnificent Reserve support program allowing Reserve members to take 24 days paid Military Leave (Royal Australian Air Force 28 days) to support ADF activities.

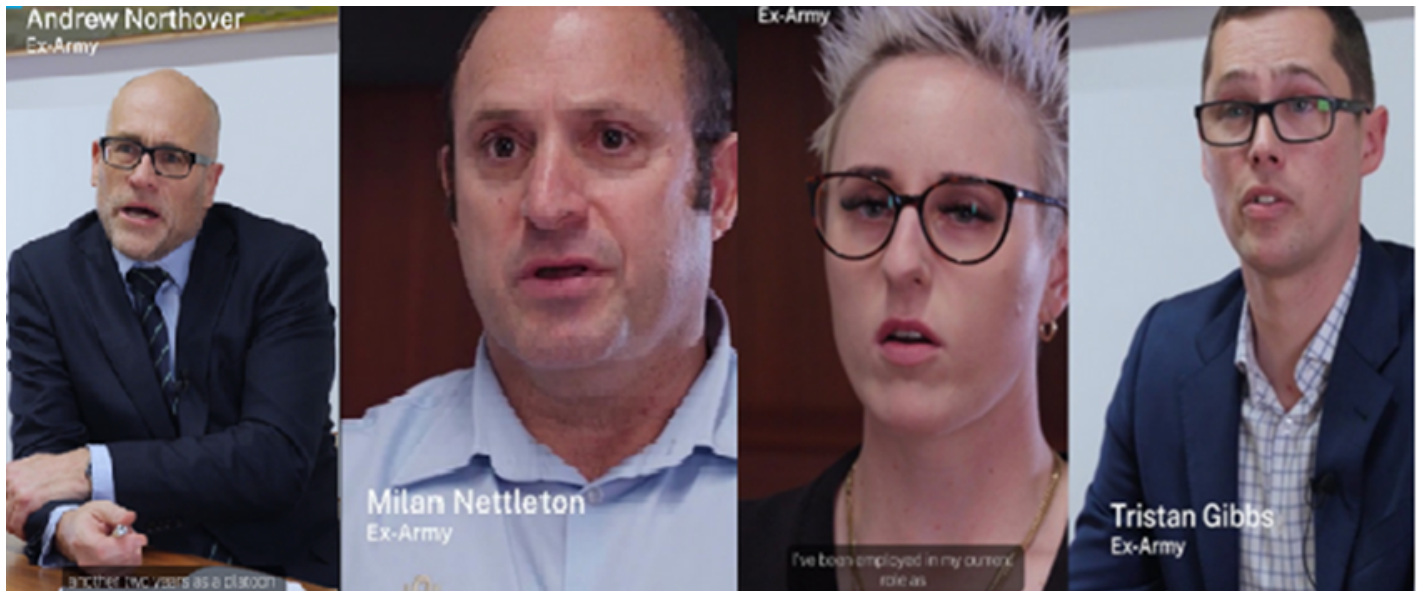
“This is the best job preparation course I have attended. Simple, concise and informative, it is equally applicable when applying for private sector roles”

Eric M

By allowing the ADF chain of command to understand what support is available for their troops, in the form of an employment program, it can help retain capability in a Reserve capacity through NSW Government employment. The Deputy Fleet Commander suggested VEP make a video of the support NSW Government provides to veterans and briefed to the Command course. This prompted the development of our VEP video and veteran testimonials which can be found on the [VEP website](#).

Video Testimonials

As well as the short video of [what VEP provides to support Veterans](#), VEP also engaged in a video project, profiling veterans who have recently transitioned from the Australian Defence Force discussing their service and transition as well as their thoughts on how they successfully transitioned from the ADF and how VEP had supported them. The videos are available on our [webpage](#) and will be progressively launched via the VEP social channels.



Central Coast Defence and Veterans Forum

VEP presented at the Central Coast Defence and Veterans Community Forum to veterans, family members and ex-service organisations. The forum, opened by the Honourable David Harris MP, aimed to help attendees learn and understand more about the services and supports available to veterans and their families in NSW.



There was also discussion about RSL LifeCare plans and initiatives to support Central Coast veterans locally and an opportunity to pose questions to a panel of presenters, including the Department of Veterans Affairs. VEP spoke about the tools available to support veterans looking for roles in NSW Government and future VEP Employment workshop opportunities.

Mentoring

Following the initial launch of the Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) Mentoring/Buddy Support System for veterans transitioning to a role with CSNSW in April 2022 we welcomed the Office of the NSW Sheriff launching its Mentoring/Buddy Support System for veterans transitioning to a role with NSW Sheriffs in April 2023. The system is slowly developing to support these uniformed veterans, through transition, training and in their new career. Since establishment, uniformed and non-uniformed staff from across the state have represented Corrections and the Office of the NSW Sherriff at ADF Transitional Seminars. A number of veterans have graduated as prison officers and Sheriffs as part of recent recruiting drives. As new members settle into their roles, they are offered additional support in the form of buddies or mentors from a select group of former Defence personnel who are happy to support them in their transition.

NSW Fire and Rescue has committed to reviewing the mentoring system with the intent to implement in 2024. VEP is also working with a non-uniformed section of government to implement a mentoring program in 2024.

Employee Resource Group - Service NSW

Department of Customer Service launched their Employee Resource Group (ERG) to support Veterans and former Emergency Services workers in NSW. Their program is focused on 'Representing those who have dedicated themselves to protecting and defending our nation and communities' and build a network to provide support. VEP was delighted to be a part of this project and hopes it can be replicated in other areas of government.

Champions Network



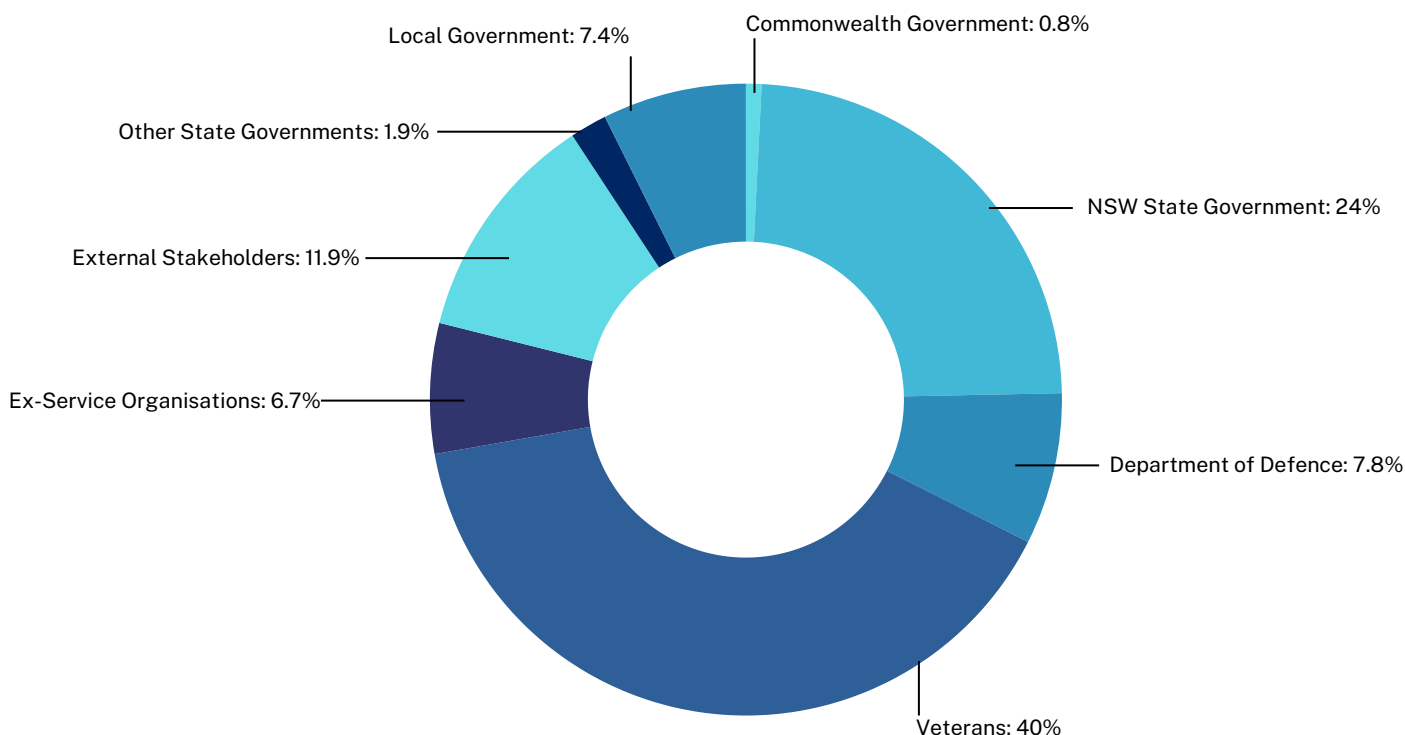
The VEP team remains focused on building the Champions Network throughout the NSW Public Sector. As there are only two members dedicated to running VEP, the Champions Network was developed to act as a force multiplier throughout government. The Network consists of Hiring Managers, Human Resource personnel, veterans and anyone who has a genuine interest in supporting veterans.

They are a group of mentors and leaders promoting VEP initiatives and the skills that veterans can bring to the public sector. The Champions Network is currently about 500 strong, committed to helping NSW Government reach its veterans employment target. VEP's success is a direct result of the support of the champions.

Seasonal Updates

Seasonal updates continue to be published on the VEP website and sent to VEP champions, veteran contacts and ex-service organisations to maintain active awareness of the program. These are published in the first week of each season; Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring and people can subscribe via the [VEP webpage](#).

Stakeholder Engagement



VEP managed to meet face-to-face and virtually with 985 stakeholders throughout 2023. There were 401 veteran engagements and 243 with NSW Government representatives. This is in line with VEP's aim to assist veterans to apply for NSW Government roles and to educate NSW Government members of the benefits of hiring veterans.

Social media



VEP has continued to use its social media channels to connect with veterans and the veteran community. Posts included creating awareness of the types of positions available, news and events, meetings and greetings, new initiatives and other information and opportunities relevant to veterans and creating awareness of veteran employability. VEP understand the importance, and its audience on each channel. While LinkedIn has become the professional job search social media platform, Facebook is still the preferred platform by younger veterans. Currently VEP has over 3,100 followers on Facebook and 1,200 on LinkedIn. We will continue to grow and evolve the way we use these channels in future.

Roundtable



VEP facilitated the fourth annual NSW Veterans Employment Roundtable, held at the Anzac Memorial on 5th October 2023. It was hosted and chaired by the NSW Minister for Veterans the Hon David Harris MP and ably assisted by the Director, Office for Veterans Affairs. The focus in 2023 was on opportunities and initiatives for collaboration.

It was attended by NSW public and private sector employment representatives and organisations supporting veterans and the Australian Defence Force. Each organisation had the opportunity to present, before proceeding to the collaborative session, full of discussion about ways to share initiatives and work together. It built opportunities between organisations to effectively share information about available services and work together to share resources.

Local Government

As at 20 December 2023 16 NSW Local Governments had developed their own form of VEP to support veterans looking for employment. It makes good business sense to hire veterans and attract them to regional areas. If you remove the uniform, there is a veteran within the ADF who aligns with an equivalent job in local council, from General Manager to a man or woman on a front desk, truck and bus drivers, HR specialists, health officers and any number of other roles within council.

Lake Macquarie City Council was the first to set up a VEP and did 4 Simple things:

- They put a note under diversity on their website - 'We understand the skills and attributes, veterans can bring to our Council.
- They put a Veteran indicator question on all applications, "Have you served in the Australian Defence Force" with a drop down box, yes, no and not specified.
- They committed to provide specific application feedback if veterans request it (not 200 people applied you didn't get the role).
- They offered to assist other councils wishing to follow their lead.

[Campbelltown City Council](#) has developed a webpage and offered to share the content with any council (they have just asked it be attributed to them).



The Veterans Employment Awards



The NSW Government's Veterans Employment Program has been an outstanding success and has received three Prime Minister's Awards, with the latest in 2021 for its influence at federal, state and local levels of government. In 2023 we were announced as a finalist in the category of, Excellence in Supporting Veteran and/or Partner Employment.

Looking ahead

Throughout 2024 the VEP team plan to continue to run Veteran Employment Workshops as a combination of face-to-face sessions at the Anzac Memorial and digital sessions for veterans based in regional areas. Workshops are promoted on the VEP website, in our newsletters and on our social channels.

VEP will continue to engage with local governments, especially in regional NSW, to promote veteran employment within local councils and the opportunity to incorporate the Veteran Skills Program. This will help to ensure veterans and their spouse/partner have the relevant training to land the right roles within councils while encouraging them to access the heavily subsidised or fee-free training courses available.

VEP is also looking into assisting the ADF maintain capability through the continued support and employment of Reserve Force personnel.

We also hope to announce the first non-uniformed section of government establishing their own mentoring program while announcing another uniformed area going live with their own mentoring program.

Thank you for supporting veterans. ***“Working together we can make a difference!”***



Veterans Employment Program