

NSW Veterans Action Plan

2021-2022



A guide to acronyms

ACI	Agency for Clinical Innovation (NSW Government, part of NSW Health)
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
DCJ	Department of Communities and Justice (NSW Government)
DCS	Department of Customer Service (NSW Government)
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet (NSW Government)
DPIE	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (NSW Government)
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs (Australian Government)
EDUCATION	Department of Education (NSW Government)
ESO	Ex-Service Organisation
LGNSW	Local Government NSW (peak organisation for local councils)
NCVH	National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare
NSW VS	NSW Veterans Strategy
OLG	Office of Local Government (NSW Government)
OOS	NSW Office of Sport (NSW Government)
OVA	NSW Office for Veterans Affairs (NSW Government)
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RSL NSW	The Returned and Services League of Australia (NSW Branch)
SES	State Emergency Service (NSW Government)
SNSW	Service NSW (NSW Government)
TAFE NSW	Technical and Further Education NSW (NSW Government)
TFNSW	Transport for NSW (NSW Government)
VSA	Veteran Sport Australia
WNSW	Women NSW (NSW Government)



COVER: OFFICIAL
OPENING OF THE ANZAC
MEMORIAL CENTENARY
PROJECT. OCTOBER 2018.
PHOTO COURTESY PENNY
BRADFIELD, AUSPIC_DPS.

1. Recognition and Commemoration

No.	Action	Lead	Target
State-level commemoration			
1.1	COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS 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	ANZAC DAY Work with RSL NSW to coordinate whole of government activities in Sydney, including the Dawn Service in Martin Place, the march 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	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VETERANS COMMEMORATION SERVICE 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	REMEMBRANCE DAY 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	KOREAN AND VIETNAM WAR RECEPTIONS Hold receptions for Korean and Vietnam War veterans. Veterans and family members will be invited to attend receptions pending Health advice and restrictions.	DPC	*Two receptions in 2021 and 2022
1.1.5	RECOGNISING WOMEN 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
1.2	ANZAC MEMORIAL 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	Annually
1.3	WAR MEMORIALS REGISTER OVA and the State Library maintain the NSW War Memorials Register, an online database of over 3,000 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.	State Library/ OVA	*Communicate to LGAs their memorial records in 2021

* marked programs are regionally significant

No.	Action	Lead	Target
Community-based commemoration			
1.4	HERITAGE AND HISTORY ACTION PLAN – COMMUNITY WAR MEMORIALS Scope community-based memorials and the issues involved in their maintenance and conservation. Consider the extent to which all veteran cohorts are represented in community memorials. The results will assist in focusing the existing Community War Memorials Fund, 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.	OVA	*Finalise LGA scope by June 2022
1.4.1	HERITAGE AND HISTORY ACTION PLAN – DIVERSE VOICES Explore veterans' heritage through the diversity of their experiences. Work initially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and women veterans to co-design an approach that tells their stories and publicise them throughout 2021, The Year of Diverse Stories, on the NSW War Memorial Register.	OVA	*50 diverse stories published in 2021
1.5	ANZAC COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM Provide a total of \$50,000 for projects that commemorate and educate New South Wales communities about the service and sacrifices of current military servicemen and women, and for projects which benefit the NSW veteran community.	OVA	*One round per year closed on Remembrance Day
Education and research			
1.6	PREMIER'S ANZAC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP Support a study tour that is awarded to 20 high school history students. In past years, scholars travelled to overseas battlefields, memorials and sites of historical significance, in France, Belgium and Germany. In future years the tour will also travel to locations in Australia associated with our military history.	OVA	*One scholarship tour delivered per year
1.7	SCHOOL EDUCATION RESOURCES Provide NSW schools with access to teaching and learning resources connecting commemoration, local war memorials and veterans' stories.	OVA/ Anzac Memorial	*Annual promotion to schools
1.8	RECOGNISING AND REPRESENTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SERVICE A new initiative between the Anzac Memorial and Kimberwalli to deliver a program that engages young Aboriginal people from Western Sydney which focuses on the recognition and representation of Aboriginal service. Kimberwalli is a centre located on Darug country that supports young Aboriginal people in Western Sydney to transition from school to further education or employment.	OVA/ Anzac Memorial	One program for up to 20 students per year
1.9	NSW GOVERNMENT DATA Progressively consider NSW data on veterans accessing programs or services, as the data becomes available.	DCS	*Annual insight from data used to inform priorities

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2. Education and Employment

No.	Action	Lead	Target
Access to education			
2.1	RANKS TO RECOGNITION 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.	TAFE NSW	*200 veterans assisted in 2021-2022
2.2	VETERANS EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM Offer financial support to veterans through a grants program to support them to undertake TAFE NSW training.	OVA/ TAFE NSW	*Two rounds per year
2.3	SKILLING FOR RECOVERY The NSW Government is co-funding 100,000 training places with the Australian Government for people who are 17-24 years of age regardless of employment status; or those who are unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed. The program is open to veterans and their partners/spouses through registered training organisations including TAFE NSW.	Education	*750 veterans enrolled in training programs by 2022
2.4	TERTIARY ENTRY Work with NSW universities to identify and promote ways to expand existing pathways.	OVA	*Engage with relevant universities by December 2021
Pathways to employment			
2.5	VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM Support veterans with tools to help them apply for roles in the public service. Support hiring managers through communication and education. Review the potential to adapt the program and the workshops for specific cohorts.	OVA	*250 veterans employed in the public service per year until 2023
2.6	VETERANS TEACHING STEM INCLUDING TRADES TRAINING Develop a transition pathway for veterans to become teachers in STEM and other relevant areas, including trades training.	Education /TAFE NSW	*Develop transition pathway by end 2021 *Provide materials tailored to veterans for use at transition seminars in 2021 and 2022
2.7	PREFERRED EMPLOYERS: LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE Build on the existing 'Rank to Grade Guide' for local government and work with LGNSW to promote local councils as veterans' employers of choice. Encourage local government to record veteran status in employment records to enable the baseline measurement and evaluation of veteran employment programs and initiatives.	OLG/ OVA	*4 LGAs develop programs in 2021-2022

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No.	Action	Lead	Target
2.8	PREFERRED EMPLOYERS: CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS Develop partnerships with the private sector to increase employment of veterans.	OVA	*One veterans employment roundtable held annually
2.9	VETERAN WORKSHOPS Support veterans to apply for NSW government roles.	OVA	3 workshops held annually
2.10	VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS INITIATIVES Develop veterans' employment and business initiatives.	TSY	*Programs established by 2022
2.11	RETURN TO WORK NEEDS The NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity and Women NSW will consider veterans' needs in relation to return to work initiatives in the Women's Strategy Year 3 Action Plan.	DCJ	Veterans' needs in relation to return to work initiatives will be considered in 2022
Support for families and spouses			
3.1	VETERANS' SPOUSES AND PARTNERS Extend the Ranks to Recognition program to spouses, providing access to career counselling, courses with reduced or no fees and support in recognising their skills.	TAFE NSW/ OVA	*Implement by November 2021

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3. Community and Volunteering

No.	Action	Lead	Target
Veterans in the community			
3.2	<p>EXPANDING VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Work in collaboration with volunteering organisations such as emergency service agencies to explore opportunities to connect veterans to volunteer roles. This includes exploring opportunities with the NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Volunteer Rescue Association and Marine Rescue NSW.</p>	OVA/SES	*Establish pilot with SES in early 2022
3.3	<p>EXPANDING VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN SPORT</p> <p>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.</p>	OOS	<p>* Tools and resources created to increase volunteering by veterans by end 2021</p> <p>Evaluation conducted and program improvements made by end 2021</p>
3.4	<p>NSW CARERS STRATEGY</p> <p>The NSW Government Carers Strategy acknowledges veterans who are carers, and carers of veterans, as priority specific carer groups. Include veterans in future Carers Week awareness activities under the Strategy's first two-year action plan.</p>	DCJ	*Veterans needs will be considered in Carers Week awareness activities in 2022
3.5	<p>AGEING WELL IN NSW: SENIORS STRATEGY</p> <p>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.</p>	DCJ	*Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021–2031 recognises that being a veteran is a factor that can lead to increased vulnerability
3.6	<p>NSW WOMEN'S STRATEGY 2018–2022 ANNUAL ACTION PLANS</p> <p>The NSW Women's Strategy Year 3 Action Plan recognises that female veterans have specific needs in terms of employment opportunities and financial wellbeing.</p>	DCJ	Veterans needs considered by the NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity in 2021 targets
3.7	<p>PEER MENTORING</p> <p>Explore partnerships that leverage expertise in mentoring programs to facilitate peer mentors. The first government agency to trial this approach will be Corrective Services NSW.</p>	OVA/ Corrective Services NSW	*Implement a veteran's transition mentoring program by Nov 2021
3.8	<p>VETERANS FORUM</p> <p>Bring veterans together to explore governance issues that Ex-Service Organisations face.</p>	OVA	*One forum in 2022

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No.	Action	Lead	Target
Health and wellbeing			
3.9	VETFIT	OOS	*Report produced by end 2021 on number of veterans engaged through VetFit and number of complex cases managed
	The NSW Office of Sport has provided a \$250,000 grant to Veteran Sport Australia to develop and run initiatives to promote physical activity and volunteering by veterans in sport and active recreation.		
3.10	NOWRA VETERAN WELLBEING CENTRE	OOS/ DCJ/NSW Health/ OVA	*The Centre will be established by June 2022
	Work with RSL LifeCare to support the establishment of a Veteran Wellbeing Centre in Nowra. Focus on social connections through sport, housing assistance, employment support and assistance services, coordination of healthcare supports including referral pathways and information access.		
3.11	ESO COLLABORATION	OVA	*2 meetings per year
	Regularly engage with peak ESOs to understand current concerns for veterans.		
Access to information			
3.12	VETERAN'S SERVICE NSW INFORMATION PAGE	Service NSW/ OVA	Enhancements in place by December 2021
	Provide information for veterans on concessions, services, and benefits. Assist veterans to understand the extensive services and supports that are available. Make further enhancements to the webpage following testing.		
3.13	PATHWAY TO NSW	Service NSW	*The initiative will be piloted in July/August 2021
	Pilot new initiatives at the Raymond Terrace, Warners Bay, Wallsend and Newcastle Service Centres on the existing Cost of Living services. Customers who identify as veterans will be referred to local organisations for support.		
3.14	INFORMATION THROUGH SENIORS CARD	DCJ	Six pieces of veteran-specific content in 2020/21
	<p>Increase the focus on veterans in communications with card members, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of six pieces of content focused on veterans across all Seniors Card channels in 2020/21. • Creation of at least two new pieces of content focusing on veterans who are also Seniors Card members by February 2021. • Create increased engagement with veterans focused content across all channels in 2020/21. 		

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4. Support Initiatives

No.	Action	Lead	Target
Concessions and supports			
4.1	<p>GOLD OPAL CARD</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 rural and regional concessions in the Regional Excursion Daily bus tickets (\$2.50) and Country Pensioner Excursion tickets (also \$2.50).</p>	Transport for NSW	*Online application process available year round
4.2	<p>ENERGY SOCIAL PROGRAMS</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 (EAPA) 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 to the veteran community 2 x per year
4.3	<p>NATIONAL PARK ENTRY FEE CONCESSION</p> <p>Provide an entry fee concession to eligible veterans.</p>	DPIE (NPWS)	*OVA to communicate concessions to the veteran community 2 x per year
Housing and homelessness			
4.4	<p>RENT CHOICE VETERANS</p> <p>Partner with RSL DefenceCare to support eligible veterans and their families to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find a rental property • get a lease or stay in their current accommodation • pay the rent for up to three years • gain skills and work opportunities to support financial independence 	DCJ	*50 clients assisted in 2020/21 60 clients assisted in 2021/22
4.5	<p>LINK2HOME VETERANS AND EX-SERVICE</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"> • Information about local services • An assessment to determine what kind of help is needed • Referral to a service, including a homelessness service, support service, temporary accommodation, or a community housing provider. 	DCJ	Promote to support up to 280 projected calls per annum

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No.	Action	Lead	Target
Physical and mental health			
4.6	<p>NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VETERANS' HEALTHCARE (NCVH)</p> <p>The NCVH's case-managed 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 a new on-site residential facility providing accommodation to veterans being treated at the NCVH and their families or carers.</p>	NSW Health	*Up to 75 veterans to receive comprehensive integrated care per year
4.7	<p>COPE PILOT PROGRAM, THE BUTTERY</p> <p>The NSW Government has invested \$300,000 in partnership with the non-government sector to design and evaluate the effectiveness of a pilot community recovery "COPE" Program. The program integrates two evidence-based treatments for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and substance use disorders tailored for veterans.</p>	NSW Health/ OVA	Pilot completed by June 2021
4.8	<p>GET HEALTHY</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 program to the veteran community 2 x per year
4.9	<p>ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG TREATMENT SERVICES</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 (www.yourroom.com.au). Telephone and web-based drug and alcohol support and information for veterans is available through the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) and for veteran's families through Family Drug Support (FDS).</p>	NSW Health	*OVA to communicate programs to the veteran community annually
4.10	<p>TOWARDS ZERO SUICIDES INITIATIVES</p> <p>There is an \$87 million investment in new suicide prevention initiatives that address priorities in the Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018-23 to reduce the suicide rate by 20 per cent by 2023. This includes leading best practice crisis care and support, building on local community resilience and improving systems and practices to reduce the suicide rate in NSW, including for veterans and their families.</p>	NSW Health	*Reduce the suicide rate by 20 per cent by 2023
4.11	<p>DATA MONITORING TO SUPPORT SUICIDE PREVENTION</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 coroner if a suspected suicide involves a current or former ADF member. Discussions are currently underway between NSW Health and DCJ with respect to the collection and reporting of data contained in the Police initial reports via the recently established NSW Suicide Monitoring System.</p>	DCJ	*Monthly data monitoring and provision to NSW Health

* marked programs are regionally significant

No.	Action	Lead	Target
Other supports and services			
4.12	WORKING WITH DVA AND AIHW Work collaboratively with DVA and AIHW to explore how to better use their data on veterans to inform our service planning and responses.	DCJ	Reviewed annually
4.13	ASSISTANCE DOGS FOR VETERANS 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.	Corrective Services NSW/ Defence Community Dogs	Provide up to 16 dogs to veterans per year
4.14	VETERANS RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP Partner with the Australian Catholic University to improve the knowledge and understanding of veterans and their families in NSW.	OVA	Research focus agreed and funding application made 2021
4.15	YOU'RE WELCOME Work together with OVA to develop a new resource that welcomes the children of newly discharged veterans into schools and supports them when settling into school.	Education	Developed in 2022
4.16	LEGAL SUPPORT FOR VETERANS 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. Civil Law 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. Family Law Help veterans with a range of family law issues, including early intervention to avoid lengthy litigation, child support and domestic and family violence. Criminal Law Assist veterans charged with criminal offences providing legal advice, minor assistance, duty appearances and case representation at courts throughout NSW.	Legal Aid NSW	*OVA communicates the services of Legal Aid twice per year to veterans
4.17	USE OF CROWN LANDS Continue to support veterans through providing for reduced rents in line with the Department's Financial Concessions Policy, and by providing grants to develop, maintain and improve Crown reserves and sites under the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund (CRIF). 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.	DPIE	OVA to communicate service to the veteran community 2 x per year

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