

# NSW Veterans Action Plan

2023-2024



## A guide to acronyms

<b>ADF</b>	Australian Defence Force
<b>AIHW</b>	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
<b>DCJ</b>	Department of Communities and Justice (NSW Government)
<b>DCS</b>	Department of Customer Service (NSW Government)
<b>DMFS</b>	Defence Member and Family Support
<b>DOE</b>	Department of Education (NSW Government)
<b>DPC</b>	Department of Premier and Cabinet (NSW Government)
<b>DPIE</b>	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (NSW Government)
<b>DVA</b>	Department of Veterans' Affairs (Australian Government)
<b>ESO</b>	Ex-Service Organisation
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>NCVH</b>	National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare
<b>OLG</b>	Office of Local Government (NSW Government)
<b>OOS</b>	NSW Office of Sport (NSW Government)
<b>OVA</b>	NSW Office for Veterans Affairs (NSW Government)
<b>RSL NSW</b>	The Returned and Services League of Australia (NSW Branch)
<b>SES</b>	State Emergency Service (NSW Government)
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>TAFE</b>	Technical and Further Education NSW (NSW Government)
<b>TNSW</b>	Transport for NSW (NSW Government)
<b>TSY</b>	Treasury (NSW Government)
<b>VEP</b>	Veterans Employment Program
<b>WNSW</b>	Women NSW (NSW Government)



# 1. Recognition and Commemoration

No.	Action	Lead	Target
<b>State-level commemoration</b>			
1.1	<b>COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS</b> Work with RSL NSW on commemorative events to mark significant dates, such as Anzac Day and Vietnam Veterans Day, and recognise the service of different groups.	OVA	Annual calendar of significant veterans' days acknowledged
1.1.1	<b>ANZAC DAY</b> Work with RSL NSW to coordinate whole of government activities in Sydney, including the Dawn Service in Martin Place, the parade through the CBD and the lunchtime service at the Anzac Memorial. Support includes security and crowd management, logistics and media.	DPC	Annually
1.1.2	<b>ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VETERANS COMMEMORATION SERVICE</b> Support the NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Commemoration Committee to host a service that combines conventional military protocol with Indigenous ceremonial display. The service is held on the Friday of Reconciliation Week in May at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park.	OVA	Annually
1.1.3	<b>REMEMBRANCE DAY</b> Project red poppies, a sign of remembrance, onto the Opera House sails on Remembrance Day to acknowledge the signing of the Armistice that ended the First World War and sacrifice by service men and women. The NSW Government State Service is held at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, led by DPC.	DPC/ OVA	Annually
1.1.4	<b>KOREAN AND VIETNAM WAR RECEPTIONS</b> Hold receptions to acknowledge the service of Korean and Vietnam War veterans and their partners.	DPC	Events to be held in 2023 and 2024
1.1.5	<b>RECOGNISING WOMEN</b> Hold an annual event at the Anzac Memorial to recognise the service of women veterans, and support networking and connection, during Women's Week.	WNSW/ OVA	Annually
1.1.6	<b>WAR WIDOWS DAY</b> The NSW Government has designated 19 October as War Widows Day, a special day for the State to officially recognise war widows and widowers of members of the Australian Defence Force.	OVA	Annually
1.1.7	<b>KOKODA DAY</b> The NSW Government has designated 3 November as NSW Kokoda Day, to officially acknowledge the Kokoda campaign of the Second World War.	OVA	Annually
1.2	<b>ANZAC MEMORIAL</b> Operate and maintain the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, the peak State memorial that recognises our history and heritage. Operation of the Memorial includes delivery of education programs including outreach, lifelong learning and public tours. Operations also include supporting volunteers and public events (such as commemorative ceremonies), as well as maintenance of the site. The Memorial is overseen by a Board of Trustees supported by OVA.	OVA	Annual reporting on activities to Parliament
1.3	<b>WAR MEMORIALS REGISTER</b> OVA and the State Library maintain the NSW War Memorials Register, an online database of over 3,500 war memorials plus the more than 250,000 veterans' names that are recorded on those memorials. The Register's data is continuously reviewed and enhanced.	OVA	Provide an annual review of additions and updates to the register

No.	Action	Lead	Target
<b>Community-based commemoration</b>			
1.4	<p><b>HERITAGE AND HISTORY ACTION PLAN – COMMUNITY WAR MEMORIALS</b></p> <p>Create additional resources to assist the community conserve and protect war memorials to support the existing Community War Memorials Fund program, which awards a total of \$250,000 each year in grants of up to \$10,000 each for the conservation, protection and repair of existing war memorials.</p>	OVA	<p>Share new resources via newsletters and web platforms.</p> <p>Deliver annual war memorial grant funding via two rounds per annum</p>
1.4.1	<p><b>HERITAGE AND HISTORY ACTION PLAN – DIVERSE VOICES</b></p> <p>Explore veterans' heritage through the diversity of their experiences. Work with different cohorts of veterans to co-design an approach that tells their stories and publicises them through various channels and mediums and on the NSW War Memorial Register.</p>	OVA	<p>Continue to create stories that increase awareness of veteran service and communicate through OVA channels</p>
1.5	<p><b>ANZAC COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM</b></p> <p>Provide a total of \$100,000 for projects that commemorate and educate New South Wales communities about the service and sacrifices of current military service men and women, and for projects which benefit the NSW veteran community.</p>	OVA	<p>One round per year closed on Remembrance Day, promoted through newsletters and other channels</p>
<b>Education and research</b>			
1.6	<p><b>PREMIER'S ANZAC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP</b></p> <p>Deliver a study tour that is awarded to up to 20 high school history students and three accompanying teachers. Scholars travel to battlefields, memorials and sites of historical significance, in Australia and overseas.</p>	OVA	<p>One scholarship tour delivered per year</p>
1.6.1	<p><b>ANZAC MEMORIAL TRUSTEES' MILITARY HISTORY PRIZE</b></p> <p>Establish the Anzac Memorial Trustees Military History Prize valued at \$10,000 as part of the 2023 NSW Premier's History Awards in collaboration with the State Library of NSW.</p>	OVA/ Anzac Memorial	<p>Annually</p>
1.7	<p><b>SCHOOL EDUCATION RESOURCES</b></p> <p>Provide NSW schools with access to teaching and learning resources connecting commemoration, local war memorials and veterans' stories.</p>	OVA/ Anzac Memorial	<p>Annual promotion to schools aligning with three key commemorations</p>
1.8	<p><b>RECOGNISING AND REPRESENTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SERVICE</b></p> <p>Scope and trial a new initiative that will showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service and engage young people in the Anzac ideals.</p>	OVA/ Anzac Memorial	<p>One program developed and trialled</p>
1.9	<p><b>NSW AND COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT DATA</b></p> <p>Progressively consider NSW data on veterans accessing programs or services, as the data becomes available as well as census data to better inform programs, projects and collaborations.</p>	DCS	<p>Insights from data used to inform priorities and shared with other agencies to support decision making</p>

## 2. Education and Employment

No.	Action	Lead	Target
<b>Access to education</b>			
2.1	<p><b>RANKS TO RECOGNITION</b></p> <p>Assist veterans to transition into the civilian workforce by providing career advice, skills assessment, training gap analysis, recognition of prior learning, other support services, and vocational training. Support veterans to achieve a formal qualification that maximises civilian employment opportunities.</p>	TAFE	Attend DMFS Transition Seminars to promote Ranks to Recognition. Ongoing reporting via VEP newsletters
2.2	<p><b>VETERANS TEACHING STEM</b></p> <p>Continue to tailor the Mid-Career Transition to Teaching Program as a pathway for veterans to become teachers in STEM in NSW schools.</p>	DOE	Attend DMFS Transition Seminars to promote the Mid-Career Transition to Teaching Program to veterans
2.3	<p><b>VETERANS SKILLS PROGRAM</b></p> <p>Fully funded and subsidised training offered by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to support veterans to learn new skills and gain qualifications to help them find the right job and have a rewarding civilian life. The program is open to veterans and their partners/spouses through registered training organisations including TAFE NSW.</p>	DOE	750 veterans enrolled in training programs by 2024
2.4	<p><b>TERTIARY ENTRY</b></p> <p>Work with NSW universities to identify and promote ways to expand existing pathways for veterans and their partners.</p>	OVA	Engage with universities offering veteran support programs and help promote these to the community
<b>Pathways to employment</b>			
2.5	<p><b>VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM</b></p> <p>Support veterans with tools to help them apply for roles in the public service. Support hiring managers through communication and education.</p> <p>Review the potential to adapt the program and the workshops for specific cohorts.</p>	OVA	500 veterans employed in the public service per year
2.6	<p><b>VETERANS TEACH AT TAFE</b></p> <p>Develop transition pathways for veterans to explore and provide the opportunity of working as a TAFE teacher.</p>	TAFE	Conduct two veteran-focused Teach at TAFE Information sessions each year and attend DMFS Transition Seminars to promote Teach at TAFE

No.	Action	Lead	Target
2.7	<p><b>PREFERRED EMPLOYERS: LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE</b></p> <p>Build on the existing 'Rank to Grade Guide' for local government and work with LGNSW to promote local councils as veterans' employers of choice.</p> <p>Encourage local government to record veteran status in employment records to enable the baseline measurement and evaluation of veteran employment programs and initiatives.</p>	OLG/ OVA	Six LGAs per year
2.8	<p><b>PREFERRED EMPLOYERS: CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS</b></p> <p>Develop partnerships with the private sector to increase employment of veterans.</p>	OVA	One veterans' employment roundtable held annually
2.9	<p><b>VETERAN WORKSHOPS</b></p> <p>Support veterans to apply for NSW Government roles.</p>	OVA	Three workshops held annually
2.10	<p><b>VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS INITIATIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry Placements Program (IPP)</li> <li>• Regional Defence Networks Program</li> <li>• Defence Industry Trade Shows</li> </ul>	Defence Industries/ Investment NSW	Launch IPP in early 2023 with a veteran stream. Deliver targeted veterans sessions and initiatives
2.11	<p><b>RETURN TO WORK NEEDS</b></p> <p>Women NSW will continue to build on and promote the Women's Financial Toolkit and the Return to Work Toolkit to ensure women, including veterans, have access to information they need.</p>	WNSW	OVA to communicate about Toolkits three times a year
<b>Support for families and spouses</b>			
3.1	<p><b>VETERANS' SPOUSES AND PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Continue to promote the Ranks to Recognition program to spouses, providing access to career counselling, courses with reduced or no fees and support in recognising their skills.</p>	TAFE	Report the figures as part of the biannual VEP reporting

### 3. Community and Volunteering

No.	Action	Lead	Target
<b>Veterans in the community</b>			
3.2	<b>EXPANDING VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES</b> Work in collaboration with volunteering organisations to explore opportunities to connect veterans to volunteer roles.	OVA	Establish a pilot with a volunteer organisation
3.3	<b>EXPANDING VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN SPORT</b> Using funding provided by the Office of Sport under the VetFit grant to Veteran Sport Australia, develop opportunities, including a digital platform, to support volunteering by veterans in sport and active recreation.	OOS	Resources created to increase volunteering
3.4	<b>SUPPORTING CARERS</b> Work with key ESOs to provide information and resources to the veteran community to profile the needs of carers.	DCJ/ OVA	Resources identified and shared
3.5	<b>AGEING WELL IN NSW: SENIORS STRATEGY</b> Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021-2031 recognises being a veteran as a factor that can lead to increased vulnerability. This will be considered by all agencies when developing activities under the Strategy.	DCJ	Recognition that aged veterans are vulnerable
3.6	<b>NSW WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2023-2026</b> The NSW Women's Strategy includes women veterans (and the women partners of veterans and service members) as a focus community. OVA will contribute veteran-specific actions to the DCJ action plan for the NSW Women's Strategy 2023-2026.	WNSW	Develop actions for the DCJ Women's Strategy Action Plan
3.7	<b>PEER MENTORING</b> Explore partnerships that leverage expertise in mentoring programs to facilitate peer mentors. The first government agency to trial this approach was Corrective Services NSW. Mentoring will be implemented in the Office of the Sheriff in 2023, and subsequently across other uniformed NSW Government agencies.	OVA/ Uniform agencies	NSW Sheriff and Police programs established
3.8	<b>VETERANS FORUM</b> Bring veterans together to explore governance issues that Ex-Service Organisations face.	OVA	One forum in 2023

No.	Action	Lead	Target
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>			
3.9	<b>SPORT</b> The Office of Sport will explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership between veteran organisations and sporting organisations to increase participation by veterans in sport and active recreation.	OOS	An annual report provided by OOS
3.10	<b>VETERANS AND FAMILIES HUBS</b> Work with the Commonwealth, NSW Government agencies and ESOs to help ensure that coordinated care and supports are linked and accessible through NSW Veterans and Families Hubs. The NSW Government's submission to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide emphasised the need for additional Veterans Wellbeing Centres, including at Holsworthy and the Tweed.	OOS/ DCJ/NSW Health/ OVA	Support NSW related Veterans and Families Hubs meetings and events through provision of NSW data, connections and information
3.11	<b>ESO COLLABORATION</b> Regularly engage with peak ESOs, RSL NSW, War Widows and Legacy to understand current concerns for veterans.	OVA	Twice annual meetings
<b>Access to information</b>			
3.12	<b>VETERAN'S SERVICE NSW INFORMATION PAGE</b> Provide information for veterans on concessions, services, and benefits. Assist veterans to understand the extensive services and supports that are available. Enhance and update the webpage with new information as required.	Service NSW/ OVA	Ongoing updates as required
3.13	<b>PATHWAY TO NSW</b> Complete and evaluate the pilot program to further refine appropriate means to support veterans and their families to access NSW Government services. Attend DMFS Transition Seminars to inform veterans about Savings Finder and other NSW Government Services available to them and their families.	Service NSW	Attend DMFS Transition Seminars in 2023 and 2024
3.14	<b>INFORMATION THROUGH SENIORS CARD</b> Increase the focus on veterans in communications with card members, including a minimum of six pieces of content focused on veterans across all Seniors Card channels.	DCJ	Six pieces of veteran-specific content per year



## 4. Support Initiatives

No.	Action	Lead	Target
<b>Concessions and supports</b>			
4.1	<p><b>GOLD OPAL CARD</b></p> <p>Provide access to the Gold Opal card to all holders of a Veteran Gold Card in NSW. Cardholders are entitled to travel on the Opal network for no more than \$2.50 per day, and receive rural and regional concessions in the Regional Excursion Daily bus tickets (\$2.50) and Country Pensioner Excursion tickets (also \$2.50).</p>	TNSW	Online application process available year round
4.2	<p><b>ENERGY REBATES</b></p> <p>Provide energy rebates targeted to assist low income and vulnerable customers, including veterans, pay their energy bills. Additionally, the Energy Account Payment Assistance Scheme provides financial help to customers experiencing acute short-term financial crisis or emergency to prevent the risk of disconnection from their energy supply.</p>	DPIE	OVA to communicate rebates three times per year
4.3	<p><b>NATIONAL PARK ENTRY FEE CONCESSION</b></p> <p>Provide an entry fee concession to eligible veterans.</p>	DPIE (NPWS)	OVA to communicate concessions three times per year
<b>Housing and homelessness</b>			
4.4	<p><b>RENT CHOICE VETERANS</b></p> <p>Partner with RSL LifeCare to support eligible veterans and their families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find or retain a lease on a private rental property</li> <li>• Pay a subsidy towards the rent for up to three years</li> <li>• Gain skills and work opportunities to help sustain a tenancy and achieve housing independence in the private rental market.</li> </ul>	DCJ	60 Clients assisted per year in 2022/23 and 2023/24
4.5	<p><b>LINK2HOME VETERANS AND EX-SERVICE</b></p> <p>Provide veterans and ex-service personnel who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless with a dedicated 24/7 state-wide information and telephone referral service providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about local services</li> <li>• An assessment to determine what kind of help is needed</li> <li>• Referral to a service, including a homelessness service, support service, veterans' services, temporary accommodation, or a community housing provider.</li> </ul>	DCJ	Promote to support up to 280 projected calls per annum
<b>Physical and mental health</b>			
4.6	<p><b>NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VETERANS' HEALTHCARE (NCVH)</b></p> <p>The NCVH provides a case-managed service for current and ex-serving ADF members. The service incorporates clinical expertise of psychiatry, rehabilitation, pain management and drug health specialties, supported by a collaborative multidisciplinary team of clinical psychologists and allied health staff. Fussell House is an on-site residential facility providing accommodation to those being treated at the NCVH and their families or carers.</p>	NSW Health	Up to 75 current and ex-serving ADF members to receive comprehensive integrated care per year

No.	Action	Lead	Target
4.7	<p><b>COPE PILOT PROGRAM EVALUATION, THE BUTTERY</b></p> <p>In partnership with NSW Health and DCJ, The Buttery's COPE residential program integrates evidence-based treatments for Post-Traumatic Stress and Substance Use Disorders, tailored for veterans. A 12-month external evaluation into the effectiveness of the program commenced in April 2022.</p>	NSW Health/ OVA	Share findings of the evaluation by 30 June 2023
4.8	<p><b>GET HEALTHY</b></p> <p>Support participants to make healthy lifestyle choices including healthy eating, staying active, alcohol reduction and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Provide wrap around services including phone health coaching from a qualified exercise physiologist or dietitian, support tools and education.</p>	NSW Health	OVA to communicate support services three times per year
4.9	<p><b>ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG TREATMENT SERVICES</b></p> <p>NSW Health provides alcohol and other drug treatment services through public and NSW Health funded non-government drug and alcohol organisations. Information about these services is available through the Your Room website (<a href="http://www.yourroom.com.au">www.yourroom.com.au</a>). Telephone and web-based drug and alcohol support and information for veterans is available through the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) and for veterans' families through Family Drug Support (FDS).</p>	NSW Health	OVA to communicate treatment services three times per year
4.10	<p><b>TOWARDS ZERO SUICIDES INITIATIVES</b></p> <p>The NSW Government is funding and implementing the Towards Zero Suicides initiatives which are carefully designed to work together to prevent suicides occurring in our communities. This major commitment to suicide prevention includes investment of \$143.4 million over four years from 2022-23, building on the \$87 million over three years from 2019-20 to 2021-22 for the Towards Zero Suicides initiatives.</p> <p>The Towards Zero Suicides initiatives are complemented by suicide prevention initiatives co-funded with the Australian Government under the Bilateral Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, a combined \$383 million investment from 2022-23 to 2025-26.</p>	NSW Health	Reduce the rate of suicide in NSW by 20 per cent by 2023
4.11	<p><b>DATA MONITORING TO SUPPORT SUICIDE PREVENTION</b></p> <p>NSW Government has agreed to support the Australian Government in providing information to the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. In April 2020, NSW Police introduced amendments to their initial reports to the NSW State Coroner if a suspected suicide involves a current or former ADF member. DCJ records this information and transfers it to NSW Health via the NSW Suicide Monitoring System which provides data on suspected suicides and confirmed suicides on a monthly basis. Work by DCJ and NSW Health is underway to assess data completeness to support the development of future reporting capacity.</p>	DCJ	Establishment of timely, routine data sharing on ADF status with the National Commissioner by end 2024, subject to the development of an appropriate information sharing arrangement
4.12	<p><b>WORKING WITH DVA AND AIHW</b></p> <p>Work collaboratively with DVA and AIHW to explore how to better use their data on veterans to inform our service planning and responses.</p>	DCJ	OVA attends regular meetings with DVA and AIHW in the context of national meetings

No.	Action	Lead	Target
4.13	<p><b>ASSISTANCE DOGS FOR VETERANS</b></p> <p>Provide trained assistance dogs to current and former Australian Defence Force members to help them better manage injuries and illnesses including PTSD. The dogs are trained by inmates at the Bathurst Correctional Centre under the guidance of professional dog trainers.</p>	Corrective Services NSW/ Defence Community Dogs	Provide up to 16 dogs to veterans per year
<b>Other supports and services</b>			
4.14	<p><b>VETERANS RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP</b></p> <p>Continue to explore opportunities to collaborate with the Commonwealth, universities and ESOs to improve the knowledge and understanding of veterans and their families in NSW.</p>	OVA	Participate in various data and research working groups and forums
4.15	<p><b>YOU ARE WELCOME</b></p> <p>Publish resources that welcome and support the children of veterans within NSW Government school communities.</p>	DOE	Resources published in Term 1, 2023
4.16	<p><b>LEGAL SUPPORT FOR VETERANS</b></p> <p>Provide targeted legal advice, assistance and representation to current and former members of the ADF and their dependents through the Veterans' Advocacy Service (VAS). The VAS also conducts outreach in New South Wales, Community Legal Education (CLE), and contributes to law reform.</p> <p><b>Civil Law</b></p> <p>Provide free advice and assistance to veterans on a range of civil law issues, such as fines, employment, housing, consumer law, credit and debt, discrimination and homelessness.</p> <p><b>Family Law</b></p> <p>Help veterans with a range of family law issues, including early intervention to avoid lengthy litigation, child support and domestic and family violence.</p> <p><b>Criminal Law</b></p> <p>Assist veterans charged with criminal offences by providing legal advice, minor assistance, duty appearances and case representation at courts throughout NSW.</p>	Legal Aid NSW	OVA to communicate Legal Aid services three times per year
4.17	<p><b>USE OF CROWN LANDS</b></p> <p>Continue to support veterans through providing for reduced rents in line with the DPIE's Financial Concessions Policy, and by providing grants to develop, maintain and improve Crown reserves and sites under the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund (CRIF).</p> <p>Help veterans and other Crown land users to locate reserves and find relevant information about the activities that can be undertaken on the reserve and the facilities that are available, via the directory of Crown reserves.</p>	DPIE	OVA to communicate Crown Land services three times per year

