

Veterans Employment Program

**October 2018 - September 2021
Three Year Report**



Message from the NSW Minister for Veterans

The Hon. David Elliott MP

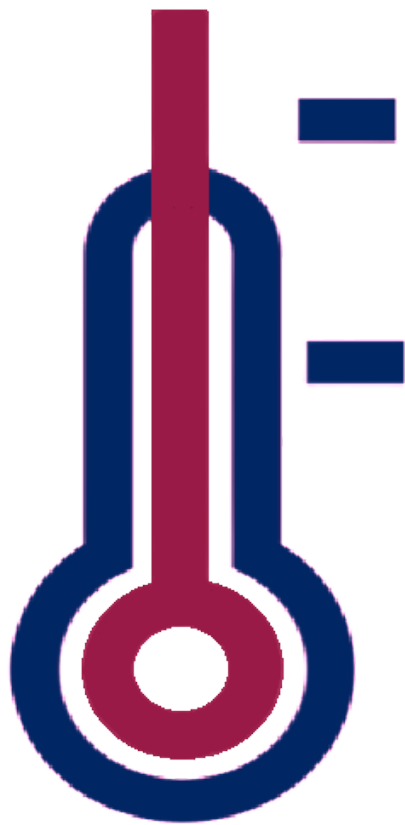


I am honoured to return to the Veterans portfolio and welcome this opportunity to provide an update on progress of the Veterans Employment Program (VEP).

It was wonderful to see VEP announced as last year's winner of the Prime Minister's Veterans Employment Award (2021) for Public Sector Excellence in Supporting Veterans Employment. The NSW VEP was recognised for their achievements in supporting veterans employment at the state, national and local levels of government, raising awareness of the value of employing veterans and helping veterans find roles within the NSW Public Sector.

Over 2,000 veterans have been employed within the NSW Government since the program began in 2016. As of October 2021, there were 1,224 veterans employed against the 2023 target of 1,000. This indicates the program is achieving its 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 remains a key pillar of the New South Wales Government Veterans Strategy. I am especially proud of the way the Program continues to be a leader in the field of veterans employment within the Public Sector in NSW.



1,244 veterans

accepted roles in the NSW public sector between October 2018 and October 2021

Target 1,000 veterans employed by November 2022

122.4% AHEAD

Program overview

The NSW Government was the first state government 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 veterans' employability. VEP sits within the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs (OVA) in the Department of Communities and Justice within the Stronger Communities Cluster. 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 2021, **1,224 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 2021, **130 veterans** were employed in new roles exceeding the target despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people of NSW.

Target tracking

October 2020 - September 2021

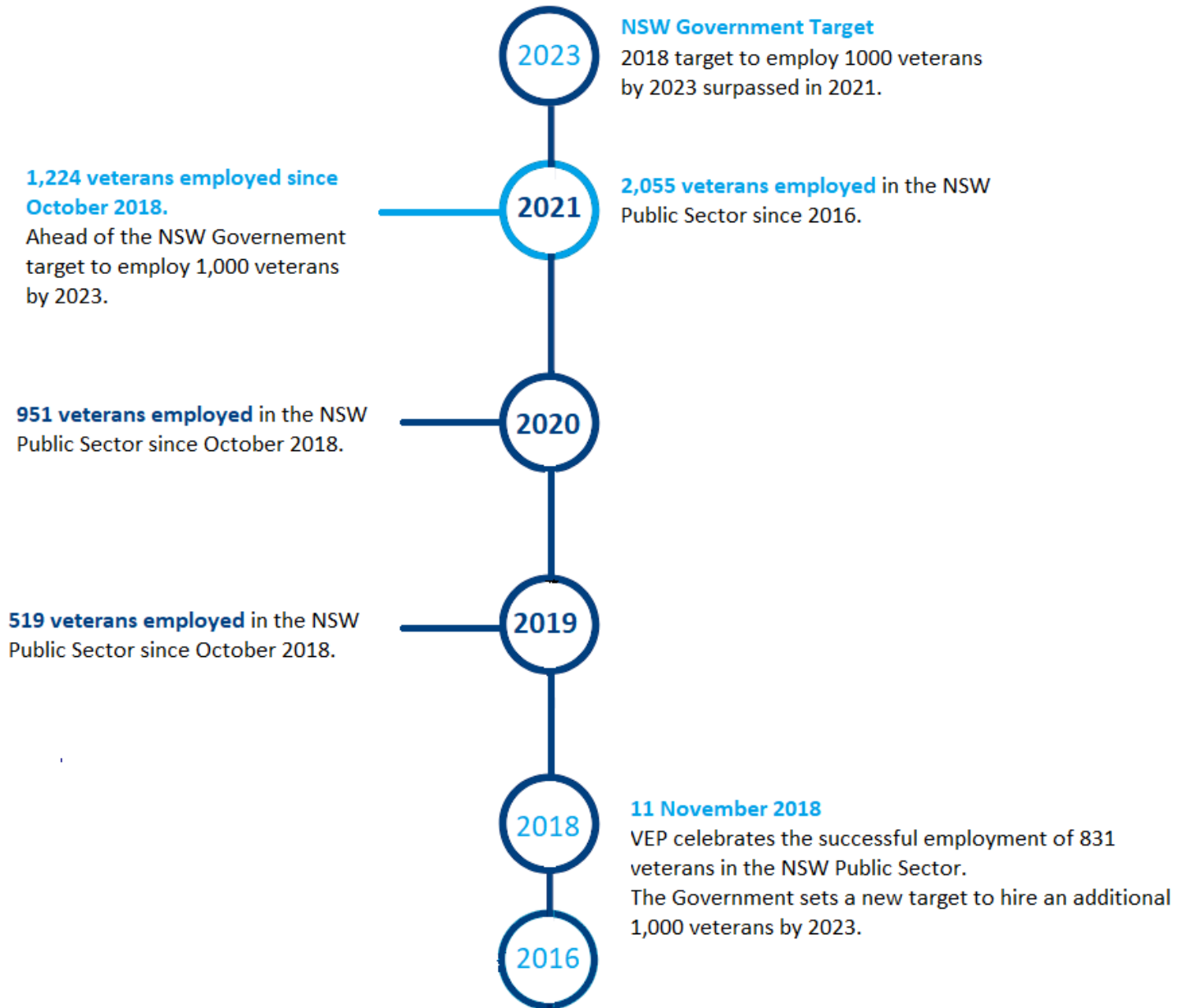
During the twelve-month reporting period, 6,610 job applications were submitted by veterans, with a success rate of 5.9 per cent. This success rate was slightly down by 0.3 per cent in the past twelve months compared to the previous 12 months. However, it remains slightly higher than the NSW general population application success rate of 5.0 per cent (2019, PSC data). These figures may reflect some environmental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic but VEP will continue to monitor changes in the next reporting period to understand and respond.

Job levels attained have remained strong and consistent during the period with most veterans joining the public sector at entry level, team member and as individual contributors. Veterans have also attained senior executive, director and manager roles. Stronger Communities (51 per cent) remains the lead veteran employment cluster, with Transport (16 per cent) in second place and Education (14 per cent) in third place. These clusters have consistently remained within the top three since veterans employment reporting began in 2016.

Results from the Public Service Commission's (PSC) 2021 People Matter Employee Survey offered us further insight into veterans working in the public sector. Of the 2,587 veteran respondents to the survey, 24 per cent have worked in the public sector for 10-20 years and 14 per cent have been employed for more than 20 years, higher than the public sector average. It is interesting to note that of the 2,587 respondents 553 work within the Health Sector (21 per cent). Currently, the Health cluster does not have a veteran tracking question on their job applications, so the figure of 1,224 would certainly be higher if the veterans employed as doctors, nurses, paramedics, transport drivers and administrative assistants were included. VEP aims to track all veterans entering the public sector and will continue to work with the Health cluster to achieve this goal.

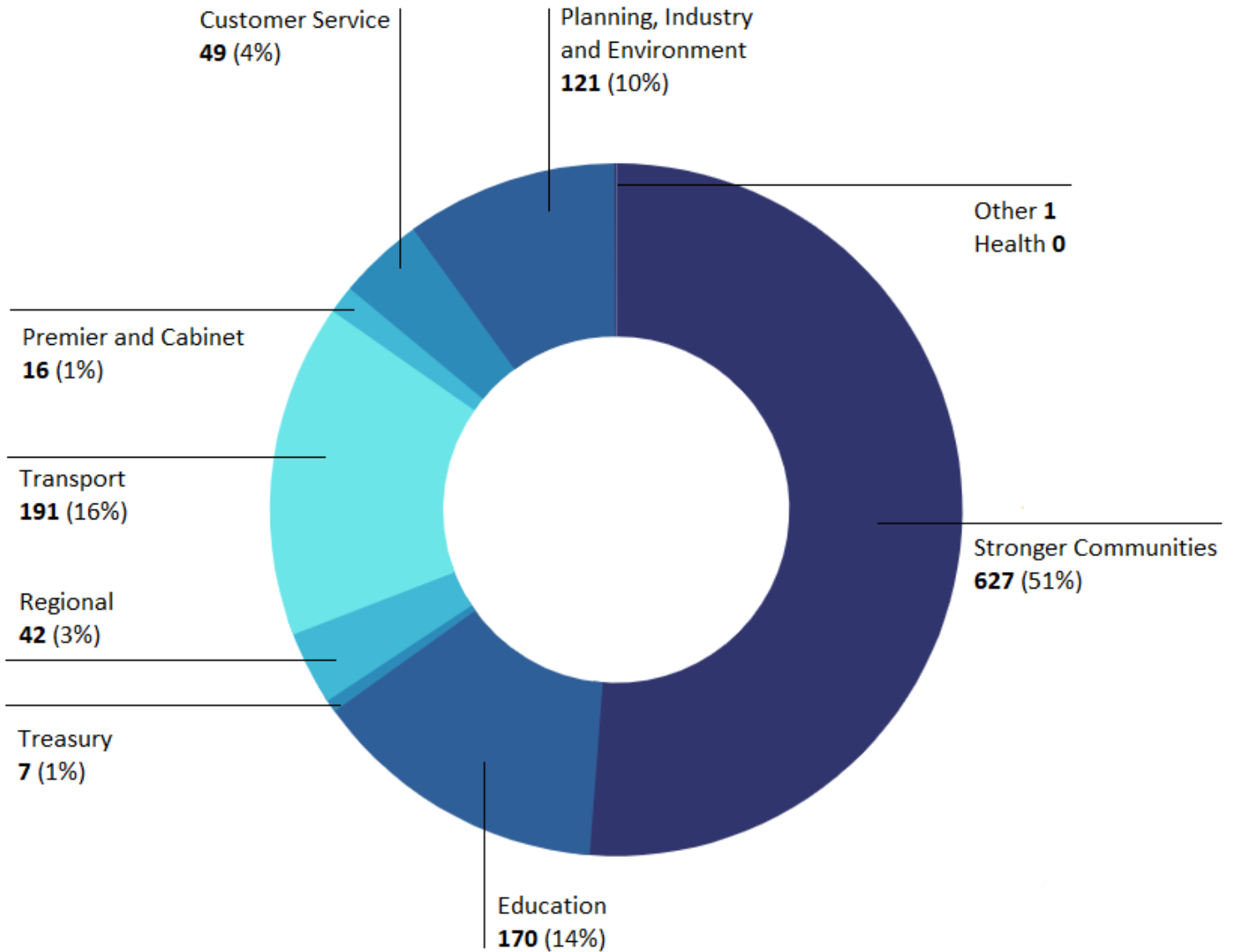
Target tracking

2016 - October 2023



Veteran hires per cluster

October 2018 - September 2021



*Number of veteran hires per cluster October 2018 to September 2021
NSW Health does not have a veteran identifier in their employment system to track veteran employment.

Veteran hires per region

October 2018 - September 2021



Engagement

As I mentioned it has been 23 years since my last interview, however, the advice you provided helped me prepare well for my interview and calmed the nerves.

Heath C

The Veterans Education Scholarship Program has been replaced by Training Services NSW as part of the **Veteran Skills program** (with effect 1 July 2021). The Veteran Skills program was launched on 31 May 2021 to provide veterans and their recognised spouse/partner access to fee-free training under the NSW Job Trainer program. Courses are offered at approximately 360 Registered Training Organisations throughout NSW. The program also supports applicants if they only require a part qualification to be 'job ready' to pursue a civilian career path. As of December 2021;

- 58 veterans and 8 spouse/partners have enrolled in full-time qualifications (e.g. Project Management, Leadership, Training and Assessment);
- 280 veterans and 27 spouse/partners have enrolled in part qualifications (e.g. Civil Constructions, Machinery Operation, Agriculture and Horticulture, Equipment Safe Operations); and
- A further 450 veterans and partners have enrolled in TAFE NSW to do a Foundation in Digital Literacy course to assist RSL NSW as part of their Advocate Skills support training.

VEP continues to support **TAFE NSW, Ranks to Recognition Program (R2R)**. 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' spouse/partner.

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.

VEP continues to produce **seasonal updates** published on the VEP website and sent to VEP champions and veteran contacts, and ex-service organisations to maintain active awareness of the program. VEP operations have also been adjusted to include more video/telephone meetings and use of social networks.

Social media channels to connect with veterans and the veteran community have also been expanded. With over 2,700 followers on Facebook and 700 on Instagram, engagement on these channels is increasing. VEP's LinkedIn following has increased as the channel use has expanded. VEP understands the importance of using different channels to communicate with different cohorts of veterans. The number of veterans on LinkedIn is growing, but Facebook is still preferred by a number of veterans. Since January 2021, VEP has published over 200 posts across the three platforms. Of those posts, 40 per cent promoted job opportunities advertised by VEP's Champions network. 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.

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

The VEP team presented a seminar at the online **Veterans Wellbeing Summit 2021** and to veteran groups (e.g. Illawarra Sub Branch of the Military Brotherhood MMC) and many clusters across NSW Government (lunch time training session guest speakers) which helped extend VEP's reach into the veteran community and the Champions Network. During the presentations VEP took a number of questions from the viewers with the majority asking for future yearly updates and to be included on the mailing list.

VEP continues to deliver the **Veterans Employment Workshop**, following a successful pilot in June 2020. The workshop gives veterans practical knowledge on the NSW State Government job search and application process. Participants are provided with resources and given practical scenarios to practice and gain confidence when applying for roles. To-date 66% of veterans who have completed the workshop have secured a role within 6 months of completing the workshop. Some veterans used the workshop as part of their transition while continuing to serve in the ADF and have not yet actively sought employment. Other attendees have become spokespeople at Ministerial events, to share their perspectives on the benefits of the workshop and some have formed veterans groups within the cluster they have been employed within.

Due to COVID-19 the **Australian Defence Force Member and Family Transition Seminar** face-to-face seminars were cancelled until further notice. The VEP team designed and built a virtual booth to share information regarding the program for the virtual transition seminars. This prototype was then shared with other NSW Government and Local Government organisations. There are now 10 NSW Government booths at the virtual transition seminar with more to follow in 2022. The virtual booth is available online for anyone to access at any time. Defence Member and Family Organisation (formally Defence Community Organisation) hold virtual days where attendees have access to a live chat with VEP staff throughout the day.





If you remove the weapon and uniform, there is a veteran within the ADF who aligns with an equivalent job in Local Council, from General Manager to the man or woman on the front desk, truck and bus drivers, HR specialists, health officers and any number of other roles within council.



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 in place a veterans employment program.



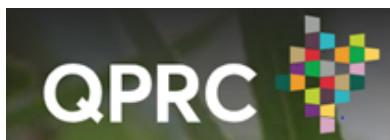
LMCC did four simple things



- Put a note on their website, 'Council has also partnered with the Veterans Employment Program to support veterans finding suitable, sustainable and meaningful employment';

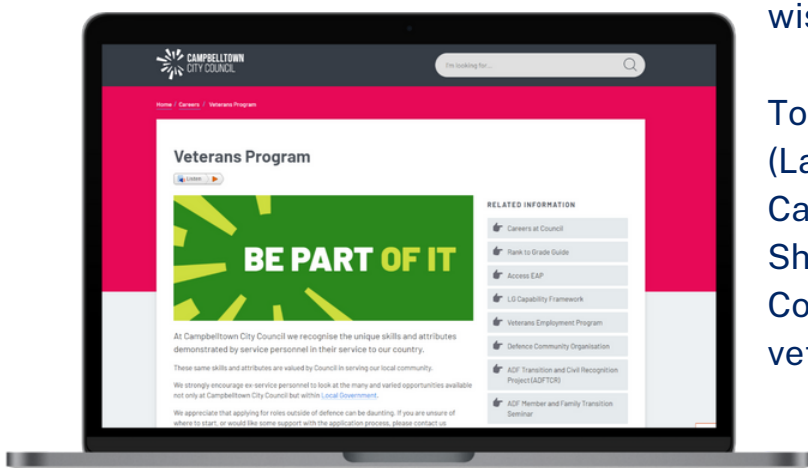
- Added a veteran indicator question on application forms;
- Committed to provide specific application feedback if veterans request it; and

- Offered to assist other councils wishing to follow their lead.



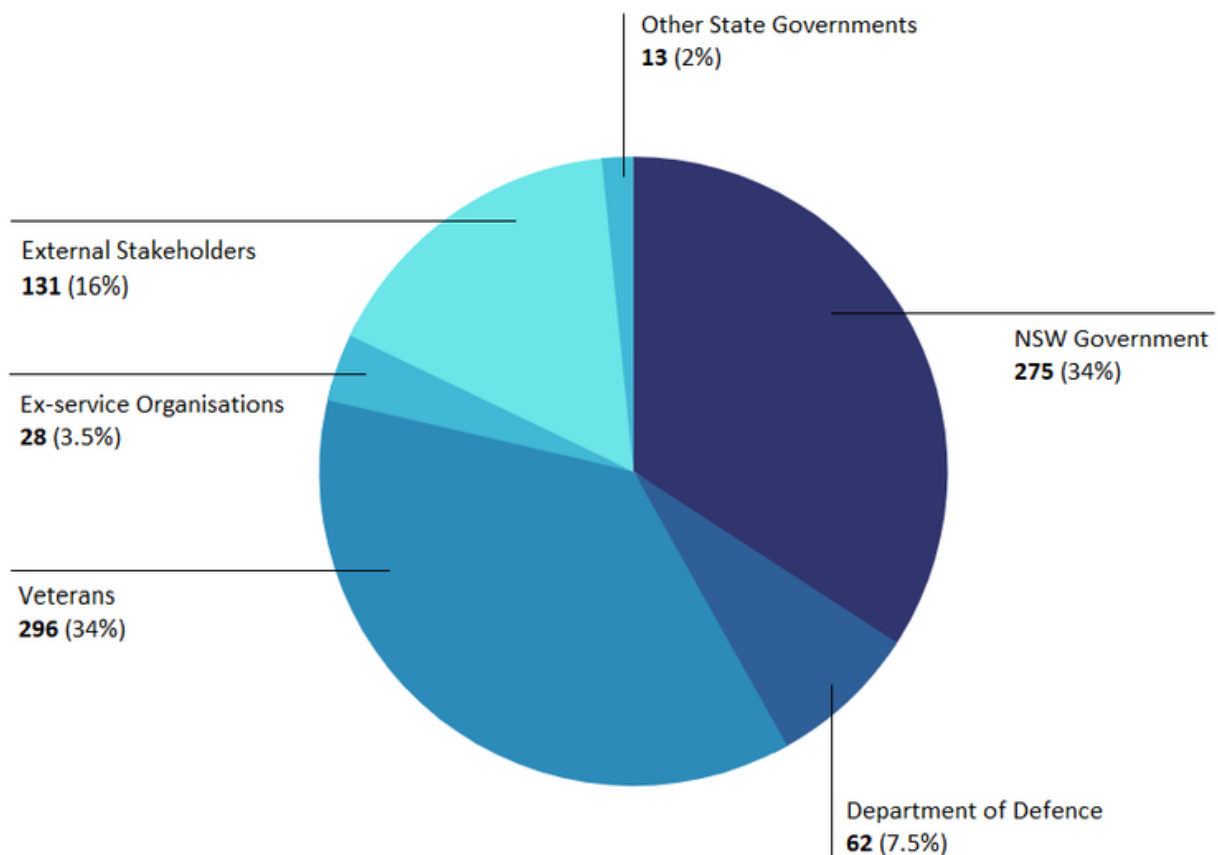
When Campbelltown City Council came on board and established their VEP they went a few steps further, developing a web page and offering to share it with any council that wished to set up their own veteran program.

To date, there are 6 NSW Local Governments (Lake Macquarie City, City of Newcastle, Campbelltown City, Blacktown City, Tweed Shire and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Councils) who have set up their own form of veterans employment program.



VEP continued to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions in 2021, meeting predominantly via Microsoft Teams, telephone and other platforms and held 887 stakeholder meetings during the year. Of those meetings, 275 were with NSW government personnel to help grow and consolidate the Champions Network. A further 296 were with veterans introducing them to VEP and assisting them to understand the NSW Government application process and education opportunities on offer as well as other transition guidance.

VEP Meetings 2021



Looking ahead

VEP plans to run Veterans Employment Workshops as a combination of face-to-face sessions at the Anzac Memorial, and online for veterans based in regional areas (within COVID-19 restrictions).

VEP will continue to engage with Local Governments, especially in regional NSW, to promote veterans employment within local councils and access to the Veterans Skills program to ensure veterans and their spouse/partner have the relevant training to secure the right roles within councils.

VEP will continue to investigate ways to maximise interactions with veterans and the veteran community in an ever-changing environment.

Thank you for supporting veterans.

Working together we can make a difference.



Veterans Employment Program