



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

DVA Capability Review Response

Secretary Foreword

For any APS department, a Capability Review is an important mechanism to highlight areas for improvement and encourage innovation to support the best delivery of service to the people of Australia.

For DVA, we welcome the opportunity this Review presents to us, to support the optimisation of the delivery of high quality services and supports to ADF veterans and veteran families. Putting on an Australian service uniform is an act of bravery and self-sacrifice, and the work of our department is central to offering support to those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation.

We have carefully considered the Review's findings and recommendations. Our response, and planned investment in our people, technology and systems will allow us to achieve our purpose of improving not only the health, but also the wellbeing and economic outcomes for veterans and families. Our response also outlines our future focused approach to making DVA a great place to work.

A major step in the department's workforce evolution is to ensure continued and improved implementation of 3 focus areas.

- Authentic leadership that sets clear direction and maintains momentum
- Communicating with purpose and acting with clarity
- Focus on wellbeing to support an agile, engaged, and innovative workforce.

We recognise there are other opportunities for improvement. The department is working to harness modernised and robust technology systems, which will help us to enhance our processes and services, while building on our strengths. We are also continuing to deliver on our **Workforce Strategy Action Plan 2024-25** which aims to ensure we have a diverse workforce with the right skills and expertise to deliver quality outcomes for our clients and stakeholders, the department and the government, as well as the Australian public.

Our leaders have a key role to play, and they are committed to modelling authentic leadership to enact improvements. The leadership group is united in its commitment to stewardship, and working together to drive meaningful and enduring change, while communicating with purpose and acting with clarity. The development of the department's 2025 Strategic Priorities to guide our people is an example of collaborative co-design within the senior leadership group, and its commitment to being unified. We are continuing to develop a culture where innovation, collaboration and co-design are embedded in the day-to-day.

We have experienced substantial change across DVA in recent years, and we are still in the midst of that change



journey. Implementation of the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide will drive comprehensive reform to the systems, processes, and culture across DVA. We have already made great strides in addressing a number of historical issues, to clear the path for us to deliver the best outcomes for the veteran community. We will continue to work alongside, engage, and consult with other Government agencies, veterans, and families to ensure our work is informed and those who we serve, receive the support that they need, when they need it.

The 2024 APS Employee Census provided DVA employees the opportunity to have their say about what it is like to work in DVA and for the APS. What we found is that the themes in the Census and the Capability Review are aligned. It was pleasing to see the continued high level of employee commitment and feelings of connectedness to the department's values and purpose.

The Capability Action Plan incorporates the Strategic Directions document and the Census Action Plan; both were developed and informed by the Capability Review, findings from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, and the 2024 APS Employee Census results. These plans will guide how we work as a department internally to build on our strengths and pay particular focus to areas where we can do better.

The passion, dedication, and empathy that are reported to me, and that I witness across all levels of staff, fills me with confidence that in 2025 we will succeed in better serving and recognising veterans and families, and we will continue to make DVA a great place to work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Frame".

Alison Frame

Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs

Strategic Priorities 2025

Why we're here and where we're going

OUR PURPOSE: Support the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and their families.

WE SUPPORT OUR PURPOSE AND MAKE DVA A GREAT PLACE TO WORK WHEN WE:



LEARN

By listening, asking and understanding so that we grow individually and together.



COLLABORATE

By working together as one team to deliver our purpose, and communicating with authenticity.



INNOVATE

By being curious, engaging with risk and trying new things to improve our work.



CO-DESIGN

By working with veterans, veteran families and stakeholders to create better solutions.

How we work together builds on the APS Values and Behaviours

TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE WE WILL:

OUR PRIORITIES

DELIVER QUALITY SERVICES

Deliver and continue to improve our services for veterans and veteran families.

IMPLEMENT ROYAL COMMISSION AND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

SIMPLIFY PROCESSES AND IMPROVE ENABLING SERVICES

Provide services and supports that enable teams to deliver for veterans and families.

OUR FOCUS FOR 2025

IMPLEMENT BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS

Improve our end-to-end processes for claimants and staff.

IMPLEMENT LEGISLATION REFORM

IMPROVE TECHNOLOGY AND INTRODUCE AI
Improve service delivery by ICT modernisation and designing AI solutions that fit business needs.

RECOGNISE AND COMMEMORATE

Increase engagement with the community to improve recognition of the service and sacrifice of veterans and families.

IMPROVE VETERAN WELLBEING AND TRANSITION

Co-design an agency focussed on wellbeing and continue to improve transition outcomes.

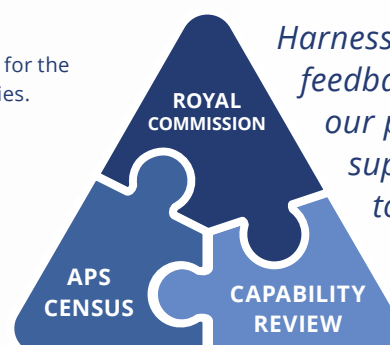
ENHANCE STEWARDSHIP

Prepare for the future - informed by data, research and evaluation; continually improve service and staff capability; and coordinate our services and supports to complement those of our partners in Government, ex-service and community organisations.

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

We will use the yearly planning and reporting process to provide clarity and direction for the contribution we are each making to achieve our business, team and individual priorities.

- Portfolio Budget Statement Outcomes
- Corporate Plan Annual Report and Performance Measures
- Group, Division and Branch Business Plans
- Enterprise Risk and Risk Management Framework
- Data, Reporting and Dashboards
- Performance Agreements
- Governance Bodies
- Community Consultation and Feedback
- Census Action Plan
- Pulse Survey and Staff Feedback



Harnessing valuable feedback to inform our priorities and support our staff to best serve veterans and families.

DVA Census Action Plan 2024–25

The Australian Public Service (APS) Employee Census is an annual employee perception survey that captures confidential attitude and opinion data from APS employees on important issues in the workplace. It is an opportunity for APS employees to share their experiences of working in the APS and their department. In 2024, the department received a response rate of 78%.

OUR KEY PRIORITIES

We will continue to invest in our workforce through these three priority focus areas:

- Authentic leadership that sets clear direction and maintains momentum
- Communicating with purpose and acting with clarity
- Focus on wellbeing to support an agile, engaged and innovative workforce.

Priority	Actions	Success Measures	Lead
1. Authentic leadership that sets clear direction and maintains momentum.	1.1 The SES will continue to work together to build a consolidated leadership team, through cross collaboration activities and by living our values. 1.2 Refresh the DVA's purpose and culture vision. 1.3 Implement the SES Performance Framework to embed a culture of transparency and accountability. 1.4 Deliver SES Masterclasses to steward and lead a safe and healthy environment for our people. 1.5 Deliver manager information sessions to share information and experiences with a focus on people management. 1.6 Continue to invest in team leader/manager training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Census scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SES leadership ◦ Immediate Supervisor ◦ Engagement • Redefined cultural behaviours/ expectations • APS Values reinforced • Increased scores identified through the DVA pulse survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SES • All managers • People Services Branch
2. Communicating with purpose and acting with clarity and autonomy.	2.1 Encourage and reinforce the message that our people can respectfully challenge or present alternative views or concepts, as a valued member of DVA. 2.2 Provide upskilling, guidance and support to develop the skills of our people to respectfully challenge, and receive feedback, when alternative views or concepts are presented. 2.3 Launch new consultation and change resources (reflects the APS Change Framework and incorporates requirements of the DVA Enterprise Agreement 2024-27). 2.4 Promote APS Reform and APS Centre of Excellence events and training (organisational change and personal change). 2.5 Continue to embrace change as a normal, constant and healthy part of a responsive and progressive agency. 2.6 Increase communication relating to organisational priorities and behaviours through regular all staff townhalls and cross functional SES panel discussions. 2.7 Focus on including the 'why' in written and verbal communications. Talk more about how/why decisions were made. 2.8 Continue to promote mental wellness activities and support to all staff via internal communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Census scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Clarity and Autonomy ◦ Communication and Change ◦ SES Leadership • Wellbeing Increased scores identified through the DVA pulse survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SES • All managers • People Services Branch
3. Focus on wellbeing to support an engaged, empowered, and innovative workforce.	3.1 Embed respectful and supportive behaviours through the roll out of the Respect Work workshop (to all sites). 3.2 Implement the Psychosocial Risks and Hazards Framework. 3.3 Continue to provide managers with training to respond to, and manage psychosocial safety and healthy, sustainable 3.4 Increase in-house wellbeing training and events, including face-to-face clinical support programs. 3.5 Provide staff with tools and resources to support self-care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Census scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Wellbeing • Decreased Census scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Bullying, harassment and discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SES • All managers • People Services Branch