

Veterans Employment Program

October 2018 - September 2020



Message from the Acting Minister for Veterans

The Hon. Dr Geoff Lee MP



The Veterans Employment Program was extended in November 2018 for a further four years, with the Premier setting the public sector a target of hiring an additional 1,000 veterans by 2023. Once again, I am extremely proud of the NSW Government's Veterans Employment Program which recently confirmed the figure of 951 veterans employed in new roles within the New South Wales public sector. This supports the fact the program is achieving the two key aims – to communicate with veterans about working in the New South Wales public sector, and to build a network of collaborators who advocate for the transferable skills veterans bring to the workforce.

Veterans employment is a key pillar of the New South Wales Government Veterans Strategy which is currently being developed and due for release in 2021. I am especially proud of the way the Veterans Employment Program continues to be a leader in the field of veterans employment within both the public and private sector. I was delighted to co-chair the first New South Wales Veterans Employment Roundtable held last year, at Parliament House. The Roundtable brought together the key thought providers from the Veteran Employment community within New South Wales from both the public and private sector, the Australian Defence Force and ex-service organisations. The key takeaway from the event was future collaboration commitment from all attendees.

As the Minister for TAFE, I am also pleased that our Veterans Education Program is helping veterans to access further education and training.

In the six months from 1 April to 30 September 2020, 307 veterans were employed in new roles within the NSW public sector. This brings the total figure of veterans employed in the public sector, since October 2018 to 951. This is ahead of the New South Wales Government target to employ 1,000 veterans in new roles by 2023.

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. During the Centenary of Anzac period, the program resulted in 831 veterans being hired, significantly exceeding the original target of 200. In November 2018 the Premier committed to a four-year extension of the Program with a new target of 1,000 veterans employed in new roles within the NSW public sector by 2023.

As of 30 September 2020, 951 veterans have been employed in new roles. The VEP team set an incremental target to see 125 veterans employed every six months. From 1 April to 30 September 2020, 307 veterans were employed in new roles. The period has traditionally seen an average of 285 veterans recruited. VEP is very pleased to exceed the target despite the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the people of New South Wales.

Target tracking

April 2020 - September 2020

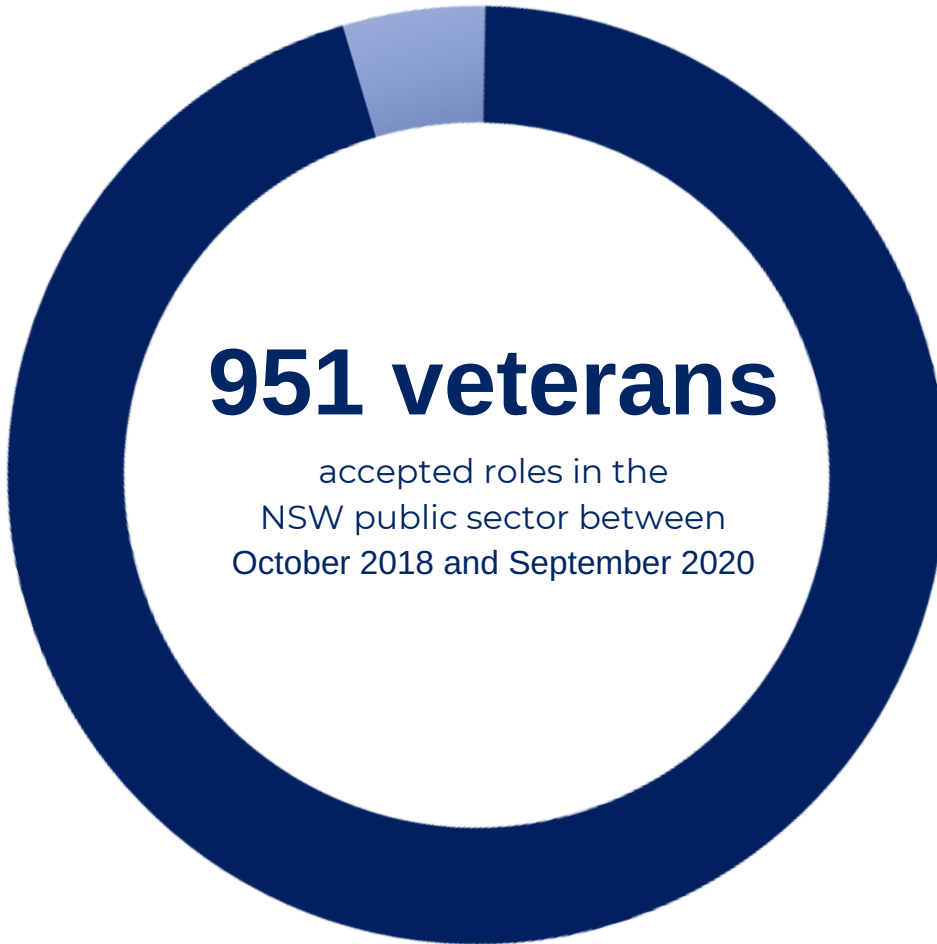
During the six-month reporting period 5,581 job applications were submitted by veterans, with a success rate of 6.2 per cent. This success rate continues to climb and has risen by half a per cent in the past six months. It remains slightly higher than the NSW general population application success rate of 5.0 per cent (2019, PSC data). Job levels won have remained strong and consistent during the period with the majority of veterans joining the public sector at the entry level, team member and as individual contributors. Veterans have also managed to win senior executive, director and manager roles.

Stronger Communities (49 per cent) remains the lead veteran employment cluster, while Education (18 per cent) overtook Transport (12 per cent) which has consistently remained in second place since veteran employment reporting began in 2016. These figures are likely to change once complete information is available for the reporting period, after the recruiting platform change over is complete. The new cluster Regional NSW (11 per cent) was the fourth largest employer of veterans, likely due to its recent establishment and recruitment activity. The Department of Planning Industry and Environment (8 per cent) were fifth.

VEP continues to work closely with the Public Service Commission to ensure all veterans entering the NSW public sector are captured. During the reporting period several clusters and agencies changed their recruiting platforms from Taleo to other systems such as CornerStone, Success Factors and Pageup. The Commission is working to ensure all clusters and agencies can still capture and report veteran employment information while the new systems are fully implemented. We will continue to track all veterans entering the public sector.

Target tracking

October 2018 - September 2020



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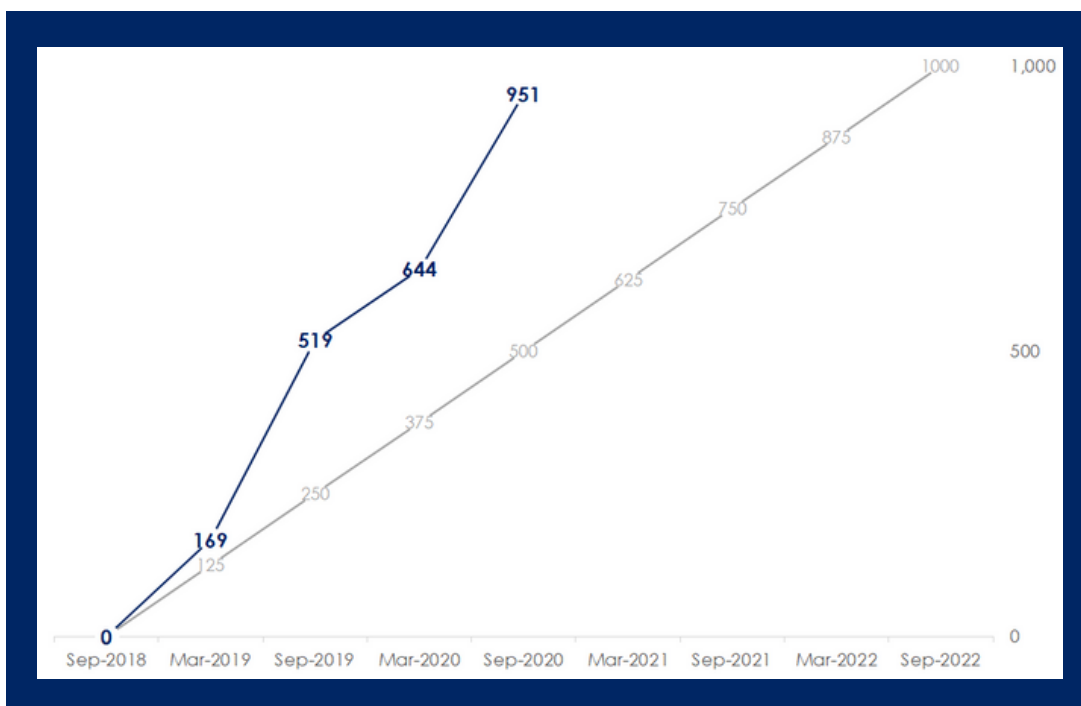
Change from prior 6 months

95.1%

% of the NSW
Government target
achieved

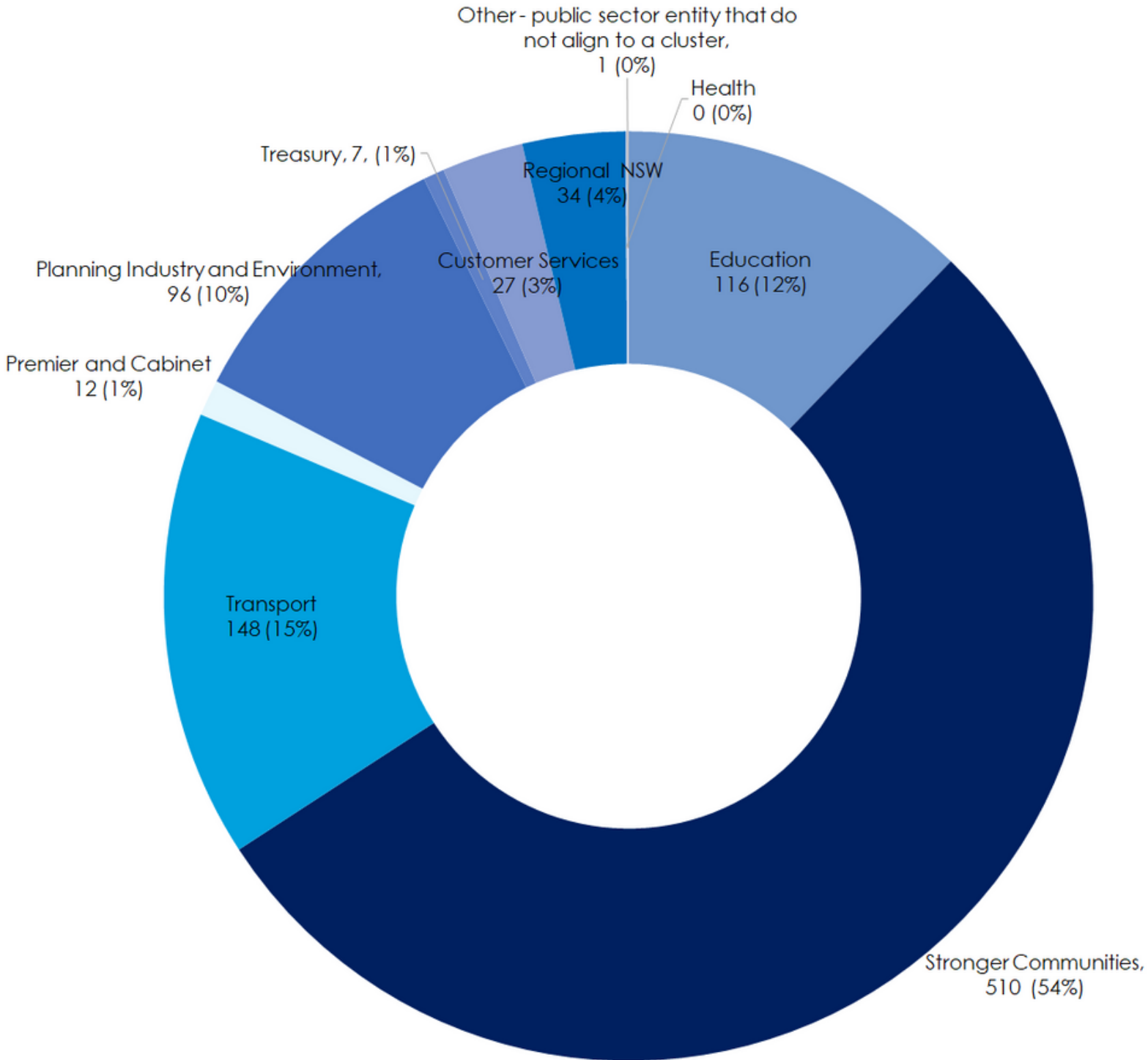
AHEAD

2 year trend



Veteran hires per cluster

October 2018 - September 2020



*Number of veteran hires per cluster October 2018 to September 2020

Engagement

I've just completed my Project Management Certificate IV online. VEP staff were so supportive from the outset and helped me smooth out and resolve the administration issues I encountered with my TAFE enrolment.

I strongly recommend applying for VEP study, it's a very easy process and most courses take up very little time. I went to class after work once a week.

Peter R

The Veterans Education Program, in partnership with TAFE NSW, continues to assist eligible veterans to progress new civilian career paths by funding students for TAFE Smart and Skilled courses.

The first application round closed in Jan 2021, with the next round due to open in March 2021. At the end of the 2019/2020 financial year 17 veterans received a share of \$49,000 towards their course fees.

VEP has also worked with Training Services NSW and TAFE NSW to ensure all veterans with a disability (that may affect their ability to study) are recognised, amending previous wording which specified a person must receive a 'pension' to receive free education. Now contemporary veterans, supported by the recent Compensation Acts who do not receive a pension, but hold a white or gold card can access fee free training, if they can demonstrate their disability impacts their ability to study.

VEP supported Service NSW with the launch of a 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.

As COVID-19 restrictions were first implemented, VEP worked to change the direction of the Program. One of these outcomes was to conduct a website review for both content and design. This resulted in a refresh of wording, design and style, supporting it to become more user friendly. VEP has continued to expand social media channels to connect with veterans and the veteran community across the state. With over 2,700 followers on Facebook and growth in both Instagram and LinkedIn pages, engagement with these channels is increasing. The implementation of branded tiles and hashtags across Instagram contributed to this growth. Since January 2020 VEP published over 220 posts across the three platforms. 50 per cent of these posts promoted job opportunities advertised via the Champions network. VEP Champions are mentors and thought leaders promoting VEP Initiatives and the skills that veterans can bring to the Public Sector. Other posts included information regarding veteran initiatives, community support and job application tips. VEP also used the channels to facilitate reach for other veteran organisation initiatives.

VEP quickly adapted to COVID-19 restrictions meeting via Microsoft Teams and other platforms and held 414 stakeholder meetings during the reporting period. Of those meetings, 111 were with NSW Government personnel to help grow and consolidate the Champions Network. 141 veterans received assistance to help them understand the NSW Government application process and education program as well as other transition guidance.

VEP continued to produce seasonal updates, sent to VEP Champions and veteran contacts, ex-service organisations and then published on the VEP website.

The VEP team remains focused on building the Champions Network throughout the NSW public sector. Our Champions are committed to helping the NSW Government reach its veteran employment target. We understand the success of the Program is a direct result of the support of our Champions.

The VEP team presented a seminar at the online Veterans Wellbeing summit. The presentation was watched by over 200 people during the two-week long summit. During the presentation VEP took live questions from the viewers including veterans, ADF personnel, ex-service organisations, other veteran employment programs and rehabilitation consultants. The webinar presentation received positive feedback.

VEP attended the Australian Defence Force Member and Family Transition Seminar in Canberra in March, before the seminars were postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. At the Canberra Seminar VEP spoke to 66 veterans and had 12 veterans subscribe to the mailing list to receive further information about the Program. VEP worked closely with Defence to spread the word of the Program and attended a virtual transition seminar pilot in August. The VEP team and members of staff within OVA are designing and building a virtual booth to share information regarding government services available to veterans in NSW for future virtual transition seminars.

VEP continues to work closely with the NSW Office of Local Government to grow awareness of the Local Government Rank to Grade Guide and transferable skills of veterans. Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) was the first to put a veteran employment policy in place. LMCC supports veterans and encourages them to apply for roles, including veterans in their diversity statement. They have also placed a veteran indicator on all role applications and are committed to providing specific application feedback to veterans if requested.

VEP facilitated the first NSW Employment Roundtable at NSW Parliament house on 24 Nov 2020. It was attended by NSW public and private sector representatives, the new Director of the Australian Defence Force Transition Authority, Defence Community Organisation, Department of Veterans Affairs and many ex-service organisations. The Roundtable was a great success with all attendees agreeing to attend future collaborative roundtables to focus on veteran employment in NSW.

In June, we delivered a pilot Veteran Employment Workshop to assist veterans applying for NSW public sector roles. 13 veterans completed the online pilot. The workshop demonstrates the use of interactive tools available on the VEP website, outlines the NSW public sector application process from job search to interview, and supports veterans with resources they can use to confidently put themselves forward for roles. Veterans are encouraged to complete an Australian Defence Force 'Job Search Preparation' workshop, including preparation of a CV, prior to applying to for the Veteran Employment Workshop.

Following the successful pilot VEP delivered the first Veterans Employment Workshop in October. Twelve veterans attended the virtual workshop, gaining practical knowledge on the NSW State Government job search and application process. Participants were provided with resources and given practical scenarios to practice and gain confidence when applying for roles.

We intend to run future in-person Veteran Employment Workshops at the Anzac Memorial and online for veterans based in regional areas. Dates for future workshops are dependent on COVID-19 restrictions and will be finalised and released accordingly.



Staying in the Army always seemed like the easier option.

After completing the Veterans Employment Workshop I now feel I have the confidence and knowledge to successfully apply for roles within NSW Government.

Nadine I

Looking ahead

Throughout 2021 the VEP team plan to run future Veteran Employment Workshops as a combination of face to face sessions at the Anzac Memorial, and digitally for veterans based in regional areas. Workshop dates will be scheduled as COVID restrictions allow. At this stage the first face to face workshop is planned for March 2021. In the second half of this year, VEP intends to develop a formal mentoring program to support veterans contemplating the application process and entering the public service.

VEP understands the world continues to change as we manage COVID-19 and return to a sense of normality. VEP will continue to investigate ways to maximise their ability to interact with veterans and the veteran community in an ever-changing environment.

Thank you for supporting veterans.



Veterans
Employment
Program