

NSW Veterans Employment Program Report

October 2022 - September 2024
24 Month Report

Message from the NSW Minister for Veterans

The Hon. David Harris MP



The Veterans Employment Program (VEP) has achieved its interim target figure for 2024 of 1,000, with 1,015 veterans finding employment in the NSW public sector against the full target of 2,000 by December 2026..

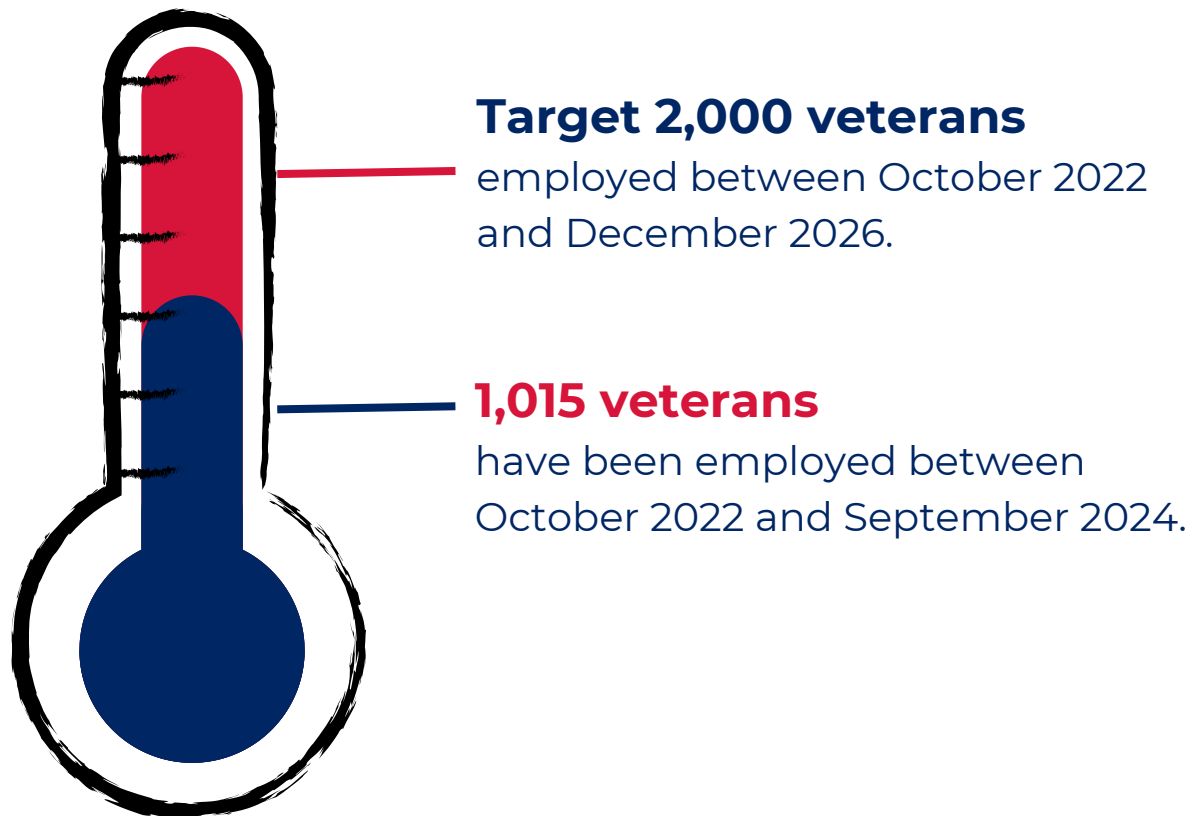
I congratulate the VEP team and NSW Office for Veterans Affairs for their hard work and dedication to achieve these results. The program remains on target to hire 2,000 veterans into new roles by December 2026.

Recognising the importance of veteran employment post transition from the Australian Defence Force is a key pillar of the 2025-2030 NSW Government Veterans Strategy. 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.

VEP is a leader in the country helping veterans find employment within the public sector, as well as promoting veteran employment to the private sector. The program remains dedicated to engaging with veterans about employment opportunities while also expanding its network of stakeholders who champion the valuable skills of veterans. The team's continued effort has also led to 26 local councils across NSW establishing their own veterans' employment programs.

I look forward to seeing the program's continued success over the coming year as the team supports the defence community and their families in making their transition to civilian life.

Program overview



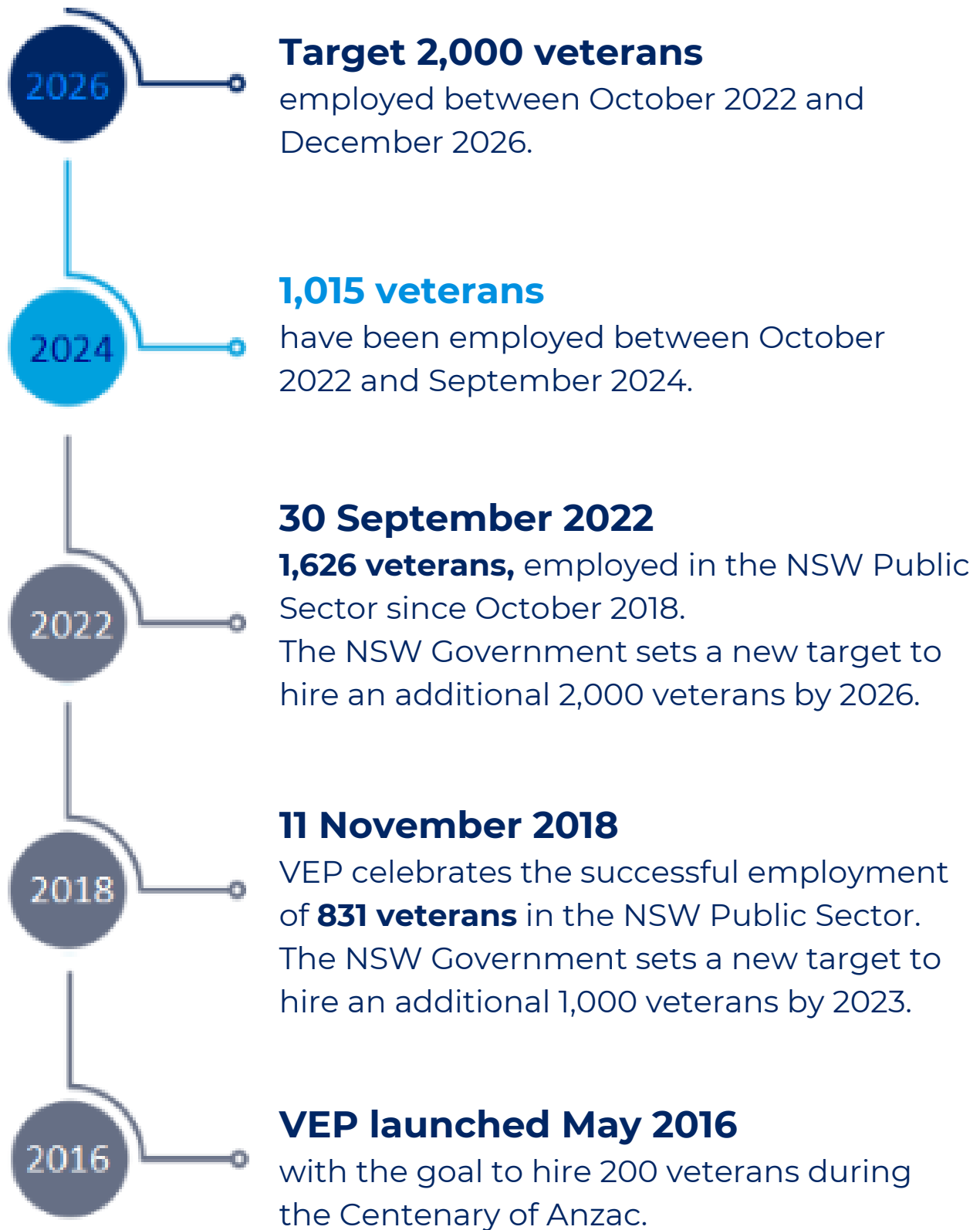
The NSW Government Veterans Employment Program (VEP) remains on track to achieve the veterans employment target of 2,000 veterans hired into new roles by December 2026. 242 veterans were employed in a public sector role between April 2024 and September 2024. This is slightly below the interim target of 250 per six months, due to a range of factors, including some restructuring of the NSW Government workforce. Overall, the good news is we have 1,015 hires which remains ahead of the 24-month (half way) target of 1,000 veteran hires.

The NSW Government was the first state to commit to supporting veterans through an 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 was chosen as a target number of veterans to hire during the Centenary of Anzac, which was surpassed with 831 veterans employed in new roles to September 2018. In the four-year period (October 2018 to September 2022), 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.

VEP has seen almost 3,500 veterans hired in new roles since inception.

Program timeline



Target tracking

During the twenty-four month reporting period (1 October 2022 to 30 September 2024) the data quality 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 Continuous full-time Service”. This is due to the fact that certain 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 22 per cent of responses and the data from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 was missing approximately 45 per cent of responses to the self-identified question. The data in the past six months has improved greatly, but is still missing approximately 12 per cent of responses.



10,633+ job applications

were submitted by candidates who identified themselves as a veteran.

Working with the available data, 10,633 job applications were submitted by veterans during the six-month period, with a success rate of 5 per cent. This success rate was the same as the previous six-month period. The figure remains higher than the NSW general population application success rate of 3 per cent for the period.



Application success rate

5% for veterans
3% for civilians.

Job levels won have remained consistent during the period with most veterans joining the public sector at entry level (12 per cent), as individual contributors (74.6 per cent) and team leaders (5.6 per cent). Veterans have also won Manager positions (7.1 per cent), while Senior Executive and Director roles make up 0.8 per cent of positions won by veterans.



87% of veterans

accepted entry level or team member roles.

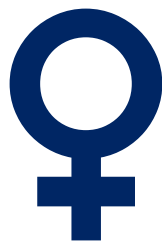


13% of veterans

accepted team leader or manager roles.

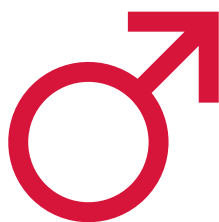
The main barrier identified to date of higher ranks filling senior executive roles is generally based around specific levels of experience required for more senior roles in the public service. For example, experience dealing with commercial contractors, procuring large infrastructure projects, or knowledge of cluster-related issues. This data remains fairly consistent with previous data analysed and reported.

The gender breakdown for the hiring period saw 26 per cent female veterans and 74 per cent of male veterans employed. This figure is interesting as about 20 per cent ADF personnel are female. Additionally, women had 5.3 per cent application success while men only had 5 per cent. Of positions won, 77 per cent were full-time, 9 per cent part-time, 14 per cent casual. Only 3.8 per cent of veterans employed identified as having a disability during the six month period.



26% of veterans hired identified as female.

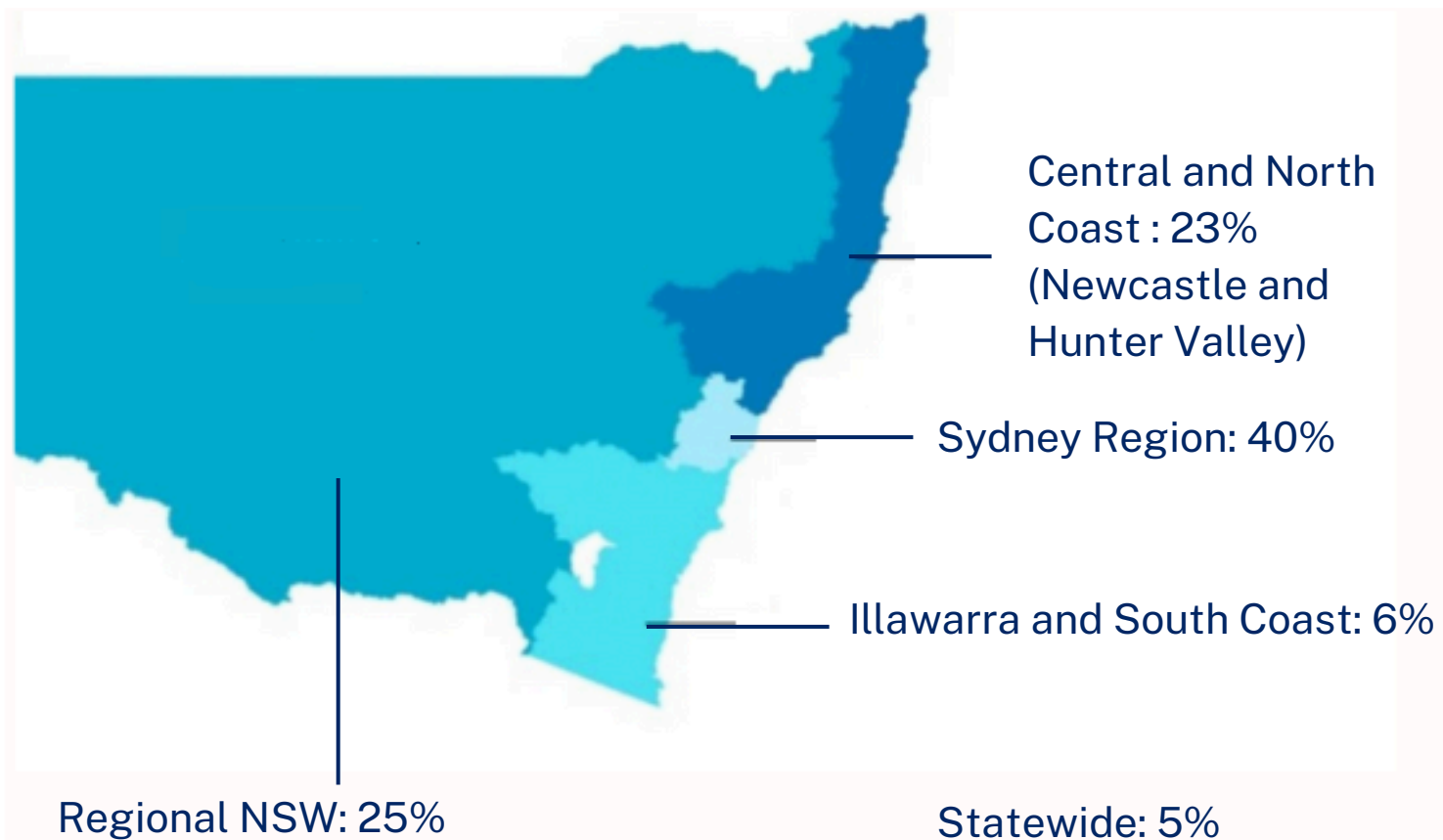
5.3% application success rate.



74% of veterans hired identified as male.

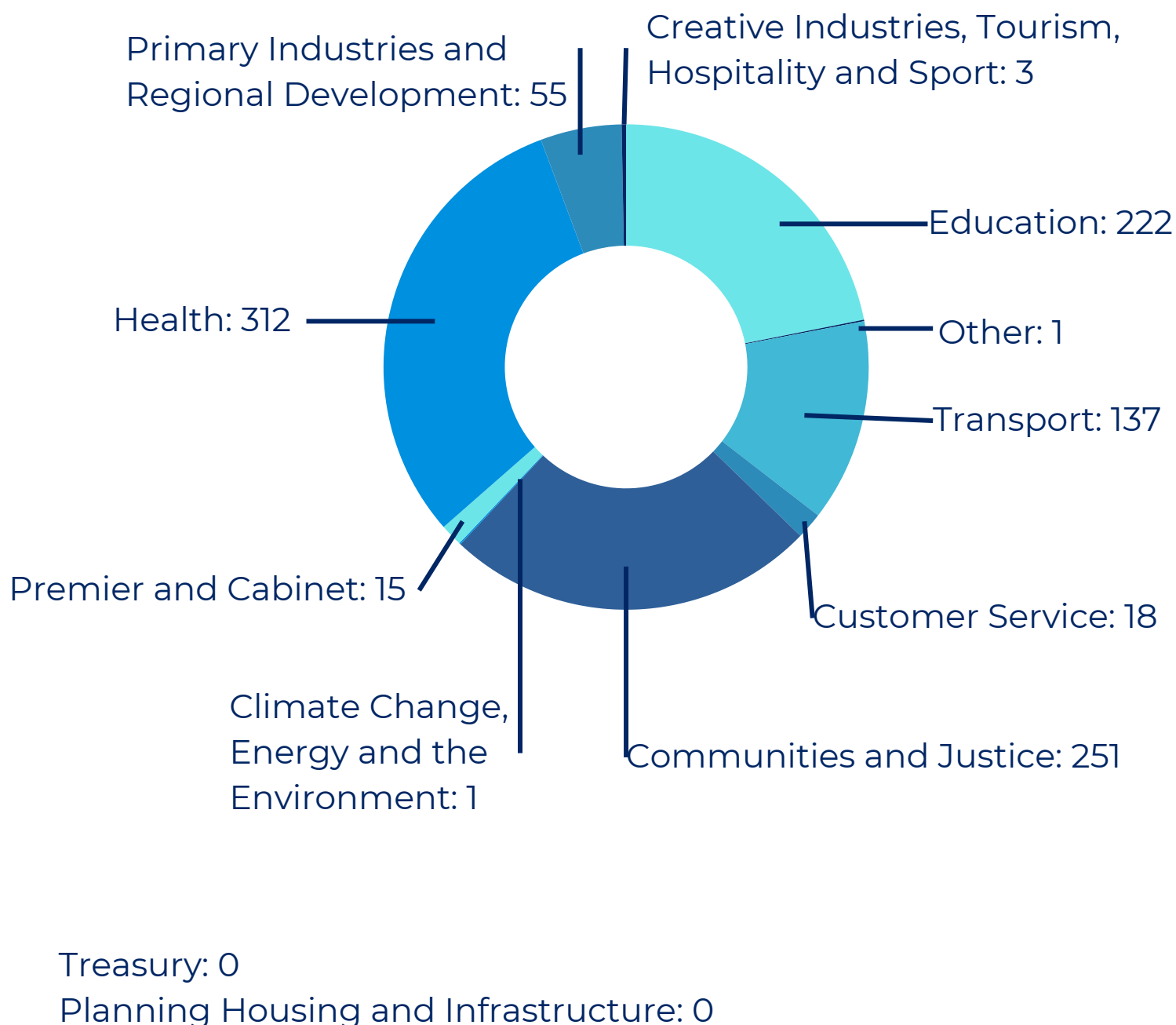
5% application success rate.

The percentage break down of veteran employment by NSW location was Central and North Coast (Newcastle and Hunter Valley) 23 per cent, Illawarra and South Coast, 6 per cent, Regional NSW 25 per cent, Statewide 5 per cent and Sydney Region 40 per cent. It is interesting to note the success rate of veterans applying for Regional NSW positions of 10.8 per cent while veterans applying from the Central and North Coast – Newcastle and Hunter Valley areas have a 9.3 per cent success rate.



Veteran hires per cluster

The two largest clusters in NSW Government are Health, who employ approximately 35 per cent of the 430,000 strong workforce, and Education, who employ approximately 31 per cent. In the past two years Health was the largest employer of veterans with 312 (31 per cent). During this period Education dropped from second to third with 222 (22 per cent). Communities and Justice which accounts for approximately 15 per cent of the workforce (and has all the uniformed positions of emergency services, the NSW Sheriff's Office and Corrective Services NSW) came in second and saw 251 (25 per cent) veterans employed, while Transport has approximately 8 per cent of the workforce and saw 137 (13 per cent) veterans employed.



CLUSTER

HIRES

Health	312
Communities and Justice	251
Education	222
Transport	137
Primary Industries and Regional Development	55
Customer Services	18
Premier and Cabinet	15
Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport	3
Climate Change, Energy and the Environment	1
Other	1
Treasury	0
Planning Housing and Infrastructure	0

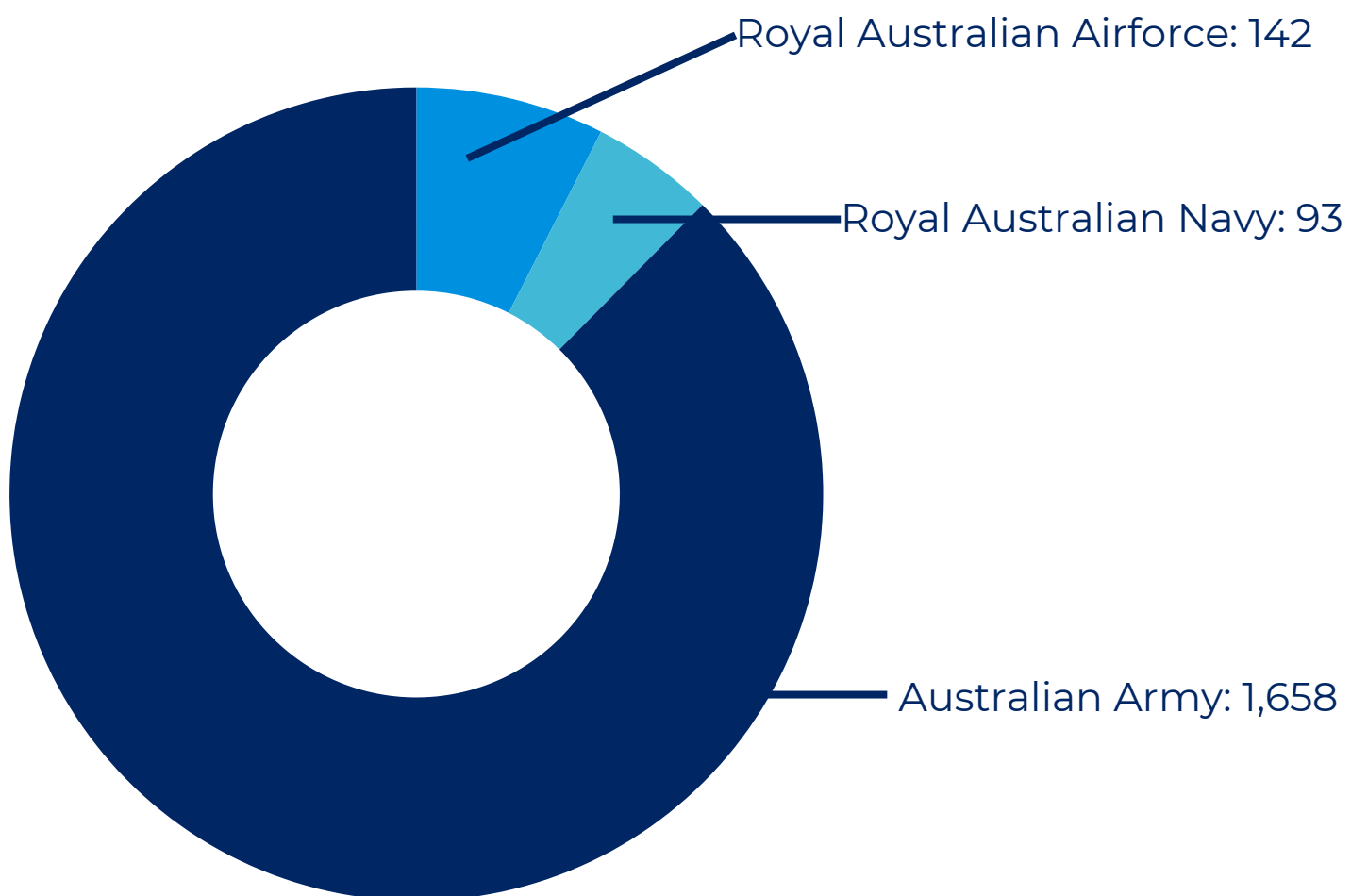
The Public Service Commission's (PSC) 2024 People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) results have given us further insight to veterans working in the public sector. Of an approximately 430,000 strong workforce the PMES only received 193,877 (45.1%) responses against the question, "Have you ever been a serving full-time member of the Australian Defence Force, or a reservist on fulltime continuous service?"

Of the respondents to the question, 3,437 answered "yes", 181,608 "no", and 8,832 "preferred not to say". It is interesting to note there were 434 less veteran respondents than surveyed in the 2023 PMES (3,871).

Of the total 3,437 veteran respondents, 24 per cent have worked in the public sector for 10-20 years and 31 per cent have been employed for more than 20 years. Five per cent of veteran respondents had been employed in the NSW Public Sector for less than 12 months while 6 per cent had been employed for 1-2 years. It is concerning to note that in the last twelve months 481 veterans have been hired within the public sector, but only 165 veterans answered the question they had previously served within the ADF, which is 34.3 per cent.

This year was the second time the PMES asked a specific question regarding Australian Defence Force Reserve service. The question had drop-down boxes to understand Reserve service by Service. 1,893 Reservists responded to the survey, 93 Royal Australian Navy, 1,658 Australian Army, and 142 Royal Australian Air Force Reserve personnel. Of these Reservists, 132 had served less than one year, 752 one to six years, 276 six to eleven years, 112 eleven to sixteen years, 49 sixteen to twenty years, 126 twenty years plus and 420 had retired from Reserve service.

In future VEP will try to 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 sectors. It was interesting to note, from the data available only 89 per cent of the previous Reserve respondents appeared to respond to the 2024 PMES survey.



Stakeholder Engagement

NSW Government Veterans Networking Event



On the Friday before Anzac Day (19 April 2024) VEP hosted its third annual NSW Veterans Networking Event for the program's champions and veterans 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 employers and employees. It was great to welcome the Minister for Veterans, The Hon. David Harris MP, and his wife.

During the event, the Commissioner Fire and Rescue NSW (Jeremy Fewtrell AFSM) announced a commitment from Fire and Rescue NSW to launch its own 'buddy support system' for veterans moving into roles within Fire and Rescue NSW. Chief Superintendent Brad Lawless from the NSW Sheriff's Office provided an update of their 'buddy support system' announced at the 2023 event. VEP looks forward to hosting this annual event on 23 April 2025 at the Anzac Memorial. Generally, the event is held on the Friday prior to Anzac Day, but in 2025 the Friday prior is Good Friday, hence the date of Wednesday 23 April being chosen for 2025.



TAFE NSW (Ranks to Recognition)

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 also offers these services to veterans' spouses and recognised partners.

TAFE NSW has supported 750 veterans who have registered under R2R in 2024, with 36 per cent successfully enrolled at TAFE NSW.

Forty per cent of veterans were referred to Counselling and Career Support, while 60 per cent 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.

In 2022, TAFE NSW launched its 'Teach at TAFE' campaign, providing veterans with the opportunity to become teachers at campuses across NSW. The Paid to Learn program helps individuals transition their careers while inspiring future generations. Participants can earn a teacher's salary while completing a 14-week, full-time Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The program offers flexibility to balance teaching with personal commitments, guaranteed employment with a leading education provider, and continuous professional support.

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After transitioning from the ADF in late 2023, the learner sought guidance from TAFE and was introduced to fee-free training opportunities.

Through the R2R program the learner also received tailored career advice, skills assessments and credit transfers, along with valuable connections to potential employment opportunities at TAFE NSW.

As a result the learner has successfully completed a Certificate III in Business and Certificate III in Accounts Administration and is now working towards a Certificate IV in Business.

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Education NSW (Veteran 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. Education NSW has advised there is no longer any veteran-specific fee-free training with effect from December 2024. However, veterans and their families can access concessions if they meet eligibility criteria. No further explanation was available.

Veterans Employment Workshop

VEP continued to deliver the Veterans Employment Workshop, however the format will be reviewed to ensure we are delivering the best outcomes and flexibility for veterans with the available resources. Data to date indicates that once a veteran completes the workshop, they have a 75 per cent chance of securing a role within six months of completion. 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 for program awareness. 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 practise and gain confidence when applying for roles. Twenty five veterans have attended workshops during the reporting period with two held online to accommodate regional veterans.

ADF Member and Family Transition Seminars



This year the VEP team has been able to attend eight face-to-face ADF Member and Family Transition Seminars (2 in Sydney, 2 in Canberra and 4 in Regional NSW) where we have spoken to approximately 700 veterans about working in the public sector and what VEP can do to assist them.

We have also logged on for 11 virtual seminars, however we have found we have far more interaction via the face-to-face seminars.

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



VEP continues to be invited by Navy to speak at the East Coast Royal Australian Navy Commander and Executive Officer Designate course, at Fleet Base East. VEP's aim is not to try and poach veterans from the ADF but rather to support veterans leaving Defence and maintain ADF capability, encouraging veterans to continue service in the Defence Reserve.

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. Most designated Commanders and Executive Officers have not experienced transition from service or recently submitted a job application, or attended an interview. By allowing the ADF chain of command to understand what support is available for their troops, in the form of VEP, it can help retain capability in a Reserve capacity through NSW Government employment.

Video Testimonials

VEP completed the roll out of profiled veterans, recently transitioned from the ADF, with video interviews of their service and transition. They have provided their thoughts on how they successfully transitioned from the ADF and how VEP had supported them. VEP is looking to develop some future videos focussing on the importance of identifying veteran status to help our data gathering and analysis. As stated above we estimate only 34.3 per cent of veterans who had served less than one year, self-identify by ticking the box. Hopefully a video explaining the importance of ticking the box and what the information is used for, will improve our overall veteran employment numbers and understanding to further develop our program and supports.

Mentoring (Buddy Support System)

In April 2022, Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) launched a pilot Buddy Support System for veterans transitioning to a role with CSNSW. In April 2023 the NSW Sheriff's Office launched its Buddy Support System for veterans transitioning to a role with NSW Sheriffs. The NSW Fire and Rescue Commissioner, Jeremy Fewtrell AFSM spoke about their 'Buddy' support system in April 2024 and their recently re-established NSW Fire Brigades sub-Branch after a nearly 40-year absence.

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 NSW Sheriff's Office at ADF Transitional Seminars. A number of veterans have graduated as prison officers and Sheriffs as part of recent recruiting drives. As the new members settle into their roles, they will be 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.

Champions Network

The VEP team remains focused on building the Champions Network throughout the NSW Public Sector. As there are only two members 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 550 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 advise of what VEP has achieved, upcoming events and initiatives. If you are not on the mailing list and would like a copy, please reach out to VEP.

The screenshot shows the 'Spring Update 2024' newsletter from the NSW Government's Veterans Employment Program. It features a blue header with the NSW Government logo and the program name. The main content is divided into several sections: a welcome message, 'Networking Opportunities' (mentioning DVA employment evenings and a Reserve Employer Support Awards session), 'Veterans Employment roundtable' (planning for the Minister's next roundtable), and 'HAVE YOUR SAY VEP Website Update' (a survey for website improvements). There are also sections for 'ACHIEVEMENTS' (Veterans Employment Report) and 'ENGAGEMENT' (ADF Member and Family Trainers). The footer includes social media icons and the slogan 'Working together, we can make a Difference'.

NSW GOVERNMENT Veterans Employment Program

Spring Update 2024

Welcome to the Veterans Employment Program. We have had a busy few months in the program along with us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

ACHIEVEMENTS
Veterans Employment Report
Read our latest report. The bi-annual report on our Veterans Employment Program targets the NSW Government. This is 23 ahead of target.

ENGAGEMENT
ADF Member and Family Trainers

Networking Opportunities
VEP has spoken at three DVA employment evenings recently in Sydney, showcasing the challenges veterans face in their transition to civilian employment. VEP was also invited to attend the Reserve Employer Support Awards and speak at the RSL LifeCare Winter Series session on veteran employment, HMAS Penguin Command team weekly meeting, Navy Command Designate Course at Fleet Base East and the Inner West Council Group Seminar. These were all an opportunity to discuss the transferable skills of veterans and discuss better ways of working together to support veterans.

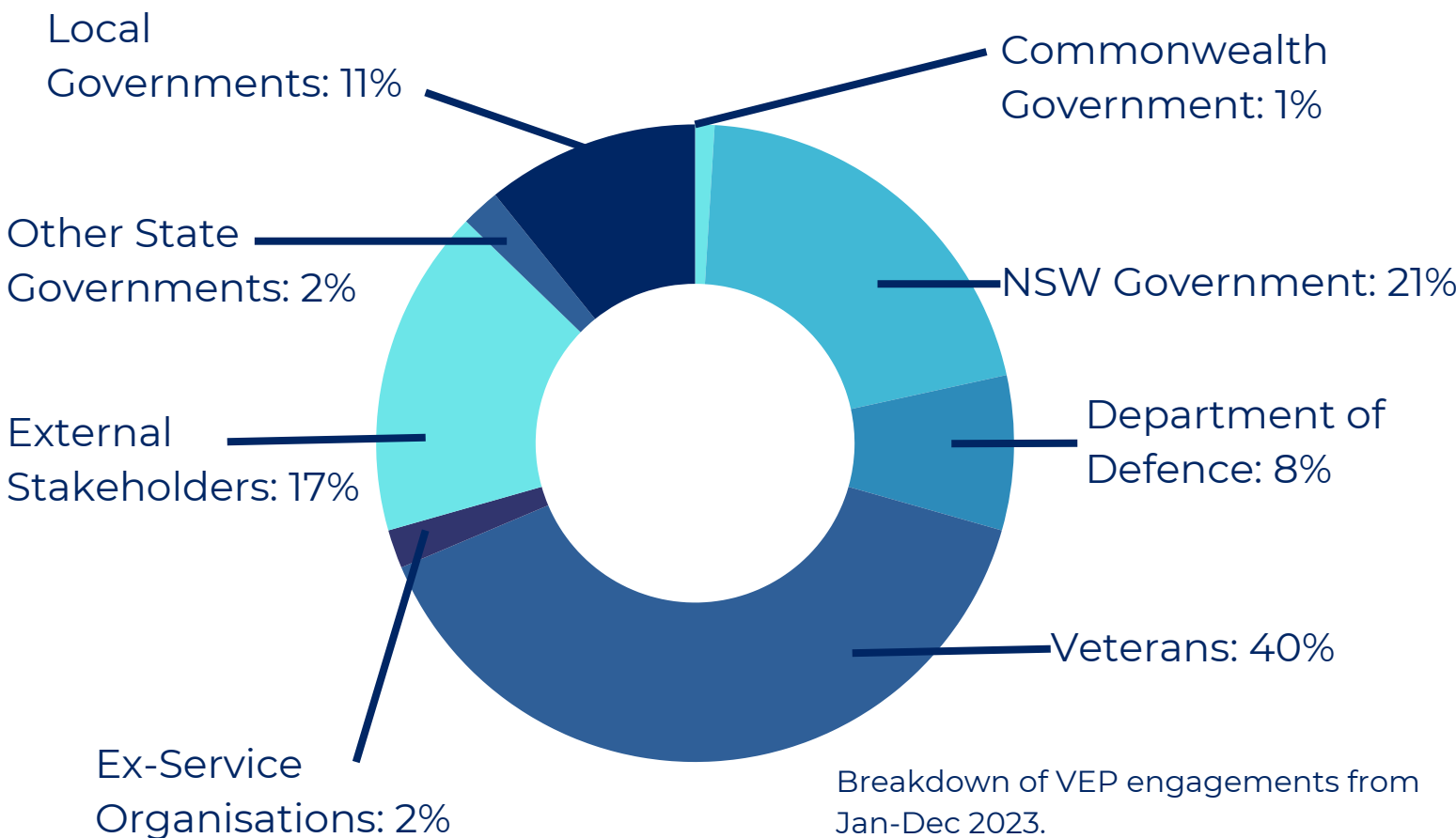
Veterans Employment roundtable
Planning is underway for the Minister's next veterans' employment roundtable with a focus on volunteering. VEP has continued to work with other organisations around support for veterans, contributing to other initiatives within the NSW Government's Veterans Strategy.

HAVE YOUR SAY VEP Website Update
We are looking to update our website and want to hear from you.
What do you think we should include?
What is missing?
What should be changed?
Please email us your thoughts.

Thank you for supporting veterans
"Working together, we can make a Difference"

Stakeholder Engagement

VEP continues to spread the word of the employability of veterans in NSW Government, local governments and the private sector. VEP managed to meet face-to-face and virtually with 1,019 stakeholders in 2024. There were 407 veteran engagements, 209 with NSW Government and 113 with local 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.



NSW Veterans Employment Roundtable



VEP facilitated the fifth annual NSW Veterans Employment Roundtable which was held at the Anzac Memorial on 1 October 2024. It was hosted and chaired by the NSW Minister for Veterans The Hon. David Harris MP and ably assisted by the Director, OVA. The focus this year was on volunteering in the community and how we can support veterans to join volunteer organisations. We were grateful to have representatives from Disaster Relief Australia, NSW SES, Surf Life Saving NSW and NSW RFS present to explain how they can support veterans in their organisations.

Each organisation had the opportunity to present, before proceeding to the collaborative session full of discussion of ways to share initiatives and work together as well as opportunities to support veteran employment initiatives. It built opportunities between organisations to effectively share information about available services and work together to share resources. If you would like to contribute to the 2025 roundtable please reach out to VEP.



Social Media



VEP has continued to expand its use of social media channels to connect with veterans and the veteran community. With over 3,000 followers on Facebook and approximately 840 on Instagram, engagement on these channels is increasing. VEP's LinkedIn following has increased as the channel has evolved, and now has just over 1,700 followers. VEP understands the importance of using different channels to communicate with different veterans. While LinkedIn continues to grow, Facebook still appears to be preferred by younger veterans. Posts include but are not limited to:

- creating awareness of the types of positions available,
- news and events,
- invitations, and
- new initiatives.



Local Government



VEP launched the NSW Local Government Rank to Grade Guide in August 2019. As at 10 December 2024 there were 26 NSW Local Governments that had developed their own form of VEP to support veterans looking for employment. This is 20 per cent of Local Councils across the state. Overall VEP has engaged with 61 (or 48 per cent) local councils about supporting veterans employment and with 26 establishing their own form of VEP that is a 43 per cent success rate. Ten of the councils advised they didn't have capacity, at this stage, to support veteran employment.

The United Services Union, Development and Environmental Professionals' Association, Local Government Association, and Local Government Engineers wrote a joint letter in August 2024 to all local councils asking them to contact us and show their support for veteran employment. Their support creating awareness of veteran's employability has been amazing.

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. They did four 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 (rather than, 200 people applied you didn't get the role) along the lines of, "you applied as a Project Manager, we can see you have done a Diploma, you applied as a Communication Specialist, but have no experience in communications in your CV or cover letter". The veteran may respond, "but I was in the Corps of Signals". Council will reply, "you didn't clearly articulate that, contact the NSW Government VEP for support."; and
- They offered to assist other councils wishing to follow their lead.

Campbelltown City Council has developed a webpage and offered to share its contents with any council (they have just asked it be attributed to them).

The remaining 24 councils have developed their own programs and continued to build on the great work of these initial path finder councils. VEP has implemented two Teams meetings per year to share local council ideas and compare notes. This has also seen the development of videos profiling veterans employed at council, networking groups and the 'pilot' Clarence Valley Veterans Employment Program and Reserve Expo.



Six monthly virtual meetings are held to encourage Local Governments to support each other in working together and sharing their veteran initiatives. These events have continued to grow and councils are starting to share their veteran employment data.

The numbers are only small at the moment, but from little things, big things grow, and we look forward to gathering more data to better understand veteran employment within local governments. Some roles that veterans have secured include; Apprentice Heavy Vehicle Mechanic and a Parking Ranger, Supervisor and outdoor labourer, Strategic Business Analyst & Office Coordinator and Landscape/Environmental Assessment Officers.

Clarence Valley Expo

The Clarence Valley Veterans Employment Program and Reserve Expo was developed in partnership between Clarence Valley Council, VEP, the ADF Reserve and Employer Support, RSL LifeCare and the local reserve unit 41 Royal New South Wales Regiment. The expo was conducted as a 'pilot' in two sessions, targeted at veterans and employers. Overall, the expo was considered a success. Veterans were generally excited to know more about employment and education in the local area, as were potential employees. Further investigation is being conducted where to hold an expo in 2025.



Looking ahead

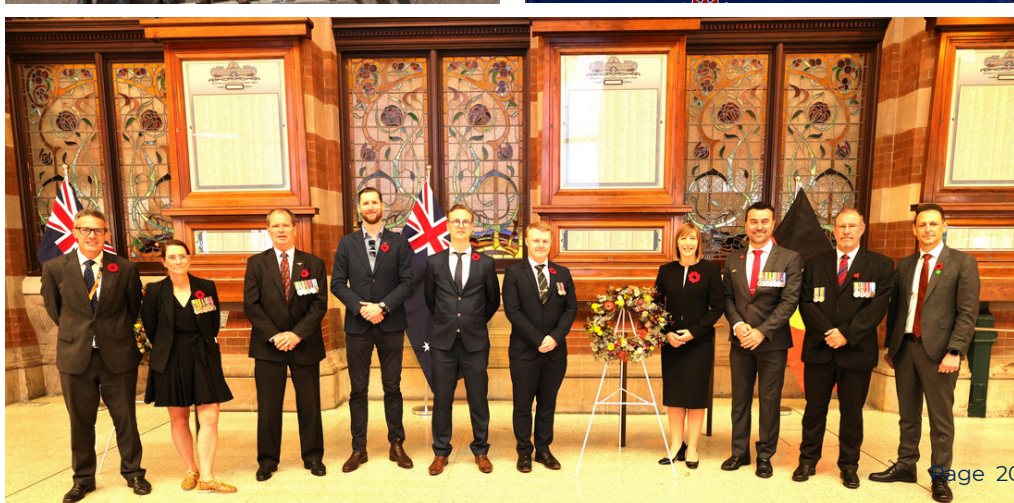
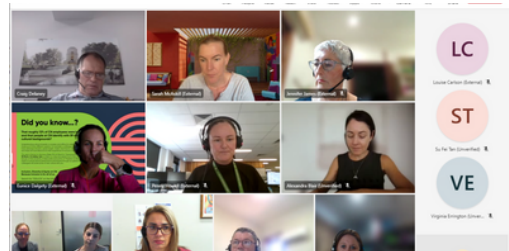
Throughout 2025 the VEP team plans to provide veterans with tools and resources to help them apply for roles in the NSW Public sector.

VEP will continue to build a network of local councils committed to employing veterans and promote local councils as an employer of choice for veterans.

VEP is also looking into assisting the ADF to maintain capability through the continued support and employment of Reserve Force personnel. VEP will continue to analyse data to identify trends and work out ways to better engage veterans.

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

“Working together we can make a difference!”





Veterans Employment Program