

# Tasmanian Veterans' Employment Strategy

2023–2027





## **Acknowledgement to Tasmanian Aboriginal People**

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The Tasmanian State Service acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and custodians of lutruwita (Tasmania) and recognises Tasmanian Aboriginal people's deep and continuous historical connection to the land and sea.

## **Acknowledgement to our veterans**

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The Tasmanian Government acknowledges the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of all who commit to defend our nation.

We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served, and promise to welcome, embrace and support all serving and ex-serving personnel as respected and valued members of our community.

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# Message from the Minister



The Hon Guy Barnett MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

The Tasmanian Government is committed to listening and responding to the needs of Tasmania's veteran and ex-serving community.

Today, over 17,500 veterans and ex-serving personnel and their families, call Tasmania home. Veterans bring to the community and the economy an incredible set of knowledge, skills, capabilities and experiences. The Tasmanian Government recognises that this talent can, and does, contribute to the growth of the economy.

As the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, I am passionate about ensuring our veterans enjoy a smooth transition out of uniform into civilian life. While those exiting the defence force do so for varied reasons, veterans are highly trained individuals with a wide range of qualifications and skills that are readily transferable to other civilian roles.

Many veterans successfully engage in post-Australian Defence Force employment, however there can be barriers for some. This is particularly the case for those relocating to Tasmania after separation, who may have no connection to the State. As a Government, we are committed to doing our part to connect all veterans seeking employment with suitable work opportunities.

Tasmania has a wealth of employment opportunities, including in the Tasmanian State Service, our State's largest employer. To demonstrate our commitment to championing veteran employment, we have developed Tasmania's first Veterans' Employment Strategy. Delivering on our election commitment, this Strategy sets an aspirational target to employ 100 new veterans in the Tasmanian State Service over four years.

This Strategy has been developed in consultation with the Veterans' Reference Group who, in providing advice to Government, bring forward the perspective of Tasmanian veterans and their families. I thank the Veterans' Reference Group for their thorough and considered input into this Strategy and for their commitment to supporting its successful implementation. I also thank RSL Tasmania for their steadfast advocacy for Tasmanian veterans and their valued advice that has informed this Strategy.

# Message from the Head of the State Service



**Jenny Gale**  
Head of the  
Tasmanian State Service

The Tasmanian Veteran's Employment Strategy is a whole-of-State Service approach that demonstrates the Tasmanian Government's commitment to providing veterans with employment opportunities across all levels and classifications of the Tasmanian State Service.

The Tasmanian State Service is proud to champion veteran employment. Our commitment to this strategy will also help build awareness amongst other employers, including Government Business Enterprises, about the value of veterans' skills and experience and how these can contribute to the growth of business and opportunity.

We know that gaining civilian employment provides veterans with a range of benefits including financial security, community engagement and increased wellbeing.

It also makes sense for organisations, including the Tasmanian State Service, to access the skills and experience of well-trained veterans, leveraging this talent pool.

As the Head of the State Service, I am committed to building a State Service workplace that reflects the diversity of the community we serve. With over 17,500 veterans living in Tasmania, it is important that veterans are represented within our workforce. Our diverse workforce powers greater innovation and contributes to the delivery of high-quality services for all Tasmanians.

I know that we already have veterans working across Tasmanian Government agencies and I look forward to seeing that number grow through our delivery of targeted actions under this Strategy.



# Appreciation

The Veterans' Employment Strategy was developed by the Tasmanian Government, in partnership with the Veterans' Reference Group.

The Veterans' Reference Group provides a link between Tasmania's veterans and the Tasmanian Government, with members giving advice and insight on a wide range of veterans-related issues.

We thank both current and recent members of the Veterans' Reference Group for their advice, contributions and ongoing commitment to veterans' employment in Tasmania.

More information on the Veterans' Reference Group is available at [https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-policy-and-engagement/advisory\\_groups/veterans\\_reference\\_group](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-policy-and-engagement/advisory_groups/veterans_reference_group)

We would also like to thank RSL Tasmania for its commitment to this Strategy.



# Tasmania's Veterans

In the context of the Strategy, veterans include all personnel who have served in the Australian Defence Force, including reservists, people who experienced operational deployments and peacekeeping missions, and people who served in peacetime.



There were  
**17,515**  
people who had previously served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) living in Tasmania, 3.8 per cent of the Tasmanian population aged 15 years and over!

**85%**  
of Tasmania's veterans are male.<sup>1</sup>



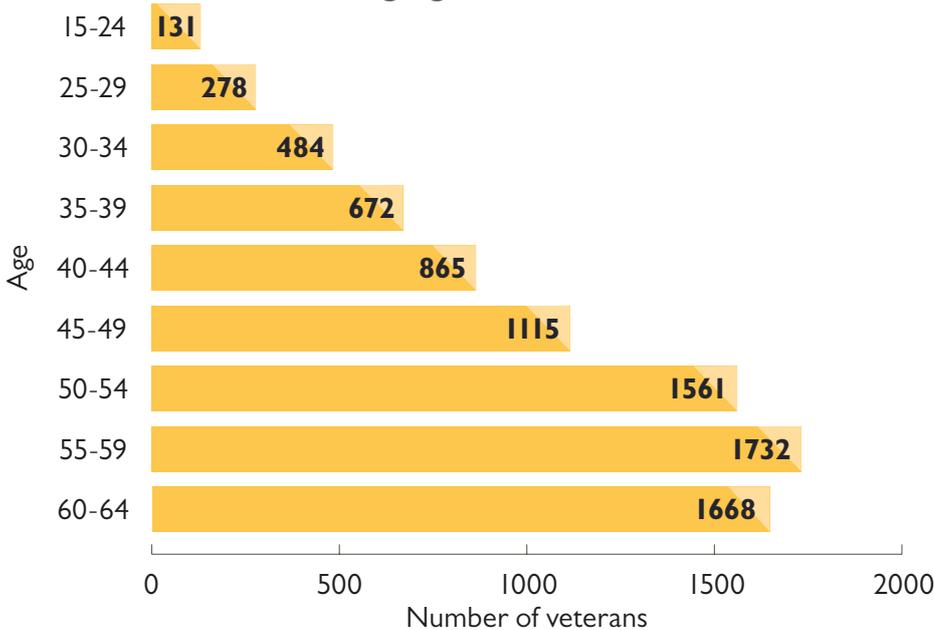
**50%** (8,506)  
of Tasmania's veterans are of working age, with the majority of those aged 50 plus.<sup>1</sup>



## ADS Separations<sup>2</sup>

Tasmania had **379** permanent ADF separations in the five-year period from **1 July 2017** to **31 December 2022**, representing an average of just over 75 separations each year.

## Working Age Veterans



## Tasmanian State Service

Of those Tasmanians who are employed, more than **1 in 10** or **32,000** people work in the Tasmanian State Service.<sup>3</sup>

On average, the Tasmanian State Service employs **1,300** new permanent staff each year.<sup>4</sup>

1 2021 Australian Census data

2 Department of Veterans' Affairs data

3 2021 Australian Census Data and State Service Workforce Reporting 2022-23 and 2021-22.

4 State Service Workforce Reporting 2022-23 and 2021-22



# Tasmanian Government support for Veterans

The Tasmania Government provides a range of support for veterans living in our State. In 2023, this includes support for:

- RSL Tasmania to operate as the peak body for veterans and undertake special projects.
- Veteran Wellbeing Voucher Program to enable veteran's participation in healthy activities that will support their health and wellbeing and assist in developing social networks. The free Program is open to eligible Tasmanian veterans who can apply for a voucher to put towards the cost of registration or membership fees at participating gyms and sporting clubs.
- Veterans' Active Recreation Program to support the wellbeing of our veterans through an outdoor recreation experience for returned service personnel in a National Park environment, which provides a challenging outdoor experience, with a focus on mental health and wellbeing, and links to training pathways and employment in outdoor education and eco-tourism.
- The Teddy Sheean VC Memorial Grants Program to provide funds to Tasmanian ex-service organisations and clubs for works, equipment purchases and welfare initiatives for veterans.
- The Cameron Baird VC MG Scholarship to provide support for students undertaking Years 11 or 12.
- Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize, a competition that commemorates and preserves the meaning of the Anzac spirit in the Tasmanian community through a study tour to sites and landmarks of wartime, either within Australia or internationally.
- Special commemorative services and events such as the Legacy Centenary in 2023.
- Developing Dago Point (Lake Sorell) Veterans Retreat which provides support for the wellbeing of veterans, recognising that time to recover, heal and re-connect can be critical to their long-term health.

# Our Target

**The Tasmanian Veterans' Employment Strategy introduces an aspirational target to employ 100 additional veterans into the Tasmanian State Service over four years.**

To help us achieve our target, the Tasmanian Government commits to working with, and involving Tasmanian veterans and ex-service personnel, in the implementation of the Strategy and its associated actions. Regular input, feedback and advice from the Veterans' Reference Group on the Strategy and its actions will continue to inform and shape current and future initiatives.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead the Strategy's implementation, working in collaboration with all Tasmanian State Service agencies.

We will also seek to partner with the State's Government Business Enterprises and State-owned Companies to expand the Strategy's implementation and future directions.

Recognising the Australian Government's responsibilities in supporting veterans, we will continue to work closely with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Defence on separation, transition and veteran support. The Strategy has been designed to complement work underway nationally including the Prime Minister's National Veterans' Employment Program.





# Guiding Principles and Focus Areas

## Guiding Principles

- We recognise the skills and values that veterans can, and do, bring to the Tasmanian State Service;
- We support the employment of veterans, ensuring that veterans have equal opportunity in gaining employment in the Tasmanian State Service;
- We provide career opportunities in our organisation to veterans;
- We actively seek to understand how veterans' skills and experience can translate into civilian skills and contribute to the Tasmanian State Service;
- We provide suitable training, mentoring and coaching to veterans to assist their integration into the Tasmanian State Service.

## Focus Areas

This Strategy has three key focus areas:

- Attract
- Recruit
- Retain

This is the Tasmanian Government's first Veterans' Employment Strategy. We are committed to building on this Strategy over time.

This Strategy identifies several future directions for consideration within the life of this Strategy.



# Focus Area 1: Attract



## Attract

The Tasmanian State Service provides work environments that are attractive to Tasmania's veterans. As Tasmania's largest employer we can create, offer and support a range of employment opportunities and career options for veterans.

Objectives	Actions
<p>Ensure that the Tasmanian State Service is an employer of choice for Tasmanian veterans looking for employment.</p> <p>Increase veterans' awareness of the Tasmanian State Service as an employer.</p> <p>Increase veterans' awareness of the wide range of roles and opportunities on offer in the Tasmanian State Service.</p>	<p>Partner with RSL Tasmania, and other ex-service organisations, to promote employment opportunities with the Tasmanian State Service.</p> <p>Establish and promote an online Veterans' Portal, with an initial focus on providing information on employment opportunities for veterans within the Tasmanian State Service. The Portal will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Targeted resources for veterans interested in working in the Tasmanian State Service.</li><li>• A link to the RSL Employment Jobs Board.</li><li>• A Training and Skills Guide which articulates military tasks and skills in civilian language.</li><li>• Case studies of veterans who have successfully transitioned into careers in the public sector.</li><li>• Contact details for mentors already working in the State Service, allowing prospective employees to connect with current employees.</li></ul>

# Profile: John Withers



*“You need to have a transition plan of where you want to live, the type of role and salary, and most importantly what your family wants as well.”*

For an ex-SAS officer, former head of the Counter Terrorism Unit and 25-year veteran of the Australian Regular Army, changing career direction was not easy.

“The sort of work I joined the army to do was behind me because of my rank,” the now retired Brigadier said.

“At that time, I had done everything exciting in terms of command opportunities and my operational skills.’

In 1998, seeking a change, and with a young family, John decided it was about time he transitioned from the military, start a civilian career and settle down.

Now Assistant Director, HR Operations and Strategy at the Department of Justice, John said it took several years to complete his transition.

“You need to have a transition plan of where you want to live, the type of role and salary, and most importantly what your family wants as well,’ he said.

“I have spoken to others who were leaving the military, but they really hadn’t thought about what they were going to do, they hadn’t done their research, which surprised me.’

John decided he wanted to specialise in Human Resources, following a senior role in the Personnel Management Agency which handles career planning and promotions for soldiers in the Australian Army.

He also knew he wanted to settle in Tasmania, having visited before with his Tasmanian-born wife, Robyn, and loving it.

John describes his skill-set as a ‘specialist-generalist’ which he said made it difficult for potential employers to identify his transferable skills. It would have been much easier if he were a medic or a driver.

To overcome this, he began a Master of Business Administration degree to supplement his practical skills, knowledge and experience.

He began working for the Department of State Growth, before working in the private sector, before returning to the Tasmanian State Service where he has been for 14 years in a variety of roles.



The State Service “is a good employer and the work’s interesting, particularly in HR. I like the variety.”

“I have also had the opportunity to bounce around in managerial roles in different organisations.”

So, what advice would he give to someone looking to transition out of the military to a public service career?

- The first thing is to plan; decide on location, role, and any training you could do before you leave that will help towards beginning your next career.
- Have appropriate expectations, that it is a transition; and that no first job may be perfect.
- Temper your thoughts as to salary as some people have an expectation of what they need or should be earning. If you have to, start a bit lower, get known, perform well and then apply for promotion.
- Prepare - research the role, ring the contact person, and understand what the job really is.

So, what do veterans have to offer a potential employer?

John said he had encountered a stereotypical view about what a military person is like, but this was far from the mark.

“We are a broad church in terms of the skill-sets. There are people like me, the operators, through to logisticians, IT, medics, cooks, pilots, transport drivers, and mechanics.”

“Defence is essentially a large and complex industry.”

John said the reality for most military people is that they move all the time, and do a variety of different jobs so are used to being organised and adaptable.

“We get very good training in a lot of areas, so we’re used to working in different and diverse environments, so we’ve got a really good, diverse skill-set appropriate in almost any industry.”

# Focus Area 2: Recruit



## Recruit

The Tasmanian State Service's recruitment practices are inclusive, accessible and attractive to people from diverse backgrounds, including ex-serving personnel.

Objectives	Actions
<p>Ensure recruitment practices across the State Service are inclusive.</p> <p>Ensure that hiring managers and delegates understand the skills and attributes that veterans can bring to positions in the Tasmanian State Service.</p>	<p>Develop resources that highlight the skills and experience that veterans can bring to the State Service. These resources will be published on the proposed Veterans' Portal and made available to hiring managers.</p> <p>Educate Tasmanian State Service employees, hiring managers and talent acquisition staff on the benefits of hiring Tasmanian veterans through the use of online training modules (including those developed by the RSL Employment Program).</p> <p>Explore options for allowing veterans' to self-identify during the recruitment process. This will improve the availability of data, allowing agencies to identify whether their efforts are best focused on attraction or recruitment.</p> <p>Undertake regular analysis of available recruitment data to identify areas where additional support can be provided to job applicants and hiring managers.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to work with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to support work trials for veterans returning to work from an illness/injury.</p>

# Profile: Shona Prior



*“Opportunities were presenting themselves in another world that I wanted to pursue, although I didn’t really know where I would end up!”*

For Lieutenant Shona Prior of the Royal Australian Navy, embarking on a civilian career became something that she just had to do.

“I enjoyed the Navy, I related to the values and culture, I liked the people,” Shona said.

“However, opportunities were presenting themselves in another world that I wanted to pursue, although I didn’t really know where I would end up!”

Joining the permanent Navy in 1996 and working as a junior Supply Officer (now called a Maritime Logistics Officer), Shona’s role involved delivering the logistic support functions required by a ship, or deployable unit, and personnel.

“I really enjoyed the work, the Supply Branch was really suited to what I do well, in terms of financial management, business management and hospitality management.”

Based in Perth and Sydney, some of her roles and experience included deploying as a junior Supply Officer onboard HMAS ARUNTA, supporting the Collins Class submarines, and being the Operational Logistics Manager for the Mine Warfare and Clearance Diving Task Group.

Shona completed her Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Geography through the Australian Defence Force Academy and throughout her Navy career, she maintained an academic interest in the social sciences and geography.

The Navy allowed her to work remotely in New Zealand for several weeks to complete a Graduate Certificate of Antarctic Studies with the University of Canterbury.

The Navy also gave Shona a year of leave without pay to do a research project with the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge in the UK, which really opened Shona’s eyes to what other career paths and professions were out there.

Following in the footsteps of some of her Navy friends, in 2000 she enrolled in an MBA, as part of a plan to obtain qualifications that would be recognised outside the Australian Defence Force (ADF).



She participated in the Defence Force Transition Program and found the transition seminar and access to funding for a professional development course most helpful in finding her feet.

Shona was in regular contact with several friends who were also transitioning out of the ADF at that time, and they all shared tips on how to best reflect their military experience in their CVs and job interviews.

Rather than leave the Navy altogether, Shona transitioned to the Navy Reserves.

“When I left the permanent Navy, I felt a loss of identity and I felt quite isolated. So being able to transition to the Navy reserves allowed me to retain part of my identity and to maintain some of my social and professional networks.”

“It greatly assisted me to settle into my new life back in Hobart.”

Her first role outside the Navy was in defence industry consulting. Then in 2006 she was employed in the State Service and held various roles across the former Department of Economic Development and Department of Premier and Cabinet for 11 years. A career highlight was being part of the Tasmanian Government’s first Climate Change Office.

In 2017, she left to take up a position at the Australian Government’s Australian Antarctic Division and returned to the State Service in 2019.

Now employed as Senior Project Manager in the Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries Unit, Department of State Growth, Shona describes her transition to her current career as a stepping stone approach.

“If you want to transition to a civilian career, start that process while you are still in the ADF, so you’ve got structure around you, and you’ve got employment.”

“Find a career coach to help you decide what career or role you’re going to transition into and to help you articulate your military skills and experience as transferable to civilian roles.”

“Before you leave, look for a qualification that is recognised in the sector you want to work in, and make a start on getting that qualification, or start getting experience and making contacts in that sector.”

“Find a mentor in your chosen sector, someone who can help with job applications and selection criteria. You can avoid the pitfalls by setting yourself up with those key contacts.”

Shona said the Tasmanian Veterans’ Employment Strategy will create better understanding of veterans by employers.

“It’s not about compromising what you’re looking for in a role, it’s not about giving a veteran a hand-out. It’s about helping that veteran transfer their skills, into what you’re looking for.”

“Veterans are often hard-working, very loyal and values-driven. So, you may end up with a better candidate in the end.”

# Focus Area 3: Retain



## Retain

The Tasmanian State Service develops and retains veterans, providing pathways for career growth, leadership development and diversification.

Objectives	Actions
<p>Ensure that the Tasmania State Service is a positive place to work for all employees, including our veterans.</p> <p>Ensure that learning and development opportunities are available and that these are sufficiently targeted to the needs of different employees, including veterans.</p> <p>Ensure that the Tasmanian State Services' flexible workplace policies are fit-for-purpose for veterans.</p>	<p>Establish a Veterans' Mentor Program and Veterans' Employee Network.</p> <p>This Program would allow veterans working in the Tasmanian State Service to connect with each other, support new employees, share insights and experiences, and provides a forum to raise Whole-of-Government issues.</p> <p>In collaboration with existing veteran State Service employees, identify factors impacting on veteran employees' attraction, retention and career progression in the Tasmanian State Service.</p> <p>Promote leave provisions, including defence force leave, to support veterans who remain part-time members of the Australian Defence Force.</p> <p>Ensure that the Tasmanian State Service Diversity and Inclusion Policy recognises the diverse experiences of ex-service personnel.</p> <p>Develop a retention target for incorporation into the Tasmanian Veterans' Employment Strategy.</p>



# Implementation, Governance and Reporting

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead the implementation of the Strategy in collaboration with Tasmanian State Service agencies.

We will continue to seek regular input, feedback and advice from the Veterans' Reference Group on the Strategy and its actions.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will monitor progress against actions in the Strategy and track progress towards the target.

A progress report on implementation will be provided to the Veterans' Reference Group and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs annually, and published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website.

# Future Directions

The Tasmanian Veterans' Employment Strategy 2023-2027 is the first iteration of this Strategy. The Tasmanian Government is committed to building on this Strategy over time to ensure we are successful in delivering favourable employment outcomes for Tasmania's veterans, and harnessing the talents of Tasmanian veterans to support our economic growth.

We commit to being guided by feedback and will take an evidence-based approach in developing future initiatives. We are also committed to refining our target as necessary to ensure we are maximising the opportunities available to Tasmania's veterans.

As a starting point, we will look to explore the feasibility of the following actions as we implement this Strategy:

- Seek to partner with the State's Government Business Enterprises and State-owned Companies to expand the Strategy's implementation and future directions.
- Continue to work with the Australian Government to improve the evidence base around Australian veteran employment to inform policy and design support for veteran employment into the future.
- Informed by data, consider the development of specific actions to target those groups of veterans at greater risk of unemployment including those who have experienced trauma.
- Consider future opportunities to incorporate this strategy into a broader Veterans' Wellbeing Strategy, linking other strategies and frameworks that focus on health and wellbeing, including within the workplace.
- Consider whether specialised Employee Assistance Program (EAP) support can be made available to veterans employed in the Tasmanian State Service.
- Consider future opportunities to partner with the RSL Employment Program to:
  - deliver training programs; and
  - run a specific veterans' employment campaign.
- Consider whether there are opportunities to holistically support veteran families under future iterations of this Strategy.
- Explore opportunities to build future partnerships with industry to promote private sector employment opportunities for veterans.
- Partner with the Australian Government and the Tasmanian local government sector to facilitate the attraction, recruitment, and retention of veterans across all levels of government.
- Consider opportunities to partner with Tasmania's Defence Advocate on the implementation of the Tasmanian Veterans' Employment Strategy, with a specific focus on defence industries.



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