

NSW Veterans Employment Program Report

October 2022 - March 2024
18 Month Report

Message from the NSW Minister for Veterans

The Hon. David Harris MP



As the NSW Minister for Veterans, it gives me great pleasure to report on the NSW Government Veterans Employment figures to April 2024 which are testament to the hard work and dedication of the Veterans Employment Program (VEP) staff within the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs.

I am delighted to confirm that 773 veterans were successfully hired across NSW Government over the 18-month period. The program remains on target to see 2,000 veterans hired into new roles within NSW Government by December 2026, with over 3,000 veterans employed since the program started in 2016.

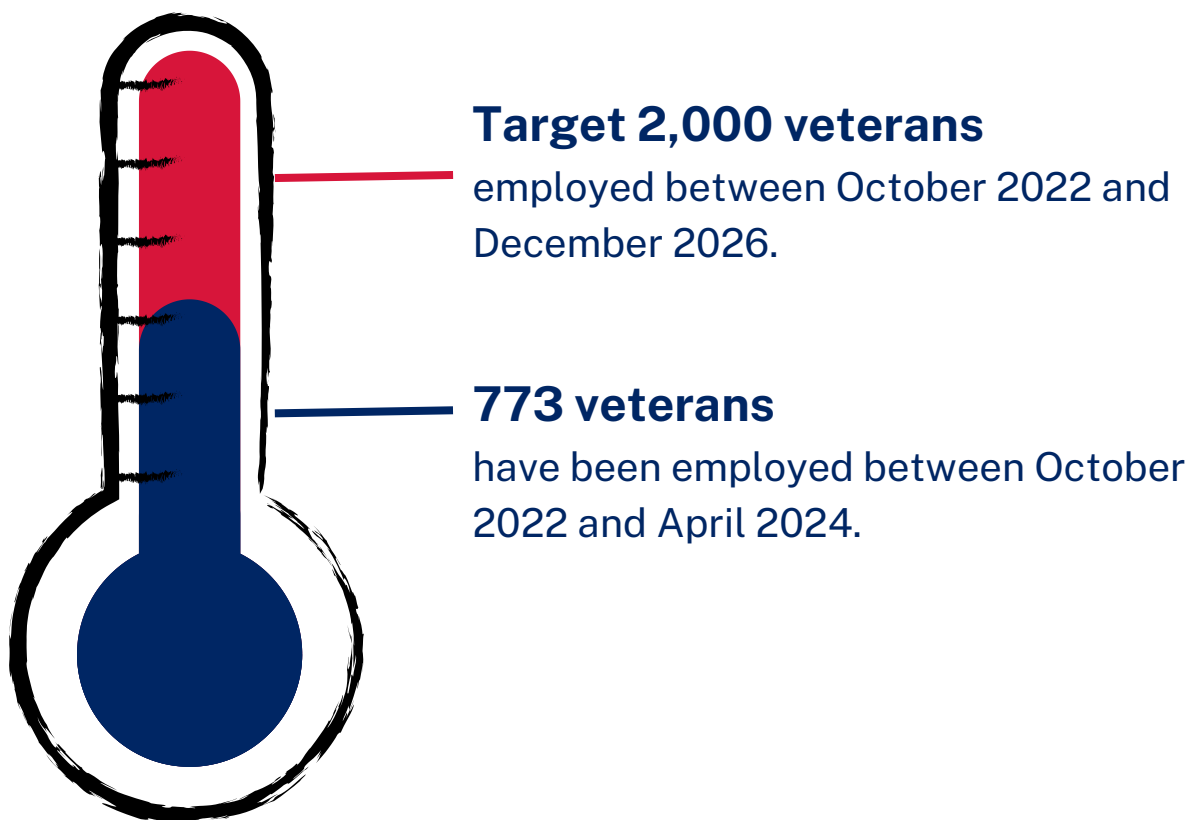
As a key pillar of the NSW Government Veterans Strategy, we recognise the importance of veteran employment post transition from the Australian Defence Force. VEP is a leader in supporting veterans to gain employment within the public sector, as well as promoting veteran employment to the private sector, and offers a suite of helpful tools and learning opportunities to assist veterans as they transition into civilian employment.

The program remains dedicated to engaging with veterans about employment opportunities in the public sector, while also expanding its network of stakeholders who champion the valuable skills of veterans. The team's continued effort has also led to 18 local councils across NSW establishing their own veterans' employment program within this reporting period.

I congratulate the VEP team and NSW Office for Veterans Affairs for their efforts in supporting veterans in their transition from military service to civilian life. This program plays a crucial role in ensuring former Defence personnel can transfer their valuable skills, knowledge, and experience to new roles, benefitting the veteran and NSW Government.

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Program overview



The New South Wales Government Veterans Employment Program (VEP) remains on track to achieve the veterans employment target of 2,000 veterans hired into new roles by 2026. 239 veterans have been employed in a public sector role between September 2023 and April 2024. This is slightly below the interim target of 250 per six months. The Christmas/New Year period is known to be traditionally slow for recruiting. However, the good news is we have 773 hires which remains ahead of the 18-month target of 750 veteran hires.

VEP launched in May 2016 with the goal to hire 200 veterans during the Centenary of Anzac. In November 2018 VEP celebrated the successful employment of 831 veterans in the NSW Public Sector. At the same time, the NSW Government set a new target to hire an additional 1,000 veterans by 2023. In October 2022 VEP announced 1,626 veterans employed in the NSW Public Sector since October 2018 and the NSW Government committed to a new more challenging target to hire 2,000 veterans by 2026. With 773 new hires in the past 18 months, this takes the total number of veterans hired in new roles to over 3,000 since the program began.

Program timeline



Target tracking

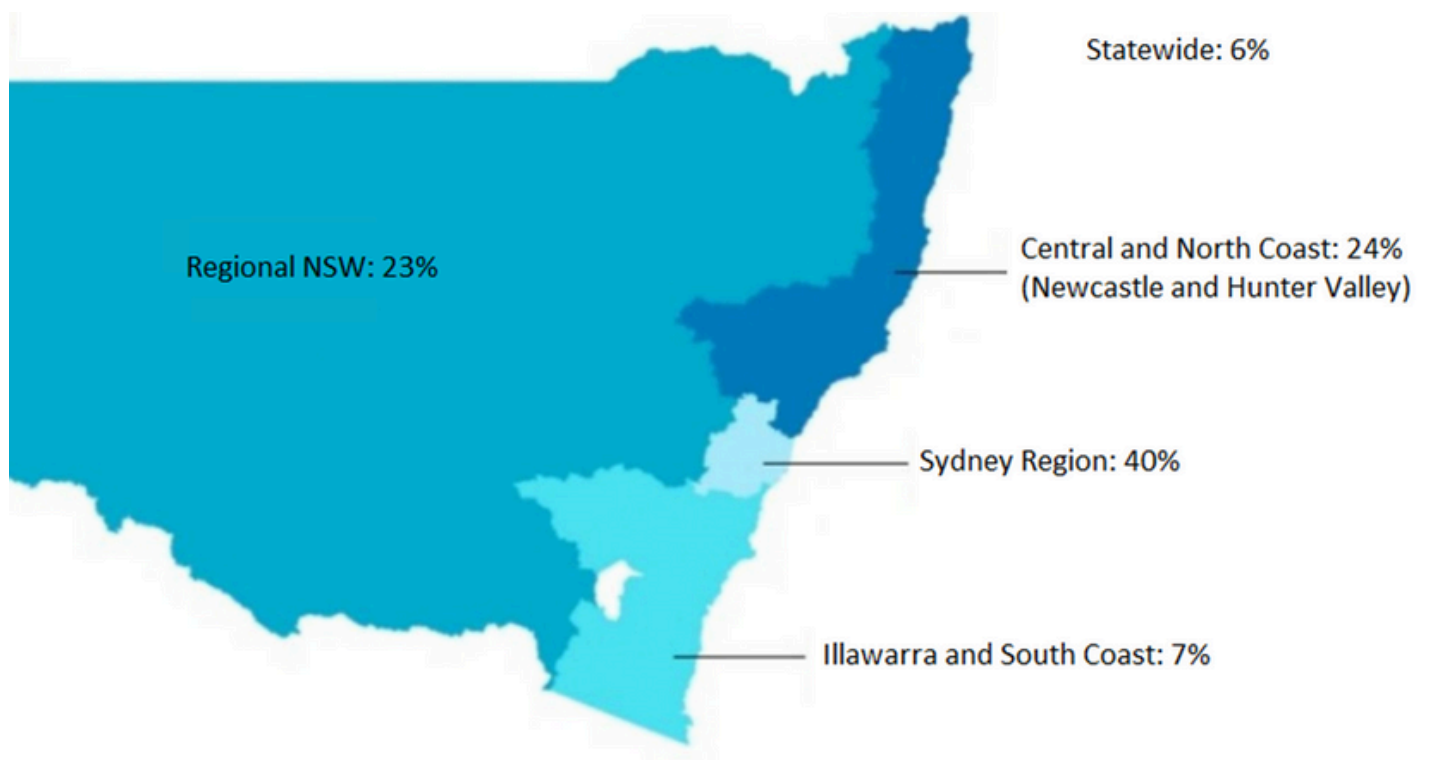
During the 18-month reporting period (1 October 2022 to 31 March 2024) the data provided by the NSW Public Service Commission is missing responses to the tracking question, "Have you ever been a full-time member of the Australian Defence Force, or a Reservist on continuous full-time Service?". This is 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 22 per cent of responses and the data from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 was missing approximately 45 per cent of the self-identified question. However, working with the data available, 9,981 job applications were submitted by veterans during the 18-month period, with a success rate of five per cent. This success rate was up one per cent in the past six months and it remains higher than the NSW general population application success rate of four per cent for the period. Job levels won have remained consistent during the period with most veterans joining the public sector at entry level (5.9 per cent), as individual contributors (80 per cent) and team leaders (5.9 per cent). Veterans have also won Manager positions (seven per cent), and Senior Executive and Director roles make up 0.7 per cent of positions won by veterans.

These figures continue to reflect the reporting trends of previous periods. VEP has identified the main barrier to higher ranks filling senior positions is generally based around specific levels of experience required for more senior roles in the public service. The gender breakdown for the hiring period saw 26 per cent female veterans and 74 per cent male veterans win roles. This figure is interesting as about 20 per cent ADF personnel are female. It is also important to note that women had 4.9 per cent application success while men had four per cent.

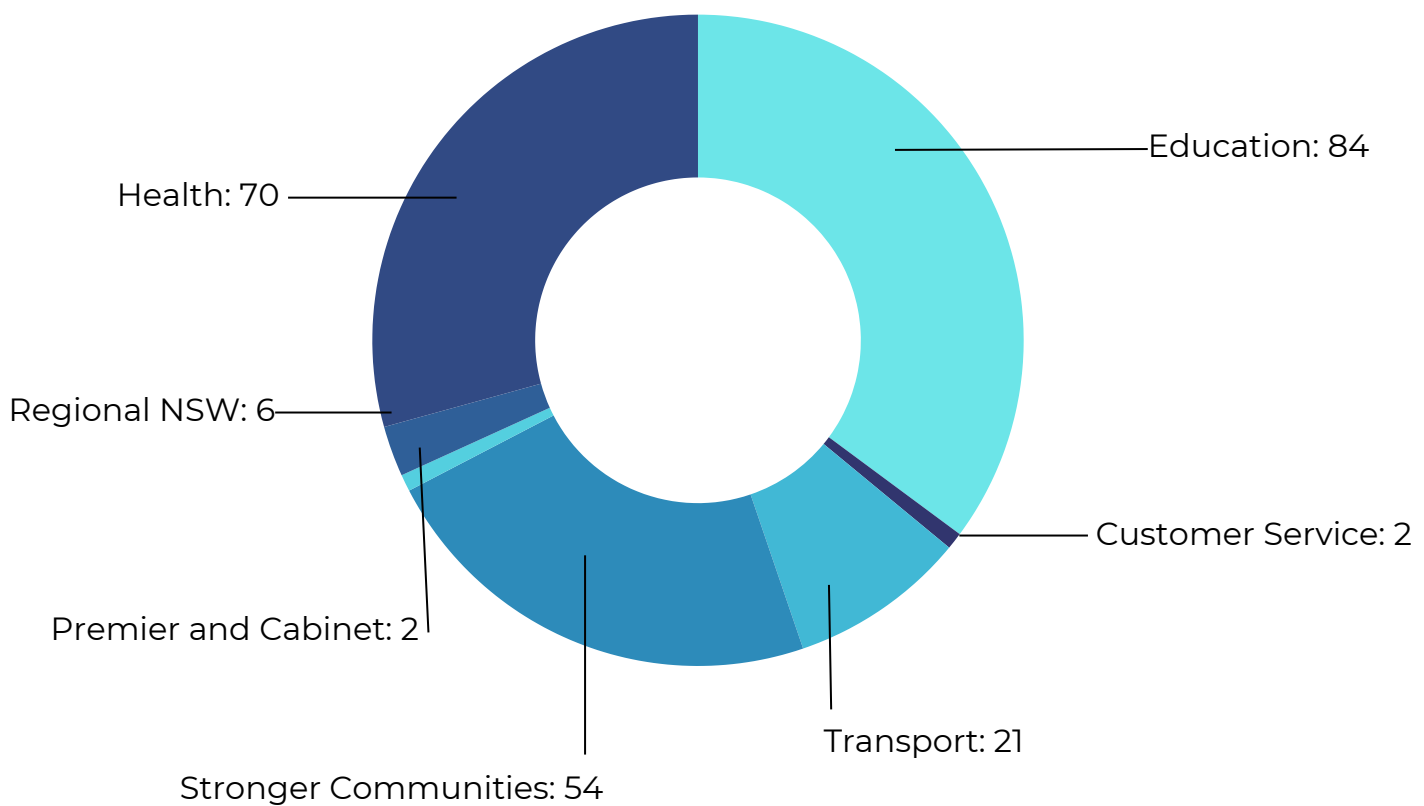
Of positions won, 73 per cent were full-time, 10 per cent part-time, 17 per cent casual. Only 3.2 per cent of veterans winning roles identified as having a disability during the twelve-month period. The percentage break down by NSW locations was:

- Central and North Coast (Newcastle and Hunter Valley): 24 per cent
- Illawarra and South Coast: 7 per cent
- Regional NSW: 23 per cent
- Statewide: 6 per cent
- Sydney Region: 40 per cent



Veteran hires per cluster

The two largest clusters in NSW Government are Health, who employ approximately 35 per cent of the 430,000 workforce, and Education who employ approximately 31 per cent. In the past six months, Education hired 84 (35%) veterans and Health employed 70 (29%) veterans. Stronger Communities, which accounts for approximately 15 per cent of the workforce, saw 54 (23%) veterans employed, while Transport has approximately eight per cent of the workforce and saw 21 (9%) veterans employed.



Mentoring (Buddy Support)

Following the initial launch of the Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) Mentoring/Buddy Support System for veterans in April 2022, the Office of the NSW Sheriff and Fire and Rescue followed suit and introduced their own 'buddy' systems. These Mentoring/Buddy Support systems are slowly developing to support these uniformed veterans, through transition, training and in their new career. At the annual NSW Government Veterans Networking Event in April, the NSW Fire and Rescue Commissioner, Jeremy Fewtrell AFSM spoke about their 'Buddy' support system and their recently re-established NSW Fire Brigades RSL sub-Branch after a nearly 40-year absence.

Education NSW (Veterans Skills Program)

As previously reported, 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.

In the past 18 months, 130 veterans and 26 recognised spouses/partners have enrolled in full qualifications. The most popular courses remain Project Management, Training and Assessment, and Leadership & Management.

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 with transitioning 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.

In the past six months, up until the end of April 2024, there were 135 new students currently supported under R2R. This contributed to a total of 980 students supported by TAFE NSW R2R since January 2021. Fifteen per cent of veterans were referred to Counselling and Career Support and the remaining 85 per cent undertook course guidance, enrolment, and fee exemption support from the R2R coordinator. Approximately 70 veterans are currently enrolled in a Diploma of Project Management and approximately 65 veterans are completing a Diploma of Leadership and Management, which are the top two courses with enrolled veterans. Certificate courses are also popular with Certificate IV in Community Services and Certificate IV in Human Resource Management being the top two. The majority of veterans under R2R are currently studying via TAFE Digital. This indicates that online study remains the most preferred option for veterans so far in 2024.

Local Government NSW

As at 1 May 2024, 18 NSW local governments have 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.



We have started collecting and analysing data from our local governments. From a small sample of four councils so far the results look very promising. As mentioned above the application success rate for veterans applying for NSW Government roles is five per cent, while the NSW general population application success rate is four per cent. The success rate for veterans applying for Local Government roles is 8.9 per cent. Some roles that veterans have won include; Apprentice Heavy Vehicle Mechanic and a Parking Ranger, Supervisor and outdoor labourer, Strategic Business Analyst & Office Coordinator and Landscape/Environmental Assessment Officers.

Looking ahead

Throughout 2024 the VEP team plan to continue to review the delivery of the Veteran Employment Workshops as a combination of face-to-face sessions at the Anzac Memorial and digital sessions for veterans based in regional areas. As the two-day workshop attendance fluctuates with varying numbers, we are looking to reduce it from two days to possibly one day.

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 spouses/partners 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 with maintaining 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. Thank you for supporting veterans.

“Working together we can make a difference!”



Veterans Employment Program