



TransitionTaskforce

IMPROVING THE TRANSITION EXPERIENCE



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Department of Defence



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This report has been produced by the Transition Taskforce. The Taskforce is co-chaired by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Department of Defence (Defence) and is made up of current and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) as well as representatives from key areas within DVA, Defence and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC).

The content and recommendations in this report were developed by the Taskforce using a collaborative design approach to explore the experiences and perspectives of current and former serving ADF members; current and former ADF family members; key government stakeholders; ex-service organisations and other professional organisations.

The Transition Taskforce would like to thank the current and former serving ADF members, family members, ex-service organisations, key government stakeholders and other professional organisations who participated in the collaborative design engagements and the *Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017* represented in this report.

Your generosity in sharing your ideas and experiences is highly valued. The Taskforce acknowledges your commitment to improving services for ADF members and their families. This is a commitment we share.



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FOREWORD

Leaving the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and establishing a civilian life outside of the military environment is often a significant event in a person's life and a key service delivery interaction point for the Departments of Defence (Defence), Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC).

Currently, between 5,500 and 6,000 ADF members leave the military each year. The experience of transition for these ADF members varies. Many members make this transition successfully and quickly re-establish civilian life, new careers or settle into retirement. For some though, separating from the ADF is not as easy or positive as it could be, and they may face significant social, financial, employment and wellbeing challenges.

Defence and DVA are working together to implement the Government's 2016 election commitment 'Creating a Better Veterans' Transition Process'. This commitment includes the establishment of a joint Transition Taskforce (the Taskforce) to identify the barriers to a successful transition, and develop recommendations to address those barriers. The Taskforce is made up of current and former serving ADF members and representatives from key areas within Defence, DVA and the CSC.

In developing its recommendations, the Taskforce sought to better understand the current experience of transition through extensive engagement with transitioning and transitioned ADF members, family members and key government stakeholders delivering transition services.

The Taskforce also considered contemporary Government Inquiries and Reviews examining the experience of service leavers and their families; relevant research; current Defence, DVA and CSC services and new transition service initiatives; and other international veteran servicing programs and initiatives. Finally, the Taskforce reviewed transition within a wider context, and engaged with emergency service and professional sporting organisations from a lessons learnt and innovative practice perspective.

In delivering its recommendations, the Taskforce recognises that separating from the ADF is more than an administrative process. This period of transition is experienced by individuals who have varied needs and unique circumstances. The recommendations of the Taskforce are designed to better support every ADF member, along with their family, through their individual transition journey, and empower them to make that transition effectively.



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KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Transition Taskforce has been established by the Australian Government to facilitate improved transition and ensure that current and future veterans, and their families, have the assistance and support that they need to transition effectively.

The purpose of the Taskforce is to identify the barriers to effective transition, and report back to portfolio Ministers on suggested actions to address those barriers. In delivering its findings and recommendations, the Taskforce acknowledges that many ADF members separate from the military and successfully re-establish civilian life. However, significant social, financial, employment and wellbeing challenges can be experienced by those who do not successfully transition.

The Taskforce considers that current and former serving members of the ADF, along with their families, are those who best know how improvements can make a difference. The following findings and recommendations have been developed drawing on the contemporary experience of transitioned and transitioning ADF members and their families, and their ideas about improving the transition experience.

KEY FINDINGS

The Taskforce found that common factors which influence an individual's experience of transition are:

- A member's level of control over the decision to leave military service
- A member's mode of separation from the ADF (i.e. voluntary, involuntary or medical separations)
- The timeframes leading to separation and the member's level of preparedness for separation
- A member's awareness of, and access to, transition related information and services
- The level of support and assistance members receive during transition from both support networks and service delivery organisations
- A member's capacity to engage with, and manage, transition processes. This capacity is influenced by a member's wellness, individual circumstances and personal resilience
- The timeliness of services and support provision
- The degree at which members have remained connected to their civilian environment whilst serving in the ADF
- The military Chain of Command's acknowledgement of an ADF member's service and contribution
- How easily members seeking employment post service can secure meaningful employment

The Taskforce found that the most common barriers to an effective transition are:

1. Prolonged periods of instability and uncertainty

Effective transition can be undermined by prolonged periods of instability and uncertainty when members are in the process of separating or have separated from the ADF. Uncertainty can relate to social, financial, employment and wellbeing challenges.

2. Inability to engage in or manage the transition processes

Some members and their families are unable to engage in, or manage, transition processes due to wellness, personal resilience or individual circumstances.

3. Inaccessible transition information

Transition information can be hard to access and/or understand.

4. Complex and fragmented government agency processes

The complexity, duplication and fragmentation of transition processes across government agencies can make separation difficult.

5. Service delivery timeframes do not always meet members' immediate needs

Some members experience delays in accessing entitlements and support services as a result of organisational timeframes and processes.

6. Varying levels of trust in government

Many members do not trust Defence, DVA and CSC to act in their individual best interest. Consequently, some members delay seeking entitlements and assistance. This mistrust is based on their own experiences or perceptions in dealing with the various agencies.

7. Low confidence in employability

In comparison to their military career, some members experience limited success in securing meaningful post ADF employment.

8. Limited support for readjustment challenges

Some members are not well prepared or equipped to manage the differences between the military environment and civilian life.

9. Unpreparedness for loss of identity

Many members are unprepared for, and unsure of how to respond to, the significant loss of military identity which is often experienced when separating from the ADF.

10. Unrecognised impact on families

Many family members feel unprepared and unsupported for the impact of transition and the consequent establishment of their lives in a civilian context.

The Taskforce found that an effective transition can be enabled by ensuring members:

- Have financial certainty
- Have access to necessary professional health care
- Have access to, and can understand, information about the transition process, including what to expect, what help and support is available and how they access the support
- Are psychologically prepared for the change
- Are provided transition information and assistance for their family
- Remain connected to peers and establish new community connections
- Experience fast, easy and simple access to services, assistance and support from government

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Taskforce recommends:

1. The focus of all transition related processes, services and support delivered by government should be centered on the needs of the person and their families.
2. The Departments of Defence, DVA and CSC should investigate the intelligent use of data to track outcomes for separating members and allow the system to respond to emerging needs.
3. Defence, DVA and CSC should trial an integrated approach to transition service delivery that provides, where appropriate, proactive assistance to the person and their family throughout their transition journey.
4. Defence, DVA and CSC should reimagine how transition related information and tools can be brought together and delivered in ways that are effective and engaging.
5. Defence, DVA and CSC should address privacy based barriers to enable proactive engagement with family members of current and former serving ADF members.
6. Defence and DVA should enhance their career assistance and development capabilities with a view to increasing the probability of current and former serving members securing employment, where appropriate.
7. Defence should consider ways in which transition can be better supported within the services including enhancing acknowledgement of (and value placed in) a member's service and contribution.



1. INTRODUCTION

Creating a Better Veterans' Transition Process forms part of the Coalition Government's Policy to Support Veterans and Their Families. Over the last decade, it has been well established through health and social research that separating from military service and re-establishing civilian life can be complex and challenging for some people. Whilst many ADF members make this transition successfully, some service men and women can face complex social, financial, employment and wellbeing challenges during this period of change.

A key focus for government is how to help military members seamlessly transition out of the ADF and ensure that they don't fall through any gaps between Defence and civilian life. To facilitate improved transition, and ensure that current and future veterans have the support that they need to transition effectively, the government has established a Transition Taskforce. The Taskforce is co-chaired by Defence and DVA, and is made up of current and former members of the ADF as well as representatives from key areas within Defence, DVA and CSC.

Reporting to Portfolio Ministers through the Defence/DVA Links Steering Committee¹, the purpose of the Taskforce is to identify the barriers to effective transition and suggest recommendations to address those barriers. The Terms of Reference for the Taskforce are at Attachment A.

Currently, between 5,500 and 6,000 ADF members leave the military each year. Separating from the military and re-establishing civilian life is more than an administrative process for these ADF members and families. Re-establishing civilian life is a journey; a journey that can include a change in, or loss of employment; housing, accommodation or locational impacts; the establishment of health care and wellness supports; changes to personal relationships; and, the re-establishment of social and community connections.

Most people are proactive, and adapt well to their changing circumstances and require limited or no support from government. On the contrary, for some, life outside the ADF can be challenging. Those separating, or who have separated previously, may carry with them the burden of their service. This may include health conditions that require ongoing support. Others may struggle with the loss of their military identity or in finding a renewed sense of purpose and meaning. Securing meaningful employment post service, for those members who seek to be re-employed, can also be challenging.

There are a range of government entitlements, services and support currently available to assist transitioning ADF members and their families. These services are provided by Defence, DVA, CSC and other Federal and State Government entities. Additionally, ex-service organisations, other organisations supporting the Defence community, and a range of Australian businesses also deliver services to transitioning members.

¹ Membership on the Defence/DVA Links Steering Committee includes key representatives from Defence and DVA. Defence members include: Deputy Secretary, Defence People Group; Head, People Capability; Commander, Joint Health Command. DVA members include: Chief Operating Officer; Repatriation Commissioner; Deputy President; Principal Medical Adviser; First Assistant Secretary, Health and Community Services; First Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Support. Please note this list does not include Committee guests or advisers.

Defence, DVA and CSC are working cooperatively to deliver assistance and support to members who leave the ADF, and are trialing new ways of delivering transition services to current and separating ADF members. This includes work on integrated, proactive service delivery, leveraging technology to deliver better and faster services, and providing personalised services to help ADF members to prepare for civilian life.

Improvements to government services for current and former serving ADF members are ongoing and includes new programs and initiatives. One key example is the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program. This program is helping Australian business appreciate the unique skills former ADF members bring to jobs and assist to recognise the transfer of veterans' capability and talents.

Through implementing the Taskforce recommendations, the experience of transition for ADF members should continue to improve. 2018 will see the Taskforce take the necessary action to implement the intent of the seven recommendations, including an examination of specific service gaps in medical and income support services, barriers within civilian employment environments, and identify any legislative or policy based disincentives to seeking civilian employment.²

The Taskforce has taken, and will continue to take, a collaborative design approach. The work of the Taskforce in addressing the recommendations is heavily focused on better understanding the circumstances, needs and service delivery preferences of those who separate from the ADF. Engaging with current and former serving ADF members and their families was the first step in designing meaningful solutions that respond to their needs and further empowers them to transition effectively.

This report shares the insights and experiences of recently transitioned or transitioning ADF members and family members engaged by the Taskforce, and the barriers they individually faced to transition effectively. This report also considers contemporary Government Inquiries and Reviews examining the experience of transitioned ADF members and their families, current government services and new transition service initiatives, along with learnings from international counterparts and other professional organisations.

Most importantly, the recommendations contained in this report draw on the insights and ideas shared by those ADF members and family members who participated in the Taskforce collaborative engagements. The Taskforce recognises that current and former serving ADF members, and family members, are those who are best placed to know which improvements would make a difference to the transition experience.

2. METHODOLOGY

APPROACH

The Taskforce adopted a collaborative design approach³ to better understand the circumstances, needs and service delivery preferences of people who separate from the ADF. Collaborative design provides rich qualitative insights about the lived experience of people, and with this understanding comes a better ability to deliver meaningful solutions that meet people's circumstances, needs and preferences.

The Taskforce also broadened the reach of the collaborative design approach through an online Transition Taskforce survey. This survey provided a greater opportunity for the Taskforce to engage widely with recently transitioned ADF members, family members, caregivers, ex-service organisations and other organisations supporting the Defence community.

The Taskforce's approach was aligned with the Digital Transformation Agency's (DTA) 'Discovery' phase; that is, listening to the service user (i.e. current and former members of the ADF and their families) to build an understanding of the experience of transition, without specific conclusions in mind. This allowed the Taskforce to look only at the emergent issues and themes that service users identified, rather than preconceived ideas from an organisational perspective.

Figure 1 shows the DTA's service design framework in visual form. It highlights the importance of the Discovery phase to 'designing the right thing,' that is, services that address the problem that users need solving and that meets their needs.

During this Discovery phase, Taskforce engagement activities also built on contemporary knowledge arising from Defence and DVA's significant health and social research studies of the transition experience for ADF members and their families.

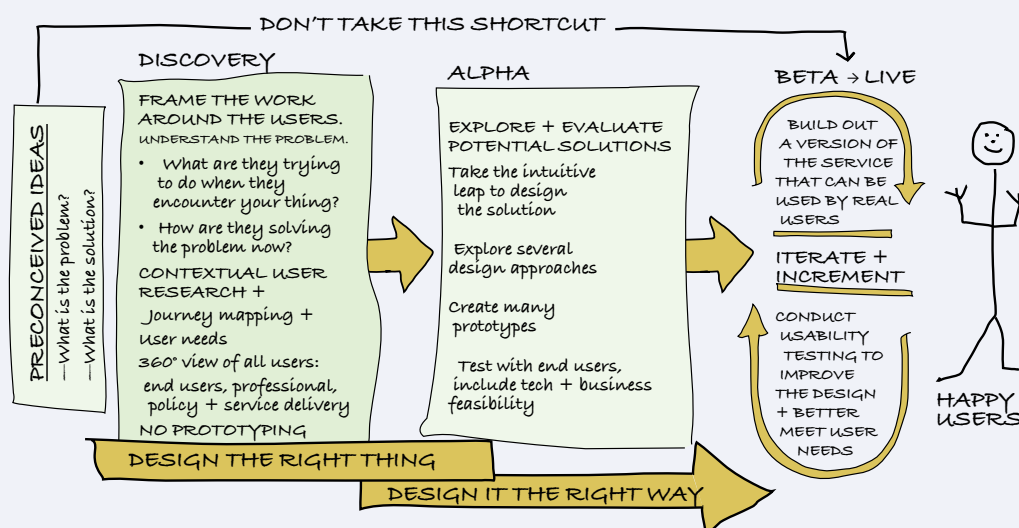


Figure 1: Design the right thing. Design it the right way—DTA.

³ It is important to highlight that a collaborative design approach seeks to surface people's experiences, circumstances and needs, and their ideas about service improvements. In developing innovative service solutions, service providers must balance desirable client outcomes with operational feasibility and sustainable.

METHODOLOGY

To explore transition from the widest possible lens, the Taskforce sought the perspectives of:

- Transitioning and recently transitioned ADF members and their families
- Ex-service organisations and other organisations supporting the Defence community
- Government stakeholders, including Defence, DVA, CSC, Federal Department of Employment, and some State Governments

Collaborative design engagement activities with these stakeholders provided the Taskforce with a better understanding of the military transition experience by:

- Identifying and exploring the circumstances and needs of separating members and their families, and the extent to which current arrangements meet those needs
- Identifying the barriers and issues faced by separating ADF members and their families as they progress through transition
- Learning more about the diverse experiences of transitioned and transitioning ADF members and their families as they interact with Defence, DVA, CSC and non-government service providers
- Identifying potential enablers to support effective transition
- Identifying opportunities for Defence, DVA and CSC to work in partnership to better facilitate effective transition

Participation in Taskforce engagements by transitioned and transitioning ADF members, family members and the veteran support community was voluntary and the majority of participants were not pre-identified for inclusion. These engagements captured the perspectives and ideas of diverse segments of stakeholders but should not be considered a representative sample for statistical or academic purposes.

The Taskforce also engaged with emergency services organisations and professional sporting organisations to consider the concept of transition in other professional environments. These professions were chosen because of the potential to discover some similarities in transition experiences. The Taskforce considered that potential similarities could include:

- The potential for injury to hasten and remove choice in relation to employment separation
- Loss of professional identity post transition
- Possible difficulties in achieving a new sense of purpose and/or meaningful employment post transition

METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

During the Discovery phase, the Taskforce engaged with 598 current and former serving ADF members, family members and caregivers. The Taskforce also engaged with government stakeholders and other relevant organisations. Two established collaborative design methods were used as part of the Taskforce's engagement activities, those were workshops and interviews. The Taskforce also conducted the *Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017*.

Interviews

Interviews are a way of understanding human experiences. During interviews, participants are invited to share their stories, values, concerns and reflections. Questions are planned to engage participants and provide structure, with interviewers also using impromptu questions to guide the interview.

Two types of interviews were employed for Transition Taskforce engagements:

- Intercept interviews: interviewers attended ADF Transition Seminars and asked transitioning members and/or their partners to participate in short, informal interviews about their transition experience. Participants were randomly selected, with interviews ranging from a few minutes to significantly longer depending on interviewee interest and their willingness to share their experiences. Eighty five (85) intercept interviews were conducted in Townsville, Canberra and Melbourne.
- Deep-dive interviews: individuals were interviewed based on their interest in participating and/or diversity of experience. A formal interview instrument was developed for these interviews, with interviews typically of one hour duration. Thirty (30) deep-dive interviews were conducted with current and former serving members and family members. Thirty two (32) deep-dive interviews were conducted with government stakeholders and thirteen (13) with other relevant organisations (a full list of the stakeholders interviewed is at Attachment B).

Workshops

Workshops allow a target group of participants to relate to each other, share their experiences, identify common themes and differences, and explore their ideas.

Transition workshops were conducted in focus group style, with between nine and seventeen participants per workshop. Workshops were held in Brisbane, Canberra and Sydney for transitioned ADF members. Another workshop was held in Canberra for family members of transitioned ADF members, with participants travelling to Canberra from across Australia.

Participants in these interviews and workshops represented:

- Members who were preparing to separate from the ADF, or who had recently separated from the ADF, with representation from the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), the Australian Army (Army) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)⁴
- The different circumstances in which a member separates from the ADF (e.g. voluntary, involuntary or medical separations)
- Varied ADF ranks, from recruits/trainees through to Senior Officers
- Varied age groups
- Varied personal situations
- Family members of transitioned and transitioning members
- Different geographic locations across Australia⁵
- Key government stakeholders delivering transition services
- Organisations from other relevant sectors to provide a lessons learnt and innovative practice perspective

⁴ Approximate breakdown of workshop and interview participation by service: 25% RAN, 53% Army and 22% RAAF.

⁵ Albury/Wodonga, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Townsville and Wagga Wagga.

Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017

Together with ORIMA Research, the Taskforce also developed and conducted an online survey⁶. This survey gathered the views and experiences of former serving members of the ADF, family members and organisations providing support to the veteran community. The survey allowed the Taskforce to augment the workshop and interview findings by opening up participation to all recently transitioned members and their families, regardless of their geographical location.

The survey provided the Taskforce with both quantitative and qualitative data, with respondents offered the opportunity to include comments about their transition experience.

The Taskforce received a total of 447 survey responses. These responses included 400 respondents who self-identified as former members of the ADF and thirty three (33) respondents who self-identified as family or friends of an ADF member. Fourteen (14) respondents were ex-service organisations and other organisations supporting the defence community (see Attachment B for the list of ex-service organisations and other organisations supporting the Defence community respondents).

Of the survey respondents, the majority were affiliated with the Army.⁷

A breakdown of the *Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017* results is at Attachment C.

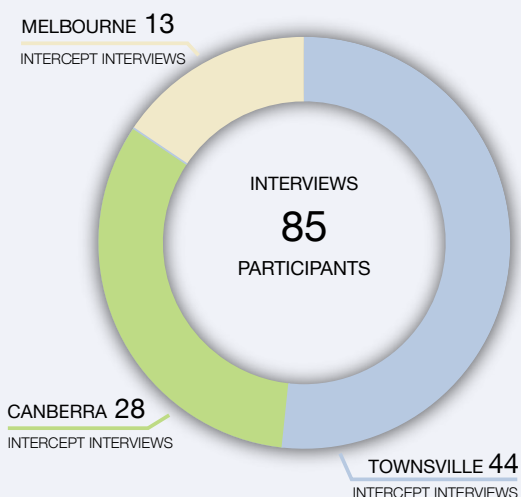


Figure 2: Transition Taskforce intercept interview participants 2017.

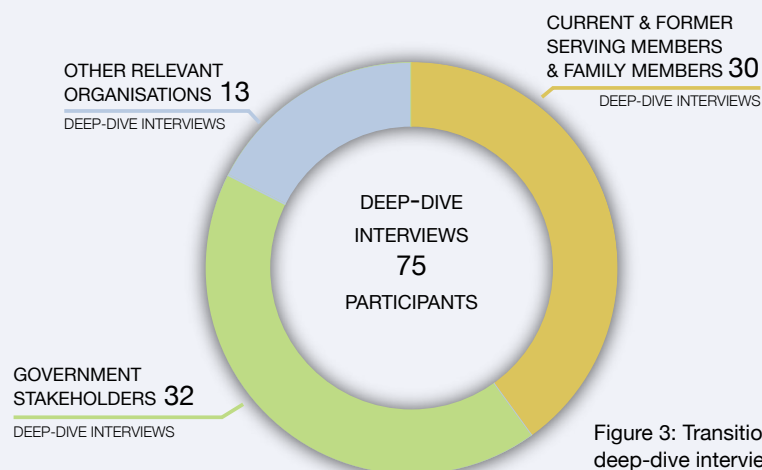


Figure 3: Transition Taskforce deep-dive interview participants 2017.

⁶ The survey was available online from 26 May to 4 June 2017, and was distributed by email to former serving members who had recently transitioned from the ADF and to members of DVA's ex-service organisation consultative bodies.

⁷ Approximate breakdown of survey responses by service: 16% RAN, 50% Army, 31% RAAF, 3% chose not to say.

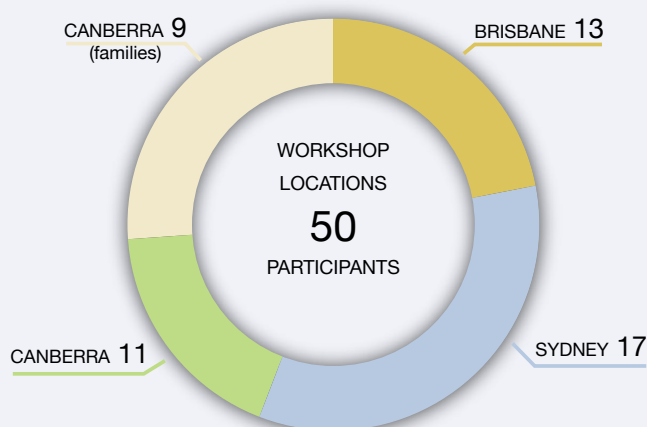


Figure 4: Transition Taskforce workshop participants 2017.

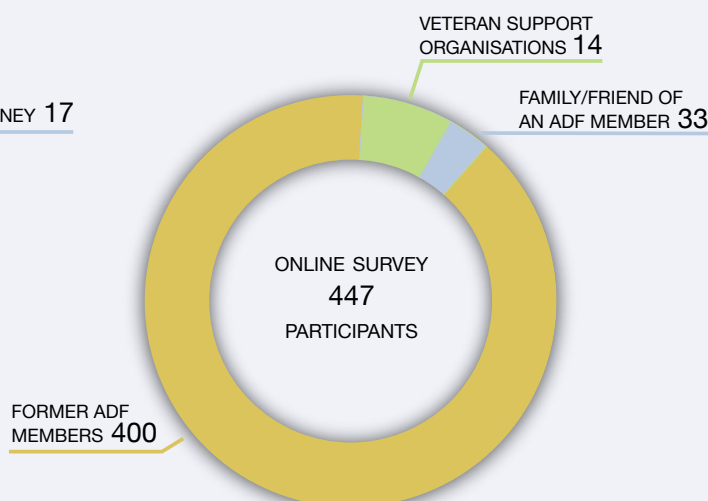


Figure 5: Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017.

QUALIFIERS AND LIMITATIONS

In the initial Discovery phase, the Taskforce focused its attention on understanding the experience and needs of transitioning and transitioned ADF members and family members, and the barriers they face to effective transition.

In acknowledgment of the implementation of new initiatives and strategies by Defence and DVA to support transitioning members, the Taskforce targeted engagement with ADF members who were in the process of separation or who had separated within the previous two years. This ensured that the Taskforce understood contemporary experiences, rather than experiences in a more historical context.

The Taskforce sought to identify, at a broad level, the common themes and insights of those who experience transition. It did not undertake a detailed analysis or assessment of the administrative components of transition, or the scope and effectiveness of transition programs and services delivered by both government and non-government service providers. The Taskforce acknowledges that further richness may be generated by such a detailed assessment.

Further, while the Taskforce acknowledges that there are some differences between the three Services (RAN, Army and RAAF) that can impact the transition experience, the Taskforce focused on the transition support and services offered across the ADF, rather than those that may be offered through the individual services.

Finally, the Taskforce acknowledges the important contribution made by ex-service organisations and other organisations supporting the Defence community in assisting transitioning and transitioned members. The Taskforce sought input from representatives of such organisations through DVA's formal consultative mechanisms.







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3 CONTEXT FOR REPORT

In delivering its recommendations, the Taskforce considered the findings and outcomes of key Government Inquiries and Reviews that examined the impacts of transition as it relates to the health and wellbeing of current and former members of the ADF and their families. These Inquiries and Reviews include:

- The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans—a Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (August 2017)
- Incidence of Suicide Among Serving and Ex-Serving Australian Defence Force Personnel 2001–2015: in Brief Summary Report—a Report of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (June 2017)
- Review into the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Services Available to Current and Former Serving ADF Members and Their Families—a Report of the National Mental Health Commission (March 2017)⁸

The Taskforce recognises that there is other significant research relating to transition that is expected to become available in 2018, such as the studies within the Transition Wellbeing Research Program. The findings and outcomes of new research will be considered as the work of the Taskforce progresses to implement the seven recommendations.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans (August 2017)

Throughout its examination of suicide within the veteran population, the Joint Standing Committee (the Committee) explored transition and the impacts this can have on the mental health of veterans. The Committee considered evidence from government and non-government organisations regarding the support and services available to members when they transition. It is important to note that the Committee did not evaluate the effectiveness of these services. The Committee also explored the views of individuals who themselves had experienced transition, making recommendations to improve transition for the benefit of all individuals.

The Committee's full report can be found at www.aph.gov.au. Some of the key points relating to transition that were explored by the Committee are outlined below.

- The issues with respect to transition that were raised with the Committee included: gaps in support in the transition process; continuity of care; social connectedness; employment and rehabilitation; and family and community support. The Committee recommended that the Transition Taskforce examine any gaps in medical services or income support for veterans in transition or immediately following transition.
- The Committee considered that transition to life as a civilian is a critical time for the provision of support to veterans. The Committee recommend a 'two track transition process' where those individuals who are identified as being at risk or require additional assistance due to their

⁸ Please note, these reports are not discussed in their entirety. The focus of the extracts below is on the observations, findings and recommendations made in so far as they relate to transition from the ADF.

circumstances are able to access intensive transition services. These services would include: claims case management; health care, mental health and wellbeing support; employment assistance programs; social connectedness programs; and health and wellbeing programs.

- The Committee, while welcoming the reform efforts across Defence, DVA and CSC, considered there was a need to do more in addressing the *'significant barriers to finding employment'* post discharge. The Committee recommended that the Transition Taskforce examine and address the *'barriers to employment for veterans who are transitioning such as workers' insurance issues and civilian recognition of qualifications, skills and training; and disincentives for veterans to undertake work or study resulting from the legislative or policy frameworks of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.'*

—Joint standing Committee Report, page 127.

- The Committee also considered that there was a need to provide transitioning ADF members with an option to complete work experience (where appropriate) with a civilian employer prior to separation to enable the member to become familiar with a different work environment and expectations. The Committee specifically recommended that the Career Transition Assistance Scheme include an option for veterans to undertake a period of work experience with an outside employer. Additionally, the Committee recommended that the Australian Public Service Commission conduct a review into mechanisms to further support veterans into employment into the Australian Public Service and the public sector.

- The Committee welcomed the recognition of the important role families of veterans but considered that there was a need to investigate and develop further support measures for this group. The Committee noted that families and caregivers are often a cornerstone of support for veterans as they move into civilian life. The Committee specifically recommended: *'the Department of Veterans' Affairs review the support for partners of veterans to identify further avenues for assistance. This review should include services such as information and advice, counselling, peer support and options for family respite care to support partners of veterans.'*
—Joint standing Committee Report, page 130.

- Finally, the Committee, in considering the issue of continuity of care, considered that there was a need to provide all transitioning members with a DVA White Card (for Non-Liability Health Care conditions) upon separation from the ADF; reducing the barriers to seeking treatment to help individuals manage existing or developing conditions.

The government accepted all findings and recommendations of the Committee.

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Incidence of Suicide Among Serving and Ex-Serving Australian Defence Force Personnel 2001–2015: in Brief Summary Report (June 2017)

In June 2017, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) released a report which quantifies the incidence of suicide among the current and former serving ADF population. A copy of the AIHW's Summary Report can be found at www.aihw.gov.au. Key findings are noted below.

- The suicide rates of ex-serving men were more than twice as high as those for serving full-time or in the reserve.
- Ex-serving men aged 18–24 were at particular risk being 2 times more likely to die from suicide than Australian men of the same age.
- Ex-serving men aged 25–29 accounted for slightly more deaths than other age groups and were 1.4 times more likely to die from suicide than Australian men of the same age. This difference was not statistically significant.
- In addition to age, certain service-related characteristics were associated with higher suicide rates among ex-serving men:
 - Those who were discharged involuntarily (suicide rates were 2.4 times as high as for those discharged for voluntary reasons), particularly if the discharge was for medical reasons (3.6 times as high as for those discharged for voluntary reasons)
 - All ranks other than commissioned officers (2.8 times as high as for commissioned officers)

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Review into the Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Services Available to Current and Former Serving ADF Members and Their Families (March 2017)

The National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) conducted a detailed review of self-harm and suicide prevention services available to current and former serving members of the ADF, assessing their accessibility and effectiveness. During their review, transition was raised as a particular issue in so far as it impacts upon individual mental health and wellbeing.

A full copy of NMHC's report, source material and the government's response is available at www.dva.gov.au. Key NMHC points relating to transition and its impacts are outlined below.

The Commission found that for some members, the act of leaving the ADF and adjusting to civilian life can be a significant risk factor for suicide and self-harm. In exploring the risk factors associated with transition the NMHC found:

- The need to address the psychological aspects relating to transition
- Involuntary separations can have adverse implications for members' wellbeing
- Relocation associated with leaving the ADF can have implications for continuity of health care and support
- Transition impacts the member's family especially when relocation is required or if the former serving member requires family members' assistance in managing or delivering ongoing medical treatment and support

- Some ADF members report they feel that the skills and training they acquired during service are not relevant to employment in the civilian workforce or not understood or valued by civilian employers, and that there is a perception that former service personnel are 'damaged goods'
- Some members leave the ADF without any clear plans for the next phase of their lives, sometimes feeling lost and struggle to find a new purpose
- The absence of ongoing connection with friends and the military context more generally can lead to isolation and feelings of loss associated with transition
- Some members feel unable to return to civilian life following military service, particularly where they feel they have become dependent on the ADF throughout their career
- Information on career transition is not easily located on the ADF website where it is located under rehabilitation services

With regard to families, the NMHC highlighted the important role that they play in protecting current and former serving members from suicide or self-harm. Noting, that *'this role must be understood, however, in the context of military family life, which presents unique experiences and challenges that differentiate military families from the broader population.'* The Commission recognised that the experiences and challenges faced by military families are unique and that there is a need to support these families in their roles.

—National Mental Health Commission, 2017, page 22.

The NMHC also explored the risk factors associated for those ADF members who join and then leave the military at a young age. The Commission commented that members are generally recruited at an age where identity formation, attachment and development of independence are critical. The NMHC observed that this is also the time where mental illness can emerge for the first time, and that there was a need to consider the impacts of transition upon this group and respond accordingly.

The NMHC made a number of recommendations which relate to transition, a summary of which is below:

- Examining how the ADF and DVA can best develop a unified system of support for current and former serving members and their families, to delivering a service offer that meets the needs of individuals in a seamlessly and person-centered way.
- Co-designing strategies to engage and support former members of the ADF aged 18–29 years, who have left the service in the last 5 years and who could be at risk of suicide or self-harm.
- Co-designing a Family Engagement and Support Strategy that focuses on known family stressors including the impact of transition.
- That the Transition Taskforce should continue and aim to deliver an approach to transition that enables all departing personnel to leave with dignity, hope and some certainty about their future, regardless of the circumstances of their discharge. A particular focus should be placed on preparing for transition throughout a member's military career and facilitating a greater role for peer workers, ex-service organisations and organisations supporting the Defence community to support transition.
- Better promotion of services and support that are available to current and former serving members, and their families, increasing awareness accessibility.
- Continuing to build on the stepped mental health care model in place and ensure that a range of early intervention options are available that can maximise early help-seeking and minimise the impact that mental illness may have (e.g. on career progression or deployment or post-military employment). Such options could include self-management, low intensity services, digital services, peer support services or on-base walk-in centres, in addition to specialist clinical services and psychosocial support.

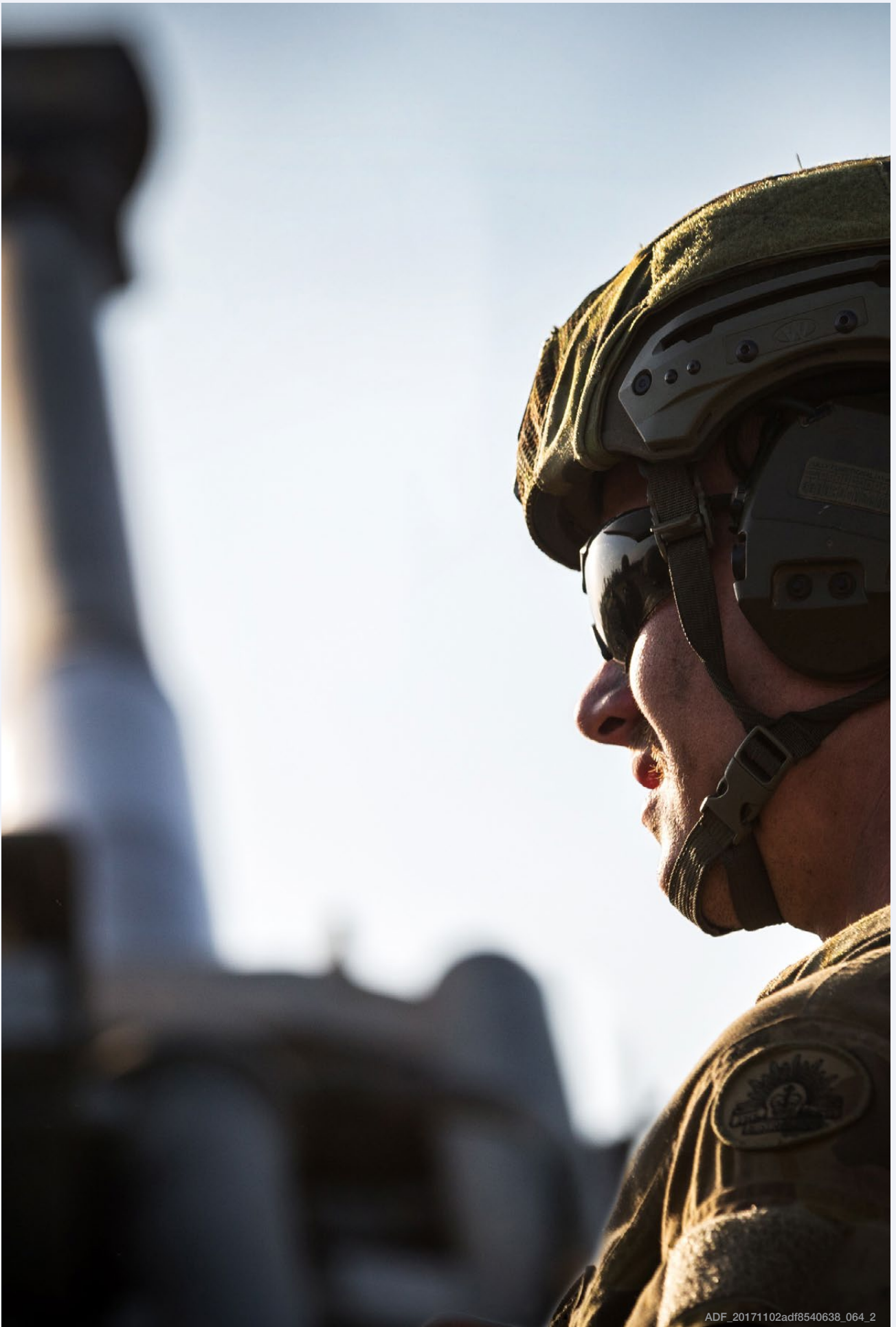
Combining the findings and recommendations of these key investigations with the Taskforce's own Discovery builds a solid evidence base for how the transition experience and process can be improved.



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4 WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT TRANSITION FROM THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Transition from the ADF can be challenging and unique. There can be a need for ADF members to learn or re-learn how to navigate common systems that may have become unfamiliar, such as the public health system. The NMHC provides a succinct discussion of Australian military culture which contextualises some of the difficulties some members experience after leaving the military. Extracts from this discussion are below:

The Australian military culture is ordered and predictable. It is a secure scaffolding in which operations are designed and executed; it is predictable, hierarchical and certain. The transition from serving personnel to ex-serving personnel is much less so.

Military service requires dedication and significant periods of time (often during the formative years of young adulthood). The values established are often forged in trials of hardship, unquestioned camaraderie and loyalty. There are severe risks associated with failure, limited ability to express emotion, and constant expectations to perform in a crisis.

The key operational aspects of the military culture are camaraderie, intensity, elitism, and distinctiveness (Harris et al. 2013), driven by the processes of training and a shared fate. A consequence of this rigid culture is the pressure to be strong (not to fail or be weak), rigid and rational thinking, and an inability (or reluctance) to express emotions and limit options in a time of crisis (McKay et al. 2010). In the transition process this is undone, and there is often an inability to disengage (Yanos 2004) combined with psychological distress that impacts on quality of life and mental wellbeing (Karekla and Panayiotou 2011). The processes in help-seeking behaviour often involves apprehension and delays (Galdas et al. 2005). For the military, this holds far greater solemnity as the culture demands full capacity for active service and the transitions to civilian life are difficult for both the individual transitioning and the families that surround them.

— National Mental Health Commission Literature Review, page 84–85.

CURRENT ADF STATISTICS

From 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2017, a total of 70,675 people left the ADF.⁹

During this period:

- 61% of transitions were from Army
- 86% were male
- 37% had served less than 5 years (including the training force, i.e. recruits)
- 13% left due to medical reasons

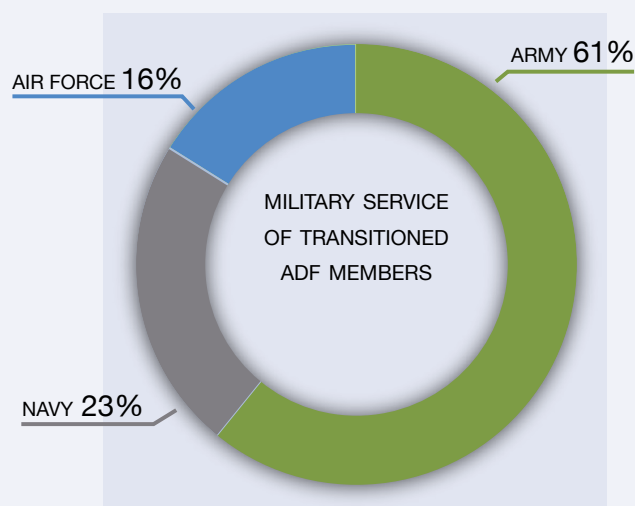


Figure 6: Military Service of transitioned ADF members between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2017.

Length of service

The majority of all transitioning personnel have less than five (5) years of service (Figure 3), by removing the training force from the sample, the distribution changes:

- Decrease from 38% to 30% for those who have served for less than 4 years
- Increase from 33% to 37% for those who have served between 5–11 years
- Increase from 28% to 32% for those who have served for more than 12 years

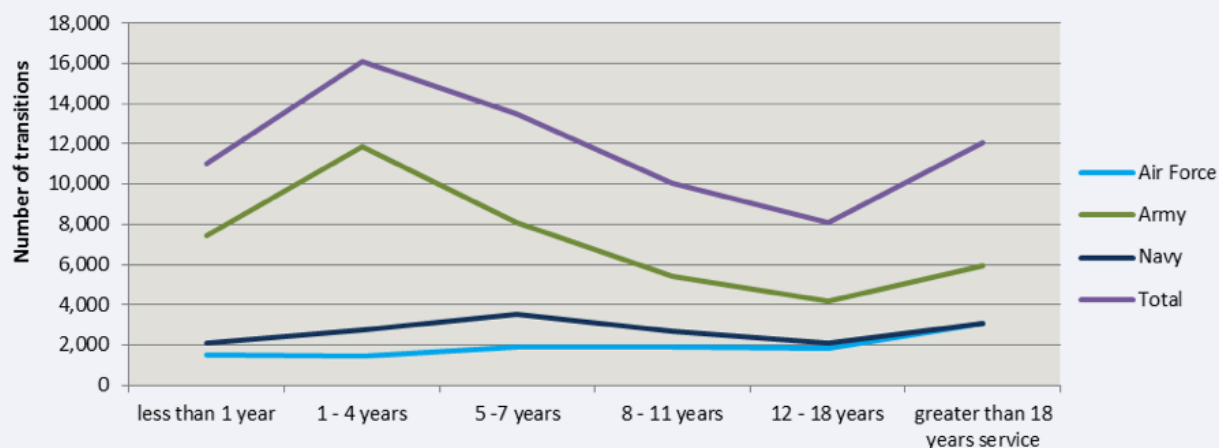


Figure 7: Length of Service at time of transition from 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2017 (Total ADF including trainees).

Reason for Separation

There are four major categories of transition from the ADF: voluntary, involuntary, medical and the end of a Continuous Full Time Service (CFTS) contract.¹⁰ Of note is the upward trend in the number of members who transition for medical reasons.

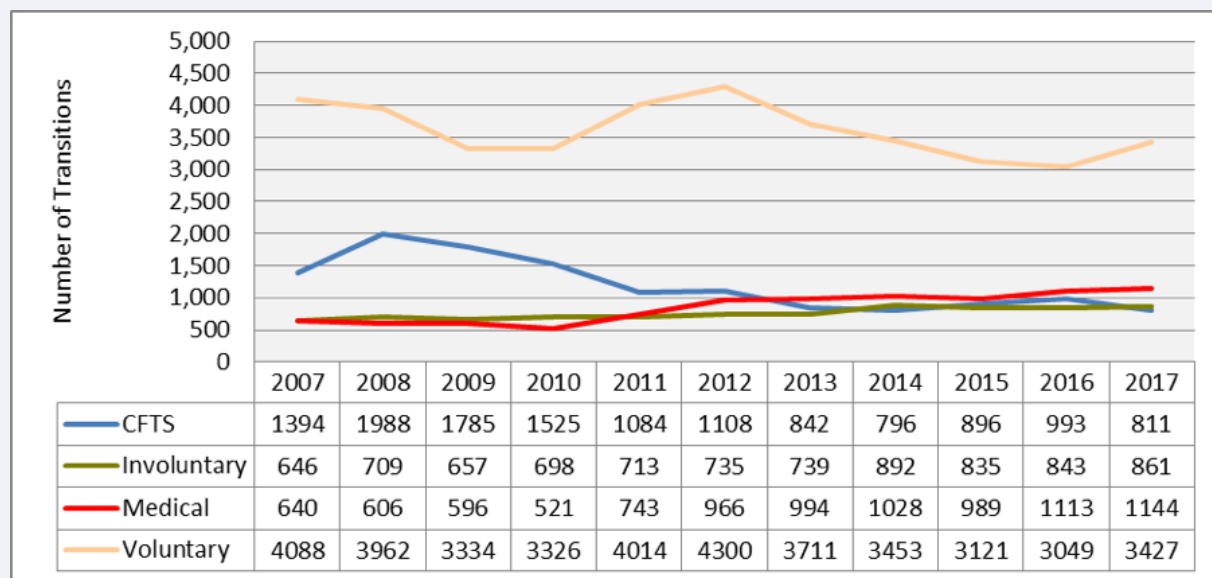


Figure 8: Transition reason from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2017.

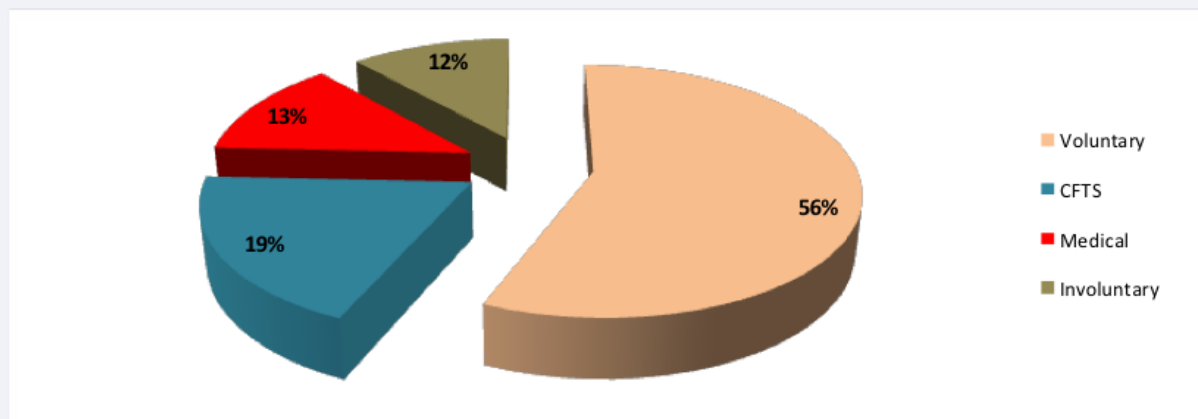


Figure 9: Transition reason by percentage between 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2017.

The majority of transitions from the ADF are voluntary (56%). The proportion of medical transitions increased from 9.46% in 2007 and peaked at 18.56% in 2016. This remained steady in 2017 at 18.32%.

Looking at the reasons for transition according to Service; it is evident that Army separates the highest proportion people for medical and involuntary reasons while the Air Force and Navy have a higher proportion of voluntary separations.¹¹

¹⁰ Note—Continuous Full Time Service (CFTS) is individuals who provide reserve service on a contracted but full-time basis for a defined period of time. Members serving on CFTS are offered access to all transition entitlements at the end of their contract.

¹¹ Note—the references to CRA in the pie charts below refer to transitions when members reach their Compulsory Retirement Age.

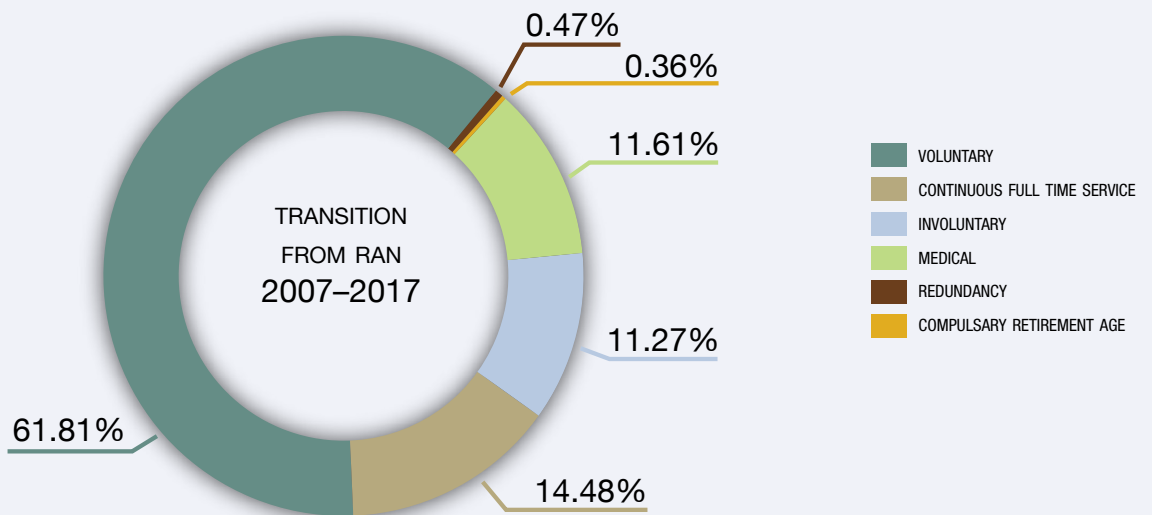


Figure 10: Separations from RAN for 2007-2017.

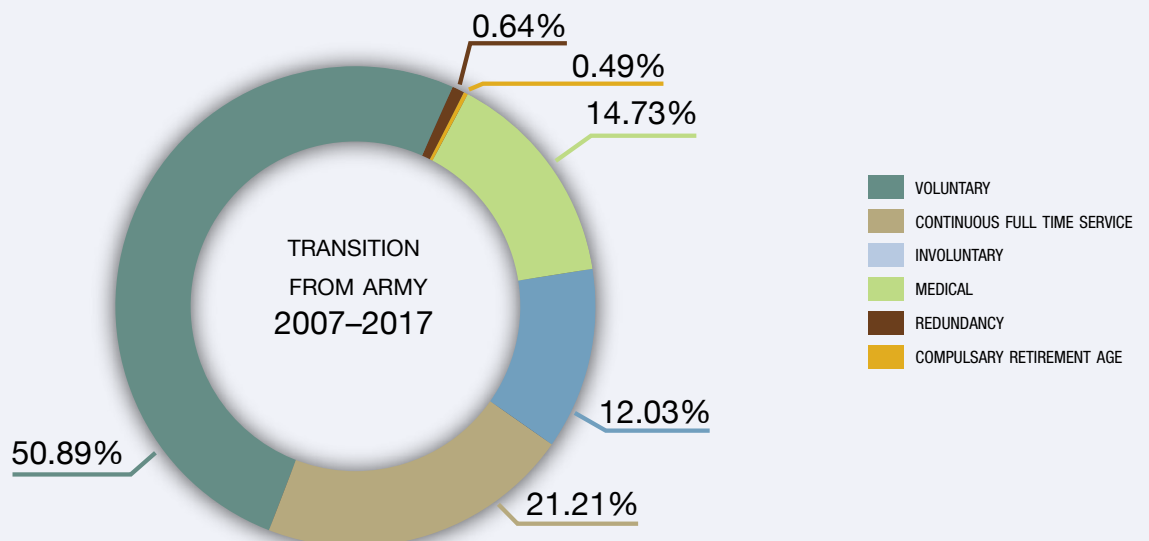


Figure 11: Separations from Army for 2007-2017.

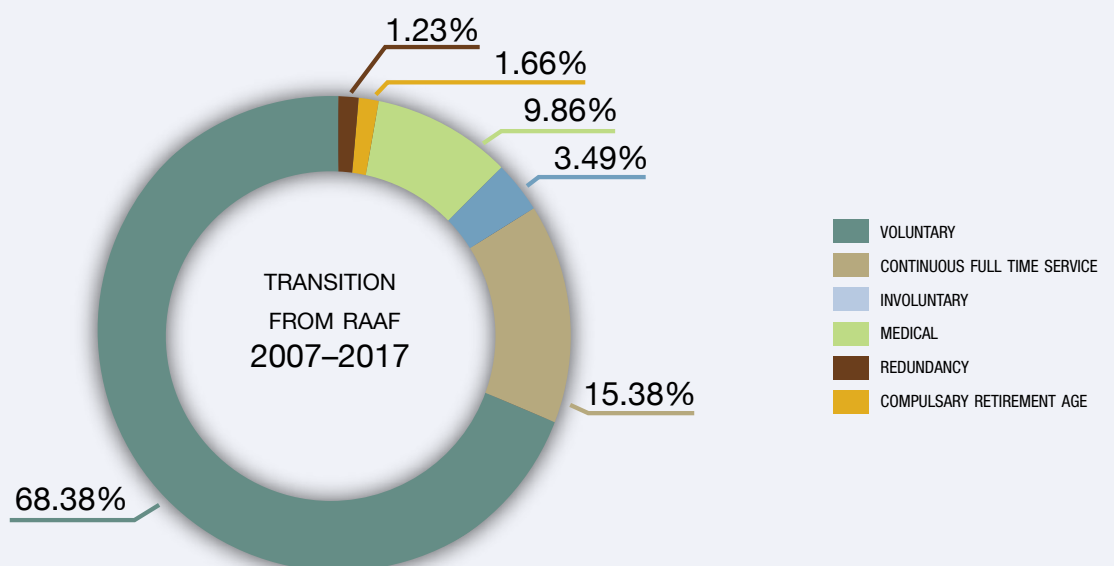


Figure 12: Separations from RAAF for 2007-2017.

Involuntary transitions represented 11.8% of all separations from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2017. An involuntary transition can occur for a number of reasons, as outlined below. Of note is that 82.3% of involuntary transitions occurred within the first five years of service.

Involuntary Separation	
Retention not in the service interest	4917
Unsuitable for service	1221
Training failure	673
Management initiated early retirement/Command initiated transfer to Reserves	479
Compulsory retirement age	464
In absence	411
Below fitness standard	87
Disciplinary	46
False statement on enlistment	25
Civil offence	5
Grand total	8328

Figure 13: Involuntary Transitions from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2017.

Transition of the Training Force

Recruits and Officers under training made up 12.1% of all separations from 2007–2017, with 61% of separations occurring voluntarily.

Time served	CFTS	Involuntary	Medical	Voluntary	Grand Total
Less than one month	1	1099	22	1349	2471
One month	7	594	24	1386	2011
Two months	4	192	23	636	855
Three months	0	139	22	285	446
Four months	1	76	40	156	273
Five months	6	56	46	120	228
Six months	1	38	39	93	171
Greater than six months	18	420	492	1163	2093
Grand total	38	2614	708	5188	8548

Figure 14: Recruit and Officer under training transitions from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2017.



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5. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE TRANSITION

The barriers to effective transition provide insight into why some transitioning ADF members and their families experience difficulty when they separate from the ADF, and have informed the development of Taskforce recommendations. The most commonly reflected barriers to effective transition identified by Taskforce engagement participants were:¹²

1. Prolonged periods of instability and uncertainty

Effective transition can be undermined by prolonged periods of instability and uncertainty when members are in the process of separating or have separated from the ADF. Uncertainty can relate to social, financial, employment and wellbeing challenges.

2. Inability to engage in or manage the transition processes

Some members and their families are unable to engage in, or manage, transition processes due to wellness, personal resilience or individual circumstances.

3. Inaccessible transition information

Transition information can be hard to access and/or understand.

4. Complex and fragmented government agency processes

The complexity, duplication and fragmentation of transition processes across government agencies can make separation difficult.

5. Service delivery timeframes do not always meet members' immediate needs

Some members experience delays in accessing entitlements and support services as a result of organisational timeframes and processes.

6. Varying levels of trust in government

Many members do not trust Defence, DVA and CSC to act in their individual best interest. Consequently, some members delay seeking entitlements and assistance. This mistrust is based on their own experiences or perceptions in dealing with the various agencies.

7. Low confidence in employability

In comparison to their military career, some members experience limited success in securing meaningful post ADF employment.

8. Limited support for readjustment challenges

Some members are not well prepared or equipped to manage the differences between the military environment and civilian life.

9. Unpreparedness for loss of identity

Many members are unprepared for, and unsure of how to respond to, the significant loss of military identity which is often experienced when separating from the ADF.

10. Unrecognised impact on families

Many family members feel unprepared and unsupported for the impact of transition and the consequent establishment of their lives in a civilian context.

¹² It is important to note that not all participants experienced barriers during transition. Noting this, the *Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017* found that 43% of former ADF members indicated that they were dissatisfied with their transition experience.





6 TRANSITION BARRIER INSIGHTS

PROLONGED PERIODS OF INSTABILITY AND UNCERTAINTY

Effective transition can be undermined by prolonged periods of instability and uncertainty when members are in the process of separating, or have separated from the ADF. Uncertainty can relate to significant social, financial, employment and wellbeing challenges. Serving ADF members receive a range of entitlements and supports that contribute to their physical and personal security. ADF members transitioning from the military to civilian life are often required to re-establish and self-manage these supports, which may include:

- Housing or accommodation
- Health, including health costs and insurance
- Secure employment
- Income security

Restoring physical and personal security can take time. Until this is achieved, members may experience continuing uncertainty and associated stress.

Prolonged instability and uncertainty can place significant stress on members and their families

'The uncertainty going through the process... that nearly brought my wife down. Being out? Fine. But the uncertainty... all those things were horrendous.'

'It's the unknown that's hard... not knowing if you'll find a job or get enough money to support your family.'

'One of the biggest challenges is the unknown.'

Government agency processes and service delivery timeframes are not always responsive to peoples' immediate needs

'I burnt \$22,000 of my own money until I could get something from DVA.'

Uncertainty can be heightened in situations when members are provided limited transition preparation time

'I was supposed to do an extra year before they medically discharged me, but they brought it up early. They really pushed me in the deep end, I wasn't ready and everything ended up as a huge mess.'

'Basically it was taken out of my hands. I was medically discharged, I went to the doctors one day and they said "we're medically discharging you". It wasn't my decision to get out, it was taken away from me. I didn't have time to look for another job before I was out.'



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Uncertainty can be reduced when DVA and CSC determinations are finalised prior to separation

'My separation was extended, it was great. I had time to work through all the information and get myself sorted.'

Meaningful, secure employment can reduce uncertainty for those transitioning members who seek to be employed

'Transition's going to be easy. I'm going to a civilian role, but I'll be doing the same thing. Already having employment makes it easier because I know what to expect.'

IDEA: Engagement participants identified that transition services and support should be re-focused to centre on the needs of the member and their family, which would help address this instability and uncertainty.

INABILITY TO ENGAGE IN, OR MANAGE, TRANSITION PROCESSES

Some members and their families are unable to engage in, or manage, transition processes due to personal wellness and resilience, or individual circumstances. Individual factors that may impact a member's need for help are complex and interconnected.

These include:

- Health
- The reason for discharge (e.g. voluntary, involuntary, medical)
- Financial circumstances
- Education
- Social support networks
- Personal resilience

Some members need more assistance to transition than others

'I felt like I'd been running and running and that I'd been spat out on the other end at my discharge date. I didn't feel like I was able to make decisions when I needed to... I had no idea what I needed to do. Totally no idea.'

'Things would cause me so much stress that my wife started calling DVA for me.'

Members who medically discharge are not always able to navigate complex processes independently, and require higher levels of support

'I suffer from chronic PTSD and anxiety and everything else. Trying to work out in your brain, because it's now foggy, it's hard to figure out what's important.'

'The medication is affecting me, everything has side effects. I need someone to explain things to me because I don't understand.'

Resilience during transition can be impacted by a member's level of ownership in the decision to separate

'I didn't want to leave the Army. In my mind I was there until retirement. It was a change I didn't want to happen. I resisted as long as I could but the day came anyway.'

Transition experiences are more likely to be positive when members have prepared

'I worked myself through it for the last six months. It's been relatively easy. I've been well supported and engaged with my command chain—it makes a difference.'

'I've known for the last 18 months that I'm leaving, so I've been studying and getting lots of CV training. I think I'm walking away well set up.'

Tailored support programs help transitioning members with more complex needs

'I didn't have to fill out the paperwork by myself, which was great. I was posted to the Soldier Recovery Centre.'

'I've got nothing but praise for case coordination. They really help when I get muddled. I would have given up if I didn't have a case-coordinator. Having a single person to help you navigate is really important when you are unwell.'

It's not always supported, practical or realistic for the administrative processes of transition to be completed when members are still working

'All the admin... layer on top of that applying for a job. We were short staffed, I was getting pummeled at work. I had a job to do and was getting paid to do that. You have to juggle a lot.'

'When you tell your CO you're leaving, they say "that's great, but you need to get on with your job—we're not paying you to arrange your discharge".'

IDEA: Engagement participants' identified that:

- Providing proactive and tailored support centred on individual needs, particularly where the member is less able to manage transition due to injury, illness or complexity of need, was important.
- Better information sharing between Defence, DVA and CSC to deliver an integrated approach to transition and reduce the burden on the member during and after transition would help them.

INACCESSIBLE TRANSITION INFORMATION

Transition information can be hard to access and/or understand for many members. ADF members rely on accurate information to understand the transition process, the supports that are available to them and their entitlements.

Accessible and easy to understand information can empower members to effectively manage their separation from the ADF. Participants reflected that they can receive a high volume of information but it is not often tailored, understandable, consistent or complete across government.

Transition information is not always accessible in a way that meets members' needs

'In the middle of the ocean, you don't have time to go see the Transition Centre.'

'Getting to a Transition Seminar is hard. They don't happen every week, only so many times a year. If you happen to be in that area you do it, but if you're having a quick transition then you're out of luck.'

'The Transition Seminar wasn't relevant to me. It needs to be more tailored. I'm retiring, I don't need a day on CVs and job interviews.'

Transition information is not always understandable

'I'd like one policy for everything—that's in English and doesn't require a lawyer.'

'We need a Defence interpreter—someone who can understand and communicate everything in a way you can understand.'

The burden is on members to know what information they need

'You don't know what you need and people don't tell you.'

'The information's there but it's not easy to find. It's like a labyrinth.'

IDEA: Engagement participants' ideas include:

- Bringing together the transition related information and tools provided by the ADF, DVA and CSC would assist members.
- Delivering transition information in more effective and engaging ways, such as making it consistent and available across different service channels would be beneficial.

COMPLEX AND FRAGMENTED GOVERNMENT AGENCY PROCESSES

The complexity, duplication and fragmentation of transition processes across Defence, DVA and CSC can make separation difficult.

Many participants experienced government processes as difficult, duplicative and fragmented. Access to services and entitlements can require members to complete complex paperwork and evidence gathering for multiple government agencies. This places a burden on individuals to navigate the process, and involves duplication of effort. This can be particularly hard to manage for members who are wounded, ill or injured.

A depiction of the complexity of the current transition process and how it looks from a member's perspective is at Attachment D. Further, a depiction of the complexity of an individual's interactions during transition is at Attachment E.

DVA and CSC processes can act as a disincentive and discourage some members from accessing supports and services

'I'll suffer rather than go through the agony and pain of proving to DVA that I am broken.'

'You have to jump through a million hoops to get any assistance.'

'I don't want to put in my paperwork until I have an appropriate way to submit my claim that's going to make it easier for me, and for them to understand the repercussions my service has entailed. I'm not very good at writing. If I'm going to write something I want to be honest but I can't articulate it. Writing a three page thing is beyond my capabilities.'

Government processes can be hard to understand and complete

'It wasn't intuitive... there was no instructions. The way the forms are set out you can't put the right information in there. There's no example or guidance on how it should be done.'

'I needed to get a lawyer to help me with my claim.'

'My claims just keep getting rejected because I don't know what I'm doing.'

The onus is on members to coordinate government processes during transition

'The current system needs the individual to take the baton from Defence and hand it over to DVA. Why should the member have to be the central point?'

'Defence know you're getting out. They even tell you to get out. They should have everything ready to go for DVA and ComSuper.'

'I've had to have every individual injury assessed again.'

IDEA: Engagement participants identified that transition service delivery should be integrated across Defence, DVA and CSC.

SERVICE DELIVERY TIMEFRAMES DO NOT ALWAYS MEET MEMBERS' IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Some members experience delays in accessing entitlements and support services as a result of organisational timeframes and processes. This can impact wellness management and may result in members independently sourcing and/or paying for services that they are entitled to, when they have the capacity to do so. In some cases delays can impact members' financial management.

Barriers to accessing health services can impact members' management of wellness

'To be able to manage my injuries I needed to fork out money of my own pocket to get rehab until the injuries got accepted.'

'I went to the ADF medical centre and asked for a separation medical appointment with three months' notice, they said wait a bit longer. I came in at six weeks and they said we won't be able to fit you in.'

Delays in monetary entitlements can cause uncertainty and financial stress

'CSC still haven't contacted me. I rang them in January saying "what's going on?" they said "we're waiting for your case it's coming up the line".'

'Getting a simple answer from DVA would've helped. Not taking a year and a half and still getting no answer.'

IDEA: Engagement participants' ideas included:

- Reducing the complexity and enhancing the flexibility of government processes would be beneficial.
- Providing proactive help when access to services is delayed would assist members.

VARYING LEVELS OF TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Many members do not trust Defence, DVA and CSC to act in their individual best interest. Consequently, some members delay seeking entitlements and assistance. This mistrust is based on their own experiences or perceptions in dealing with the various agencies.

Many participants described their interactions with Defence, DVA and CSC as adversarial in nature, which led them to believe that accessing their entitlements is a 'fight'. As current or former serving members of the ADF, they expected to be trusted by government and are surprised if/when their interactions do not reflect this trust.

Negative experiences with government agencies can discourage members from seeking their entitlements or requesting help

'Staff just try to palm you off to someone else. They say "we're busy at the moment, we'll call you back"—and they never do.'

'They always start from the position that you're lying.'

Negative service delivery experiences can be de-valuing for members

'I feel like they're doing me favours—but it's an entitlement. It's dehumanising to have to go through the process.'

'You spent all this time trying to chase people... no one cares...'

'People say they'll return a phone call but they don't do that or not in a timeframe I'd expect. It's upsetting, particularly when we're vulnerable.'

IDEA: Engagement participants' ideas include:

- Implementing government processes that demonstrate trust would be beneficial.
- Ensuring government service interactions are respectful and timely would assist members.
- Investigating ways that government could better identify and respond to the emerging needs of members.

LOW CONFIDENCE IN EMPLOYABILITY

In comparison to their military careers, some members experience limited success in securing meaningful post ADF employment.

Many participants considered secure post-ADF employment to be an extremely important aspect of their transition. The majority of participants identified a successful employment outcome to be a job that offered comparable remuneration to their ADF role and provided an individual sense of meaning or purpose.

Translating ADF qualifications and skills for civilian employment can be difficult

'I don't know what jobs I'm going to be qualified for in the real world.'

'My training and skills aren't well matched to the civilian world.'

'I had to take my CV to someone to translate it into civvy speak.'

Study or retraining entitlements do not always fully support members to obtain meaningful post-separation employment

'My son felt trapped I suppose. He'd finished high school and gone straight into the military. He had no other trade to fall back on and that was scary... was he employable? He didn't feel that he was.'

'Leaving and realising that you have no qualifications—that's the hardest thing.'

'In certain parts of the Navy there are no transferable skills. Admittedly, the ADF is not there as a civilian training authority, but that's where transition should come in.'

'They say "I'm going to give you a Certificate I because that's what you need"—but it's not what you want!'

Compulsory or management initiated retirement can cause hardship for members

'Noting my age, there will likely be age discrimination. Failing getting a job, I will seek reservists work for the minimum 20 days, as it will slowly assist with life after death.'

'You must retire at 60 years, but there's no support for me until I turn 67. Even if I spend another five years in the reserves, that still only gets me to 65. It leaves me on my own for two years flapping around.'

It can be difficult to undertake job search activities, prior to separation, due to the requirements of ADF employment

'What would help me is being able to take more than six weeks long service leave at a time... access to long periods of long service leave would give a buffer to guarantee a new employer a start date.'

'I was looking for employment without jeopardising my job in the Army—so I can't access resume help because I didn't want to draw too much attention to myself, there's no point in jeopardising my current job if it doesn't work out.'

IDEA: Engagement participants identified that enhancing the career assistance and development capabilities provided by Defence and DVA would support members to secure post-ADF employment.

LIMITED SUPPORT FOR READJUSTMENT CHALLENGES

Some transitioning members are not well prepared for or equipped to manage the differences between the military environment and civilian life.

The *Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017* found that 40% of respondents did not feel/felt prepared for civilian life. Additionally, 45% felt that adjusting to civilian life had not been easy.

Many members spend little time preparing to leave the ADF environment, compared to the significant period of time invested in training to be members of the ADF. The adjustments required to transition from the military to civilian environment can be complex.

Operating outside of the ADF culture can be difficult for some members

'We may not like each other in the military, but we respect each other. Outside they wave and smile, but they don't actually care like the military does. None of that is covered off in the Transition Seminars, it only comes out if you know someone who has left.'

'You can't take the Army out of someone, you still wake up early even though you're not out in the field. You're institutionalised. I expect things to be like the military. Structure. I miss that.'

Re-connecting with the civilian community can be hard

'When you get out and you actually realise you are a civilian. It's quite a shock to now be one.'

'I get frustrated with my friends and family when it comes to timings and what not... They say "it's ok, you've got nowhere to be", but it's not ok. They said it'd be five minutes.'

'When you get out of the military, no one cares that you've been overseas and been shot at. They're going to whinge about the fact that the coffee shop downstairs didn't have any vanilla to put in their latte, because that might be the hardest thing they have faced in a long time.'

Connecting with other transitioned or transitioning ADF members can help

'I did go back to my workplace, met my friend at the coffee truck. We had a long spiel about different aspects of what was happening... I realised I didn't miss the job so much, but I did miss the culture... and I was surprised.'

'There's so much commonality between experiences, whether they're generationally different or different service, the problems were similar.'

IDEA: Engagement participants' ideas include:

- Better support to help transitioning members reintegrate back into civilian life.
- Opportunities to gain awareness of transition processes and supports throughout a member's career to help prepare them for post-ADF life.

UNPREPAREDNESS FOR LOSS OF IDENTITY

Many members are unprepared for, and unsure of how to respond to, the significant loss of military identity which is often experienced when separating from the ADF.

Members reflected that transition had significantly impacted their personal identity, sense of community and feelings of belonging. Transition often requires members to re-establish their sense of purpose and sense of belonging. This can be particularly difficult for injured, ill or wounded service men and women, who have experienced a loss of wellness. To many members, the military is more than just a job.

The *Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017* found that 44% of respondents did not find it easy to find a sense of purpose after leaving the ADF.

Members are unsure how to resolve the significant impact ADF separation can have on identity and sense of purpose

'He didn't ever think of anything else. It was his identity. His professional identity was his personal identity. He didn't know who he was.'
'You go from being something to being nothing.'

Acknowledgement of service when separating from the ADF is important to members

'For my seven years of service, and my operational deployment, I received no formal farewell whatsoever.'
'When we're talking about transitioning with 'dignity' it means: do those things that make us believe our service meant something.'
'I thought I better go in and say goodbye to my supervisor, it's my last day—he'd already left early. I felt just discarded. I had put ADF needs ahead of my needs, ADF needs ahead of my family's needs.'

Demonstrating understanding for military values in government service transactions makes members feel respected

'When you're in the military you're taught to turn up on time, to dress appropriately. When you get out, the organisations who are supposed to support you don't show those skills and you automatically feel that they don't understand you.'

IDEA: Engagement participants' ideas include:

- Members and their families should be provided with information and practical ideas early to prepare them for and help reduce a loss of identity after service.
- Recognising their military service, prior to separation, in a way that acknowledges (and values) their contribution would assist members' transition.

UNRECOGNISED IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Many family members feel unprepared and unsupported for the impact of transition and the consequent establishment of their lives in a civilian context.

Transition can be a stressful and uncertain time for families, and some members reflected that their personal relationships were less stable during the transition period. Sometimes, family dynamics change during transition, as a result of changes to working arrangements, financial stability and relocating the family home. In these instances, families may require support in addition to the support available to the transitioning member.

Sometimes families cannot or do not support the member with their transition.

Transition can impact the stability of some members' personal relationships	<i>'After leaving the ADF, to my kids, I was just the angry guy who sits at the end of the couch.'</i> <i>'Transition will probably split me and my partner up.'</i>
Some families need more targeted transition information and support	<i>'A lot of the time we forget there's a family behind the soldier. The family's been part of the ADF for the same amount of time.'</i> <i>'At no point does Defence proactively contact the partner and say "you are going to carry a great weight. We are going to keep you up to date with opportunities, where you can find this community". At this time, the only time Defence proactively contacts families is a knock on the door. That great weight is all they know.'</i>
Family can be a significant support to transitioning members	<i>'What happens after someone's actually injured. The extent to which I had to be an advocate for my husband... the amount of problems I had to fix because he was too fearful of rocking the boat. In many ways I didn't expect to be an advocate.'</i> <i>'If something has not gone right, I am giving a tremendous amount of support to that person... families are trying to say that there is effort in being a part of this life. Even for those who have transitioned out, there is effort in this life after service.'</i>
People who do not have family support during their transition may need different forms of assistance from government	<i>'I'm basically doing it by myself... what isn't considered during transition is what else are you trying to deal with outside of that transition.'</i> <i>'I didn't tell my family what was happening with my transition. They had enough to deal with.'</i>

IDEA: Engagement participants' ideas include:

- Transition information and support that centres on the needs of the family, as well as the member
- Addressing privacy based barriers to enable proactive engagement with family members.

COMMON FACTORS AND KEY IDEA THEMES

The Taskforce's engagement with current and former serving members and their families identified that common factors which influence an individual's experience of transition can be:

- A member's level of control over the decision to leave military service
- A member's mode of separation from the ADF (i.e. voluntary, involuntary or medical)
- The timeframes leading to separation and the members' level of preparedness for separation
- A member's awareness of, and access to, transition related information and services
- The level of support and assistance members receive during transition from both support networks and service delivery organisations
- A member's capacity to engage with, and manage, transition processes. This capacity is influenced by a member's wellness, individual circumstances and personal resilience
- The timeliness of services and support provision
- The degree at which members have remained connected to their civilian environment whilst serving in the ADF
- The military Chain of Command's acknowledgement of an ADF member's service and contribution
- How easily members seeking employment post service can secure meaningful employment

The Taskforce's engagement with current and former serving members and their families identified five areas of focus for improving transition moving forward:

1. Integrated service provision
2. Support for early preparation for transition
3. Accessible and consistent information
4. Equipping members to increase their probability of securing post-ADF employment
5. Better support for families and caregivers



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7. ENABLERS TO AN EFFECTIVE TRANSITION

Addressing the barriers to an effective transition requires building a transition system that is integrated, flexible and responsive to the needs of the people who use it. A system that enhances trust in government, facilitates certainty, increases individual and family engagement and improves service delivery. An effective transition is one that enables relatively easy adaption to civilian life by ensuring that members are provided with support to assist them to:

- Have financial certainty
- Have appropriate access to necessary professional health care
- Have access to, and can understand, information about the transition process, including what to expect, what help and support is available and how they access the support
- Are psychologically prepared for the change
- Are provided transition information and assistance for their family
- Remain connected to peers and establish new community connections
- Experience fast, easy and simple access to support and entitlements from Government

The key enablers to an effective transition identified through the Taskforce's engagements are explored in more detail below.

TRANSITION PROCESSES, SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE

The Taskforce found that those members who tended to have positive transition experiences felt that their needs had been met, that their access to services and entitlements was fast and easy, and they were trusted by government.

Separation from the ADF, and access to services and entitlements during transition, are transacted by different areas of Defence, DVA and CSC. Currently the transition process is heavily focused on the administrative needs of the agencies involved and can be experienced by transitioning and transitioned members as complex, fragmented and duplicative.

The Taskforce noted that many people identified that accessing services and entitlements was difficult, and on occasion, some had experienced lengthy delays in the delivery of services and support. This placed significant financial and emotional stress on both individuals and families, and can be particularly hard to manage for members who are wounded, injured or ill.

While some ADF members need more help to transition due the complexity of their needs, others are able to navigate the process independently and require limited or no

assistance. A 'one size fits all' approach does not assist those members who are most vulnerable. Identifying people's needs early in the process and providing a tailored and coordinated response to those needs provides better outcomes for all transitioning ADF members.

Similarly, understanding that sometimes transitioning members need urgent assistance, and responding to that need, is important. Peoples needs do not always fit with organisational processes and processing timeframes. Responding to people in need of immediate wellness and financial support acts as a safety net when transition does not go to plan.

The Taskforce considers that simple, timely, tailored and coordinated transition service delivery during and post transition can encourage members to proactively access their entitlements and seek support by increasing trust.

'Defence know you are getting out. They even tell you to get out. They should have everything ready to go for DVA and ComSuper.'

'We need a single process covering all internal and external agencies' needs.'

'Successful transition is seamless and crackless.'

SECURING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT POST SERVICE CAN SUPPORT A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Many ADF members identified that they are concerned about their post-ADF employment prospects for reasons of financial security and establishing a new sense of purpose. Taskforce engagement reflected that, for those transitioned members who sought to be re-employed, securing meaningful civilian employment was a key determinate of their successful transition.

The Taskforce found that members who leave the ADF due to injury or illness may require higher levels of support and assistance to move into new civilian careers. Meaningful, ongoing employment provides transitioning ADF members and their families with a greater degree of financial security and certainty. The financial security that comes with gaining post-ADF employment can help make the other aspects of transition easier to manage.

The Taskforce found that some members were unsure how to translate their military experience to the civilian context, and noted that military qualifications are not always consistent with civilian training or education standards. In particular, the Taskforce also observed that some members are no longer able to use their military qualifications or technical expertise due to injury or illness.

The financial impacts for those with limited transferrable technical skills outside the ADF can be significant, particularly for well remunerated members whose earning capacity is not commensurate within the civilian context. The Taskforce considers that enhancing career assistance and development opportunities for transitioning ADF members will better equip them to secure meaningful employment.

'In certain parts of the Navy there are no transferrable skills. Admittedly, the ADF is not there as a civilian training authority, but that's where transition should come in.'

'My transition was easy as I studied and planned my exit. I did not allow Defence to dictate terms for me so I had control and therefore transition was easy for me... employment was easy with my education, but this was mostly self-initiated.'

'No one will employ a person who cannot walk upstairs and has to do things at their own pace.'

'I was medically discharged and no employer wants to look after a busted, broken soldier, simple as that.'

RELEVANT TRANSITION INFORMATION THAT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCESS

The Taskforce recognises that providing the right information in the right way empowers separating members and their families to understand and engage more effectively in their transition and gain access to their entitlements.

The Taskforce found that ADF members want transition information that is easy to understand and clearly articulates the services and entitlements available to them. It became apparent to the Taskforce in speaking with separating and separated members and their families, that many are unclear about existing services and their entitlements to those services. Given the range of government agencies involved in transition, the Taskforce also identified the need for multi-agency transition information products that explain in plain-English Defence, DVA and CSC entitlements and the relationships between those entitlements.

Beyond the need for easy to understand information, many separating members also highlighted to the Taskforce the importance of information that is relevant to their circumstances and tailored to their needs. This may entail one-on-one support for those members who are wounded, ill or injured, or those who experience difficulties understanding how transition information fits their individual circumstances and what they need to do.

The Taskforce found that easy access to information across all service channels can help support ADF members during and after transition.

Not all members can access information the same way or have the same opportunity to access information. This can be influenced by a range of factors including the member's health, their ability to access digital channels and their geographic location. Taking a multi-channel approach supports a member's access to transition information.

'Information is really hard to come by in any of the services. Our intranet is a nightmare, and so is trying to navigate it. Finding the right form is hard. There should be videos that say these are the steps you need to take, for anyone from Private to General. It's a really effective way of communicating information.'

'If there was a generic online version of the Transition Seminar, those who don't get to see one can at least get the nuts and bolts of one.'

'It would help me most to have time to work through the information. I have conflicting information between DVA and CSC.'

'I want one-on-one tailored advice and information.'

REDEFINING IDENTITY AND CONTRIBUTION

The Taskforce noted that another common theme identified by members who had experienced an effective transition was their level of psychological preparedness and preparation. The Taskforce also noted that having an element of control over the decision to leave the ADF provided a greater opportunity for preparation.

The Taskforce observed that separation from the ADF can significantly impact an individual's personal identity, sense of community and sense of belonging. Transition often requires members to re-establish their sense of purpose and belonging, which can be particularly difficult for those who are wounded, injured and ill.

For many, the ADF is more than a job. The Taskforce notes that most members engaged by the Taskforce reflected on the importance of leaving military service in a positive and acknowledged way.

People who serve in the ADF often feel that they are part of something much bigger than themselves. This can be hard to replace, particularly for those ADF members who do not voluntarily leave the military. The Taskforce considers that assisting ADF members to plan for life after service as early as possible in a member's career will assist them to adjust to civilian life

'Plan your separation early... start the mental process of breaking away from the military. The indoctrination we were programmed with needs to be broken before we can assimilate into civilian life.'

'He didn't ever think of anything else. It was his identity. His professional identity was his personal identity. He left at retirement age and then went into a vacuum. Suddenly he was a nobody.'

'When someone joins we actually make a bit of fuss over that. Make it similar for us on the way out. That would make a big difference.'

FAMILY AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Transition can be stressful and an uncertain time for many families as well as for the member themselves. Family dynamics can be impacted during transition due to significant changes in multiple areas of life. Often, families deal with the consequences of service, yet some do not feel like they are recognised or supported. Family members engaged by the Taskforce often felt overwhelmed, dissatisfied and disempowered during transition. Their experiences were also influenced by a lack of accessible transition information, and practical family transition support and assistance.

During transition, families are often concerned about the wellbeing of the member and the impact transition has on their family circumstances. Family members reflected that they can have difficulties in accessing support for their loved ones and themselves.

While support is provided to service families while members are in service, the Taskforce considers that more can be done to support families during and after transition. The Taskforce notes that the complexities associated with identifying and connecting directly with families and caregivers can be a barrier to the provision of holistic support and services.¹³

'A lot of the time we forget there is a family behind the soldier. The family has been part of the ADF for the same amount of time.'

'We just survive. We get through one thing and think it's going to be okay now, but things keep happening. I've accepted this is how it is now. We survive.'

'The serving families do not get told everything. The serving members get briefed on lots of things and then only tells their family little bits as required. They only know what they know and don't know what they don't know.'



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8. TRANSITION FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Transition from the military is currently an area of focus in Australia and internationally. The issues faced by the veteran population and their families in Australia are similar to those in other countries and the Taskforce considers that lessons can be learnt from the experience of our international counterparts.

Additionally, while military transition is unique, transition at times affects many diverse groups. Transition is about a move from one environment where there is stability in an individual's assumptions, roles, relationships and routines to one where this stability needs to be re-established.¹⁴ The Taskforce therefore considered that lessons may be learnt from different sectors such as emergency services and professional sporting organisations.

The Taskforce has identified the following key learnings from the documented experiences and research of international counterparts and the insights and practices of emergency services and professional sporting organisations.

KEY LEARNING 1:

ADF MEMBERS AND ELITE ATHLETES CAN SHARE SOME SIMILAR TRANSITION CHALLENGES

Contemporary research is now considering what it means to separate from the military and what it means to transition from sporting environments.

Comparisons may be drawn between some challenges experienced by transitioning ADF members and challenges experienced by transitioning elite athletes. Civilian environments can be difficult for both military members and professional athletes. Research by the University of Queensland has confirmed that the change associated in moving from sporting to non-sporting environments isn't as easy as it appears. Specifically, the characteristics which appear to enable 'success' on the sporting field do not necessarily translate to non-sporting environments, particularly, submissiveness, perfectionism and competitiveness.¹⁵

'You go from being the king of your domain, where you know exactly what your value is, what your job is. The influence you can have on your team mates, that type of thing. Then, all of a sudden, you're standing on your own, in a room full of strangers which are your new work friends. They are wanting

you to talk about what you used to be, and all that you want to focus on is what you want to become, and you are very unsure as to who you actually are.'

— Elite Athlete — ABC, Four Corners Program 'After the Game'.

'The government puts a lot of money into making us as finely tuned as possible so that we can win medals... it is a bit like being put out to pasture when you retire... it's like alright, we are done with you now, on your way. There has to be just a little bit more support through that process.'

— Lauren Jackson — ABC, Four Corners Program 'After the Game'.

Some similarities can be drawn between military and sporting environments in terms of what enables a successful transition, including:

- Engaging in early and good planning
- Securing employment
- Having someone to help navigate the journey
- Support from someone who has travelled the same path

¹⁴ Goodman et al (2006)

¹⁵ Rynne (2012)

KEY LEARNING 2:

ALIGNING RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TRANSITION STRATEGIES CAN ASSIST IN DEVELOPING A PERSON-CENTRIC SYSTEM AND IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

Experience in the Canadian military and the experience of elite sporting organisations has shown the positive impacts of aligning recruitment, retention and transition strategies.

‘Our first priority is to recruit people to put on a uniform and serve their country. These people will serve Canada and we have a mandate to look after them. We will ask them to do a great many things and they need to have faith that we will look after them and their families... we are a people organisation, if we don’t look after them we won’t get people to put the uniform on.’

—LGen. C.A Lamarre CMM MSC CD, Commander Military Personnel Command.

The Canadian Military has made the link between good transition, recruitment and retention. This approach is seeing the Canadian Government make positive steps toward improving outcomes for veterans and their families. For example, Veterans’ Education and Training Benefit and the Veterans’ in the Public Service Unit.

Similarly, the approach of elite sporting organisations is structured around a holistic approach to ‘on and off’ the field development. This has resulted in a positive outcomes for elite athletes. It has also helped to establish and reinforce boundaries relating to identity and value. Research from the University of New South Wales has identified that no single part of an individual’s life should contribute to more than one-third of their identity and self-esteem. Rather, there should be multiple channels through which individuals establish who they are as a person and identify their values, so that when one channel inevitably closes they can draw on the others to keep them going.¹⁶

‘Sport is what you do, not who you are.’

—A-League Football Manager.

Another example is the Australian National Rugby League Association which has commenced implementing programs that facilitate early and ongoing planning for inevitable transition. Programs focus on resilience, emotional intelligence, mental health, family support and engagement, financial literacy and education. These programs aim to position people for success in the next phase of their lives, improve planning and reduce the psychological barriers associated with transition.

Similarly, the New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) is developing new rehabilitation, recruitment and retention initiatives based on person-centricity, prevention and wellbeing principles. This approach is being used to underpin police officers’ transition from the NSWPF. The approach to developing a cohesive transition strategy will see the NSWPF bring together government and non-government sectors to develop solutions that aim to ensure their police officers leave law enforcement service with dignity and respect.

‘... go with dignity and in a planned way... ensuring that Officers leave happy. They committed their lives to the organisation, at one time they loved the organisation and this needs to be carried through to the end of their careers.’

—Assistant Commissioner Carlene York APM.

KEY LEARNING 3:

SERVICES ARE HOLISTIC WHEN FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS ARE TREATED AS INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT

While the impacts of transition and military service on families and caregivers are increasingly coming to light, services and support that focus on families and caregivers will make positive inroads in supporting them through the transition journey.

‘... a fighting force needs to be focused, the military wants everything in personal lives taken care of and tucked away so that the men and women can focus. If we don’t take care of the ripples then it has a huge impact for recruitment. Families do have difficulties in accessing programs and support because of all their duties, they quite literally do everything. They also focused on caring for the member and not themselves...’

—Col. Rakesh Jetly, Senior Psychiatrist and Mental Health Clinical Advisor to the Canadian Forces Surgeon General.

Families and caregivers of veterans are often inevitably drawn into the military environment because service in the ADF can be considered more than a job. The consequences of service and transition on this group need to be more fully considered and addressed.

The United States (US) and Canadian militaries are focusing more on how families and caregivers can be better supported. The US, for example, offers the Veterans Affairs Caregiver’s Support Program, which provides a vast amount of resources for families, including platforms for connecting with others in similar circumstances and a caregiver support coordinator. In addition to this, partnerships between the public and private sectors in the US and Canada have seen the development of resources such as PsychArmour and the Mental Health Caregiver Guide.

The importance of supporting this group is best summed up by the UK’s Forces in Mind Trust.

‘... supporting families and caregivers is a case of putting on their oxygen masks first before helping others.’¹⁷



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9. CURRENT INITIATIVES AND FUTURE PLANS

CURRENT INITIATIVES

The Government is committed to ensuring that ADF members and their families transition effectively, and that they have access to the services and support they need, when they need it. Regardless of their separation circumstances, ADF members should transition with confidence and dignity. A significant amount of work across Defence and DVA is already underway to improve the experience of individuals separating from the ADF, along with their families.

DVA, Defence, and CSC are already developing a person-centred service delivery, and working cooperatively to deliver assistance and support to members who leave the ADF.

Transition services are coordinated and delivered nationally by Defence People Group, Defence Community Organisation (DCO), through 13 ADF Transition Centres located on most of the major ADF bases in Australia. Transition services for eligible members include Transition Seminars, personalised assistance to prepare for transition, and referrals to appropriate support and assistance with administration. Eligible ADF members can also access financial assistance toward education and training to support their future careers, through the Career Transition Assistance Scheme (CTAS).

Significant features of Career Transition Assistance Scheme are:

- Career Transition Training—vocationally-oriented training that builds on existing skills and knowledge to assist the separating ADF member to be competitive in the labour market and have the minimum involuntary break in continuity of employment.
- Career Transition Management Coaching—one-on-one coaching that may include identifying transferable skills, career options,

resume coaching, job search strategies, interview skills, and stress management techniques.

- Resume Coaching—professional coaching in how to write a resume.
- Job Search Preparation—two day program identify transferable skills, resume coaching, job search strategies, writing letters of application, researching positions and interview skills. Program will be supplemented with additional one-on-one coaching sessions.
- Financial Counselling—professional financial counselling.
- Approved Absence—may be utilised to undertake Career Transition Assistance Scheme activities, as well as job interviews and job searches.

These services are complemented by DVA's On Base Advisory Service (OBAS). OBAS provides a physical presence on major ADF bases around the nation to assist members, particularly those who are in the process of separating from the ADF. OBAS provides access to information and advice about DVA's service offer, assistance in lodging claims, and helps members understand how DVA can assist them during transition and into the future.

To assist ADF members and their partners to consider what it means to go from the military environment to civilian life, as an individual and as a family, the Veterans' and Veterans Families Counselling Service offers the Stepping Out program. This program is for all ADF members, and their partners, who are discharging from the ADF or have discharged in the past 12 months. Stepping Out focuses on skills that will assist members and their partners in their transition including: planning; motivation and adaption techniques; expectation and attitude management; maintaining relationships and knowing where to go to seek professional support.

Transition Improvements

In response to the Government's commitment to improving transition, work is ongoing to provide transitioning members with improved support and services.

The Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program, launched November 2016, reflects the Australian Government's commitment to ensuring that veterans have a range of employment options when they separate, to support their transition into civilian life. An important aspect of this Program is a searchable 'defence force experience desirable' flag on the Australian Government jobactive website, and information tailored for veteran jobseekers. The Industry Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment has been established to develop and provide advice on practical measures to embed veterans' employment strategies into the recruitment practices of Australian businesses.¹⁸

Beyond this program, recent and ongoing work from Defence, DVA and CSC seeks to improve the transition experience for ADF members. Broadly, these improvements focus on: integrated service delivery; support before separation; easier access to DVA; and earlier determinations.

Integrated Service Delivery

Through the Taskforce, Defence, DVA and CSC are working together to trial new ways of integrating transition service delivery. One example is the Transition Health Assessment Pilot currently running at Holsworthy Barracks. This pilot program facilitates a streamlined transition for members, consolidating the requirements of Defence, DVA and CSC into a single medical assessment process undertaken before a member leaves the ADF. The aim of this pilot is to wherever possible, reduce duplication within the system and provide greater certainty to members and their families regarding potential entitlements prior to separation.

Enhancing Support Before Separation

Defence's Transition Transformation Program seeks to better support ADF members in transition through delivering a consistent and efficient experience for members. More information about the ADF Transition Transformation is at Attachment F. Key features of the program include: a coaching and mentoring model; documentation access; employment and training improvements; and post-transition surveys.

The transition business model of coaching and mentoring offers individualised career coaching and mentoring services for all permanent ADF members, and reservists on continuous full-time service, leaving the ADF. This assistance is available for up to twelve months after their transition date.¹⁹

Defence has also implemented measures to ensure that every individual leaving the ADF participates in the mandatory transition process and is able to access their documentation, including copies of their medical records, service history, professional military education and training, final leave and payment summaries and an individual transition plan.

Employment and training improvements include the Transition for Employment Program and the Review of the Career Transition Assistance Scheme. The Transition for Employment Program seeks to support ADF members with complex medical conditions toward obtaining civilian employment. This Program will be available to nominated members who are set to discharge for medical reasons and whose cases have been identified as complex in nature.

To better support ADF members to transfer their ADF skills and qualifications to the civilian workforce, Defence will undertake a Review of the Career Transition Assistance Scheme. In addition to this work, the Australian Defence College is investigating options to improve qualifications for transitioning members and is working with NSW Government and other organisations to map ADF skills to roles and qualifications.

¹⁸ More information on this Program is available on the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program website

¹⁹ Since the implementation of the new ADF Transition service delivery model in April 2017 until 31 December 2017, over 3000 ADF members have commenced their transition with the support of an ADF Transition Coach.

To support continued improvement, post-transition surveys are conducted by telephone one month post separation, with further online surveys sent to former members at four, seven, ten and thirteen months after their transition date. Each of these touch points is designed to determine if further assistance is required to support the individual and assess the effectiveness of Defence's transition programs.

Easier Access to DVA

Through significant improvement in information sharing between Defence and DVA, DVA is connecting earlier with ADF members. Until recently, DVA was connected to approximately one in five of all separating ADF members. The Early Engagement Model aims to increase the number of current and former serving ADF members known to DVA, now and into the future, to facilitate earlier access to DVA services and support. Members who joined the ADF from 1 January 2016 and those who separated after 27 July 2016, are now being registered with DVA. Over time, the Departments will add new triggers for registration to capture those members who might require support from DVA prior to separation. This will allow DVA to engage with members when they experience a significant career event.

In response to known barriers in health treatment seeking, DVA pays for treatment for mental and certain physical health conditions, without the need for the conditions to be accepted as service related (Non-Liability Health Care). Eligibility for the treatment of mental health conditions through Non-Liability Health Care has been recently expanded to anyone with a minimum of one-full day period of continuous full-time service with the ADF.

DVA is also currently undergoing a significant transformation designed to take the Department from an organisation that is focused on claims to one that places veterans and their families at the centre of everything it does.

In 2016, the Government allocated \$166 million to support the implementation of the Department's Veteran Centric Reform agenda (VCR). Through VCR, DVA is reforming business processes and culture; identifying and implementing government endorsed best practice service options and continuing targeted ICT redevelopment. This includes:

- Simpler, better, digitally enhanced experiences for clients when they interact with DVA
- An easy and successful process of transition from the ADF
- Early intervention and preventative health care, enabling veterans to live healthy and productive lives
- Access to early treatment for physical and mental health injuries to prevent problems occurring acutely later on in life
- An ICT platform that mitigates risk and improves service delivery

Transition is a key component of the VCR agenda, and the work of the Taskforce will continue to guide the development and implementation of new initiatives aimed at addressing the barriers to an effective transition. Additional information regarding VCR is at Attachment G.

FUTURE PLANS

The insight gained by the Taskforce identified that while much progress has been made to support and assist transitioning ADF members, more work can be done. The Taskforce's engagement with current and former serving members and their families identified five areas of focus for improving transition moving forward:

1. Integrated service provision
2. Support for early preparation for transition
3. Accessible and consistent information
4. Equipping members to increase their probability of securing post-ADF employment
5. Better support for families and caregivers

Key Defence, DVA and CSC representatives engaged by the Taskforce also identified, from a service delivery perspective, that there is scope for transition service delivery improvements in the areas of service integration, enhanced transition information and communication products and the proactive provision of services and support. Additionally, many stakeholder representatives indicated that while organisations are striving to be more inclusive of families, there is a need for an improved holistic approach which recognises the individual needs of family members and caregivers.

Drawing on the Discovery insights, the Taskforce considers that the transition experience can be enhanced through:

- **Service Provision**—enhancing services and support available, streamlining supporting processes and integrating service delivery wherever possible. Transition advice and support should not be limited to finding immediate employment on leaving the service, rather it should prepare each person to navigate the necessary aspects of civilian life.²⁰
- **Preparation**—the importance of good preparation for separation and transition cannot be understated. Seeking to ensure that every member of the services has a personal pathway of advice and support from

the time they are recruited—preparing them for a successful transition into civilian life. Key to this is setting expectations about careers in the ADF from the time of recruitment and disassociating identity from service.

- **Information**—information about separation from the ADF and transition to a civilian environment needs to be more accessible, more engaging, and easy to find and understand. It should be able to be tailored to individual circumstances and interests—connecting people to what they need, when they need it and connecting veterans to each other.
- **Employment**—employment initiatives should focus on enhancing the employability of veterans and connecting employers with veterans and connecting veterans with each other. An enhanced support methodology for the more complex transition cases is also required. Initiatives need to provide practical assistance to members in understanding and navigating the civilian job market and civilian work environments. Further, enhancing the transferability of material skills or providing practical options to reskill underpins the connection to new career pathways.
- **Families and Caregivers**—the focus here should be viewing families and caregivers as individuals in their own right and supporting them as such. Including tailored support programs (DVA), information resources and greater engagement with families during transition which is enabled by the removal of privacy barriers.

Though the focus areas above call for the design and development of new solutions they do not seek to fundamentally change what is already working, and working well, within the system. Rather, they seek to enhance the process, experience and outcomes for individuals and government alike.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Taskforce has engaged with current and former serving members, families, government and non-government stakeholders to better understand the transition experience. The Taskforce found that transition is more than a process of separating from the ADF. Transition is an individual journey that takes time, planning and preparation.

The Taskforce established that, for most service leavers, accessing government services and support can be challenging. Many individuals experience government processes as difficult, duplicative and fragmented. These challenges can be compounded by a person's inability to engage in, or manage transition processes due to personal wellness and resilience, or their individual circumstances.

The Taskforce identified that the experience of each service leaver may be impacted by the reason they are leaving the ADF, their willingness to leave, and their length of service and level of preparation for civilian life. Fundamentally, the individual factors that may impact an ADF member's need for help during transition are complex and interconnected.

'I felt like I had been running and running and that I'd been spat out on the other end at my discharge date. I didn't feel like I was able to make decisions when I needed to.'

The Taskforce considers that service men and women can be supported in their transition to civilian life by ensuring that members:

- Have financial certainty
- Have access to necessary professional health care
- Have access to, and can understand, information about the transition process, including what to expect, what help and support is available and how they access the support

- Are psychologically prepared for the change
- Are provided transition information and assistance for their family
- Remain connected to peers and establish new community connections
- Experience fast, easy and simple access to support and entitlements from Government

The Taskforce found that common factors which influence an individual's experience of transition are:

- A member's level of control over the decision to leave military service
- A member's mode of separation from the ADF (i.e. voluntary, involuntary or medical separations)
- The timeframes leading to separation and the member's level of preparedness for separation
- A member's awareness of, and access to, transition related information and services
- The level of support and assistance members receive during transition from both support networks and service delivery organisations
- A member's capacity to engage with, and manage, transition processes. This capacity is influenced by a member's wellness, individual circumstances and personal resilience
- The timeliness of services and support provision
- The degree at which members have remained connected to their civilian environment whilst serving in the ADF
- The military Chain of Command's acknowledgement of an ADF member's service and contribution
- How easily members seeking employment post service can secure meaningful employment

Considering the work already underway across Defence, DVA and CSC to improve outcomes for current and former serving ADF members and their families, the Taskforce makes the following recommendations:

1. The focus of all transition related processes, services and support delivered by Government should be centered on the needs of the person and their families.
2. The Departments of Defence, DVA and CSC should investigate the intelligent use of data to track outcomes for separating members and allow the system to respond to emerging needs.
3. Defence, DVA and CSC should trial an integrated approach to transition service delivery that provides, where appropriate, proactive assistance to the person and their family throughout their transition journey.
4. Defence, DVA and CSC should reimagine how transition related information and tools can be brought together and delivered in ways that are effective and engaging.
5. Defence, DVA and CSC should address privacy based barriers to enable proactive engagement with family members of current and former serving members.
6. Defence and DVA should enhance their career assistance and development capabilities with a view to increasing the probability of current and former serving members securing employment, where appropriate.
7. Defence should consider ways in which transition can be better supported within the services including enhancing acknowledgement of (and value placed in) a member's service and contribution.



CLARIFYING
WHAT IS
NEXT

MORE
TIME
WITH
PARTNER

New
Career

WORKING

WHAT WILL I BE
DOING IN 12
MONTHS TIME?

New Job

Health
- repair
my injuries

Have
Job I
enjoy
doing

Study for
a career
that motivates
me

FIND A
CAREER I'M
PASSIONATE
ABOUT

Study

Get my
medical
stuff
sorted

Prioritizing
family
→ Not being
away
so much

Found a
job I
really want
to be in

Stay active!
Enjoy
retirement
😊

Reconnect
with
family

Pain
management

Find a
job that
suits my
conditions

FIND A
CAREER
PATH

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ATTACHMENT A



Defence-DVA-CSC Transition Taskforce

Terms of Reference

At the 2016 Federal Election the Government announced an Election Commitment entitled *Creating a better veteran's transition process*. The commitment has two parts:

The Coalition will put in place a 'Discharge (separation) with Documentation' policy across the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs; and

To facilitate improved transition from the ADF to civilian life the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs will establish a taskforce to report back to portfolio Ministers on barriers to effective transition and suggested actions to address those barriers.

These Terms of Reference deal with both parts of this commitment.

Background

Although the majority of ADF members transition successfully, some former members advise that they experienced difficulties. For some, the difficulties relate to navigating the DVA claims process or handover of health care in the transition to civilian life. Others need assistance with employment, financial stability and more general connection with the wider civilian community after service.

Transition from a Defence perspective is largely a process by which people leave the ADF with support to assist their future lives. From a DVA perspective it is often the point at which responsibility starts for care and support of those who need it.

A more holistic view could see transition in terms of outcomes for the veteran, rather than the successful completion of a transition process. We would increasingly target our efforts towards those most in need based on criteria such as continuity of healthcare, finding employment and social connectedness.

Those criteria, while valid for all, are more critical for a smaller percentage of members, including those whose transition is significantly complicated by health considerations, including mental health difficulties, and those who separate involuntarily. Successful transition must also include success for the former member's family including in relation to spouse employment, children's education and wellbeing, housing and financial security.

Governance

The Transition Taskforce has been established to implement both elements of this election commitment under the auspices of the Defence DVA Links Steering Committee (DLSC), and will be managed jointly by Defence, DVA and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation.

Membership

The Taskforce will be jointly led by the Assistant Secretary Veteran Centric Reform Transformation Implementation, DVA and Director General Defence Community Organisation, Defence. The Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation is a key contributor with the Senior Manager, Scheme Determinations a member of the Taskforce. The Taskforce will report to the DLSC through Head People Capability (Defence) and First Assistant Secretary, Transformation Taskforce (DVA).

Additional personnel and advisors will be provided and/or co-opted by participating organisations as required. The Australian Taxation Office, Department of Employment and Department of Human Services may be invited to contribute to or attend particular activities in an advisory capacity, but are not expected to provide a member.

Methodology

The Transition Taskforce will adopt an open scoping approach to establishing a mutual understanding of the transition experience from the perspective of veterans and their families.

This will include gathering and collating information on current services, practices and processes, drawing on client consultation already undertaken, and other sources of feedback.

Information already available will be supplemented with further targeted client workshops, interviews and analysis addressing the key barriers and challenges, identifying what is working well and seeking advice on ways to improve the experience.

Views and information for analysis will be collected from a wide range of stakeholders, including Departmental and ADF staff involved with the policy and administration of transition, current and former ADF members and their families, organisations external to government which offer services or support in the transition context and other organisations or individuals identified by the Taskforce during its operation.

A draft report providing advice and recommendations will be produced for consideration by DLSC prior to submission to portfolio Ministers.

Timing

The first report of the Taskforce will be provided to DLSC by no later than 30 June 2017.

ATTACHMENT B

Attachment B

ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED BY THE TASKFORCE

Interviews - Government stakeholders

The Taskforce conducted 32 deep dive interviews with the following government stakeholders to explore transition from their agencies' perspective:

Defence	DVA	Other
Head, People Capability	Chief Operating Officer	Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation
Commander, Joint Health Command	Deputy President	
Captain, Joint Health Command	Commissioner	
Director-General Personnel – RAN, Army, RAAF	National Manager, Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS)	
Representative of Director General Personnel - Army	First Assistant Secretary, Commemorations Division	
Health and Wellbeing Officer, 7 th Brigade	Deputy Commissioner QLD	
Welfare Officers, 7 th and 8 th /9 th Brigades	Rehabilitation and Support Division Assistant Secretaries	
Defence Community Organisation (DCO), Brisbane Office Manager	Rehabilitation and Support Division, policy staff	
ADF Rehabilitation Program Manager, Brisbane	Health and Community Services Division Assistant Secretaries	
ADF Rehabilitation Program Manager, Sydney	Health and Community Services Division policy staff	
Soldier Recovery Centre, Brisbane	Coordinated Client Support program staff	
Soldier Recovery Centre, Townsville	On Base Advisors	
Intensive Rehabilitation Team, Sydney	VVCS officer, Melbourne	
DCO Transition staff Brisbane		
DCO Transition staff, Melbourne		
DCO Transition staff, Sydney		
Army Personnel Coordination Detachment, Brisbane		
Army Personnel Coordination Detachment, Canberra		

Interviews - Other relevant organisations

The Taskforce conducted 13 deep dive interviews with professional sporting organisations and emergency services organisations to understand the transition support and programs available within their professional environments. The Taskforce engaged with the Assistant Commissioner, NSW Police Force and the following sporting organisations:

- ❖ National Rugby League - Brisbane Broncos, Sydney Roosters, and a NRL Career Coach
- ❖ Australian Football League - Brisbane Lions and Sydney Swans
- ❖ A-League - Brisbane Roar and Sydney FC
- ❖ Professional Footballers' Association (PFA)
- ❖ Rugby Union Players' Association (RUPA) – NSW Rugby

Transition Taskforce Online Survey 2017

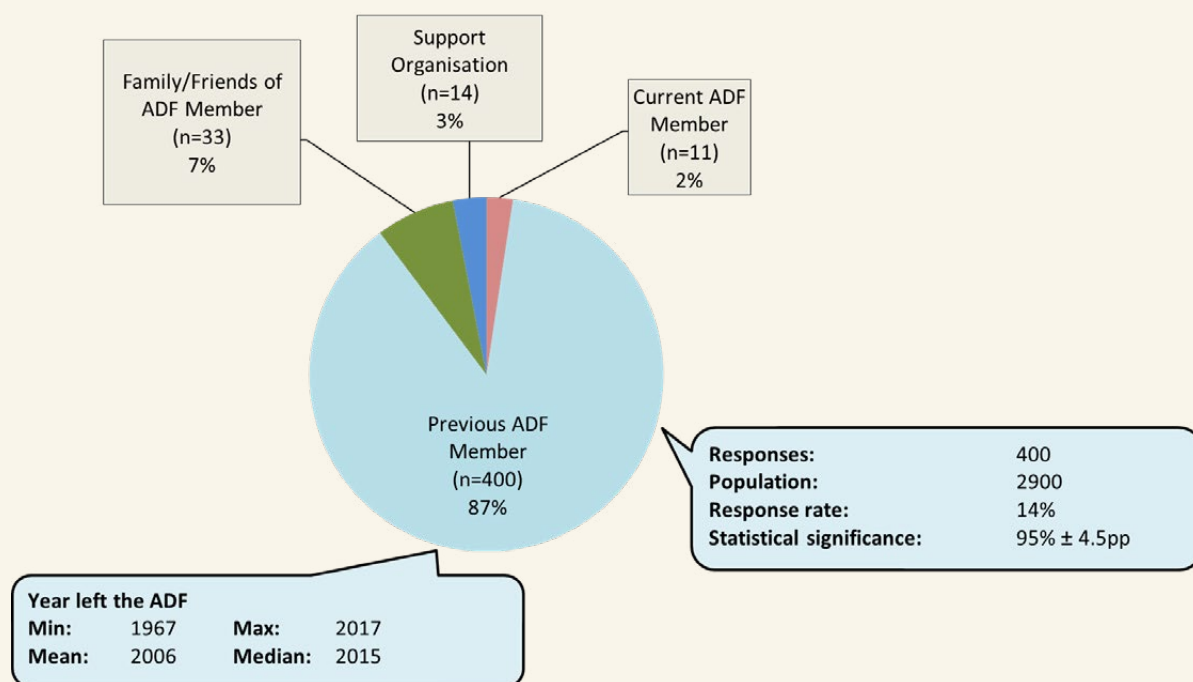
Chart Pack

June 2017

Background

- ◆ **Fieldwork dates:** 26 May to 6 June 2017
- ◆ **Response numbers/rates:**

Figure 1: Response numbers / rates



Life within the ADF

Figure 2: Extent of agreement in relation to the following statements about the ADF (q3)

Base: Previous ADF member

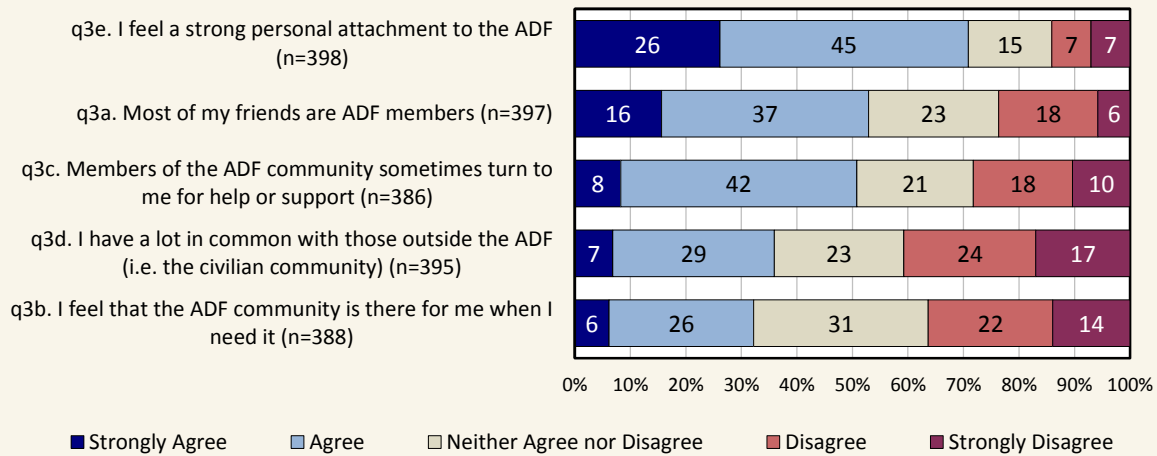


Figure 3: What did you enjoy most about serving in the ADF? (q4mr) – Top three options

Base: Previous ADF member, n=397

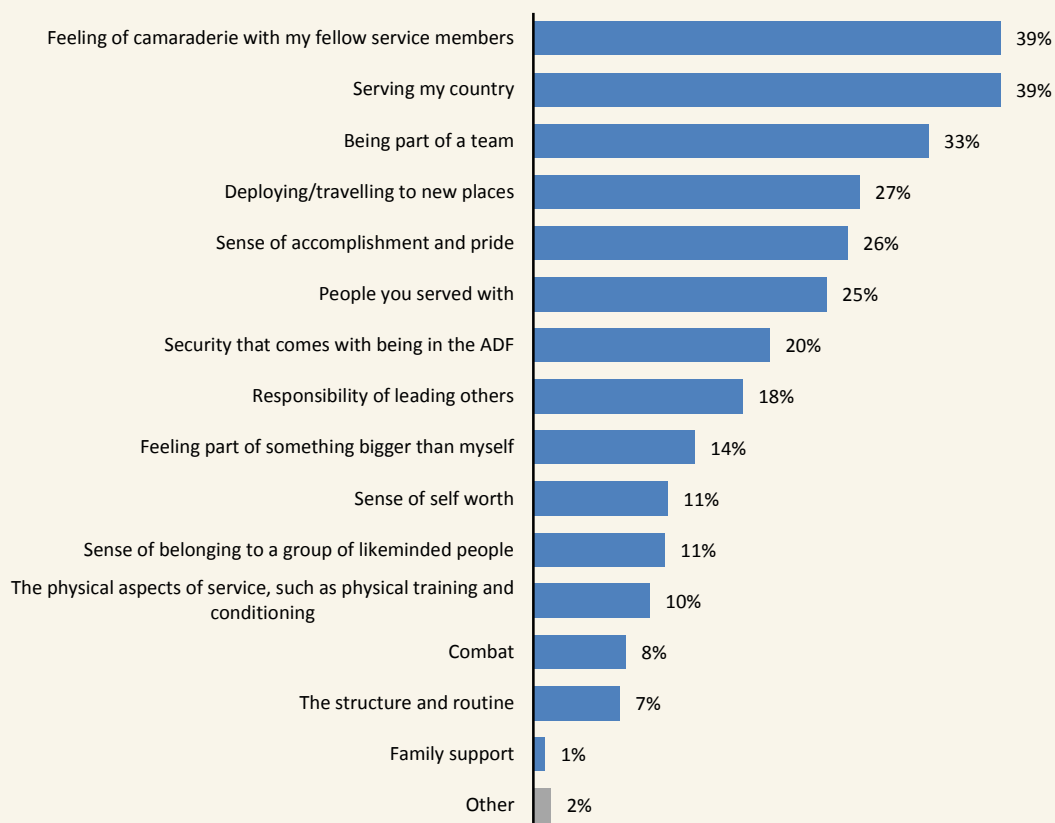


Figure 4: What did you enjoy the least about serving in the ADF? (q5mr) – Top three options

Base: Previous ADF member, n=389

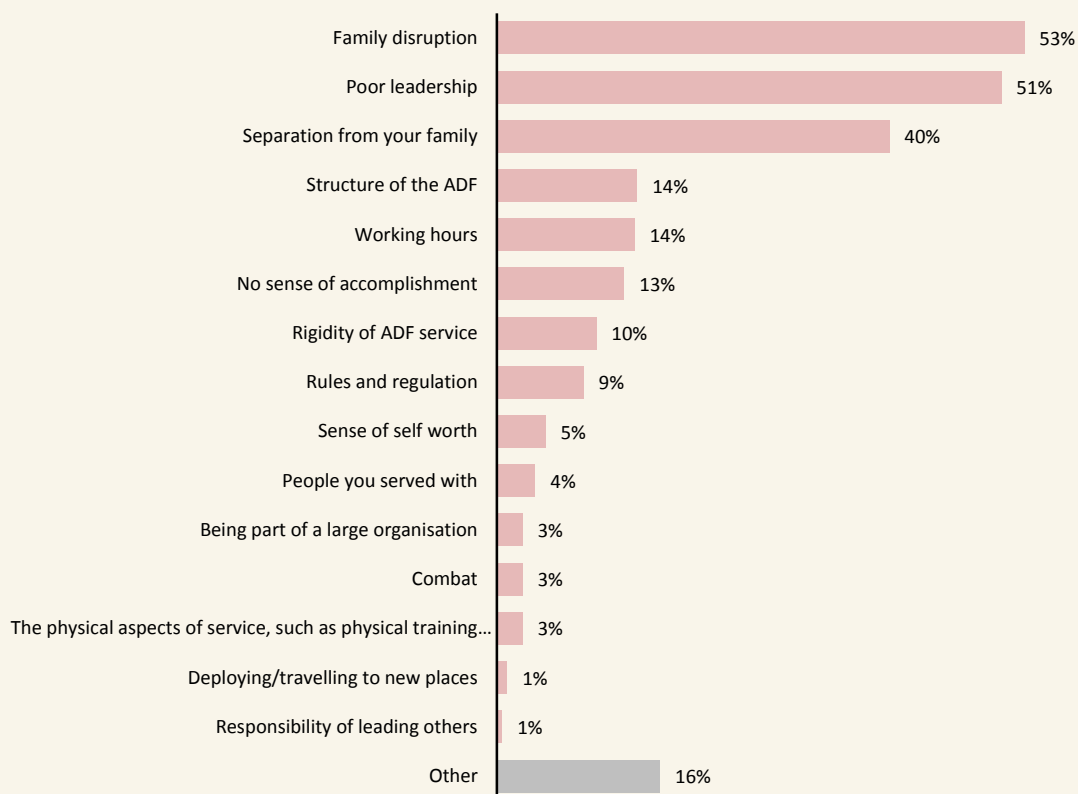
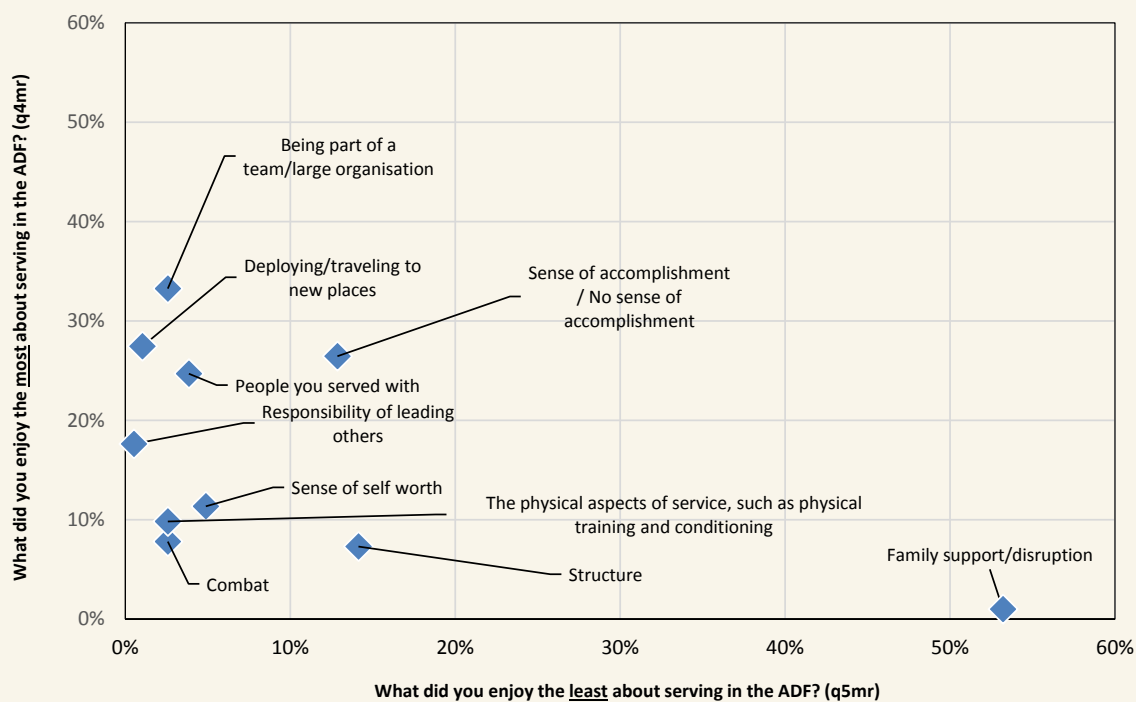


Figure 5: Most vs least enjoyed aspects in relation to serving in the ADF (q5mr vs q4mr)



Leaving the ADF

Figure 6: Overall satisfaction with experience in leaving the ADF (q13 / q27)

Base: Previous ADF members

q13. Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience in leaving the ADF? (n=397)

Base: Family/Friends of ADF member

q27. Overall, how satisfied were you with the experience of your member/friend transitioning out of the ADF? (n=20)

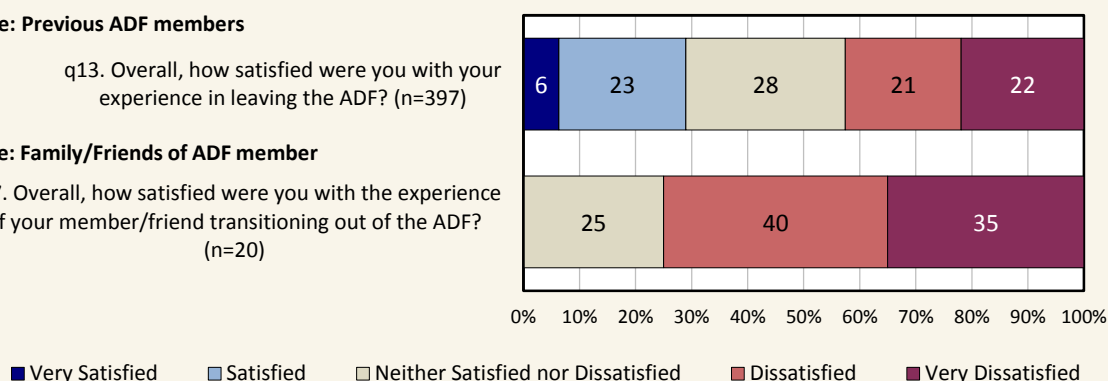


Figure 7: First plans upon leaving the ADF (q6mr)

Base: Previous ADF members, n=381

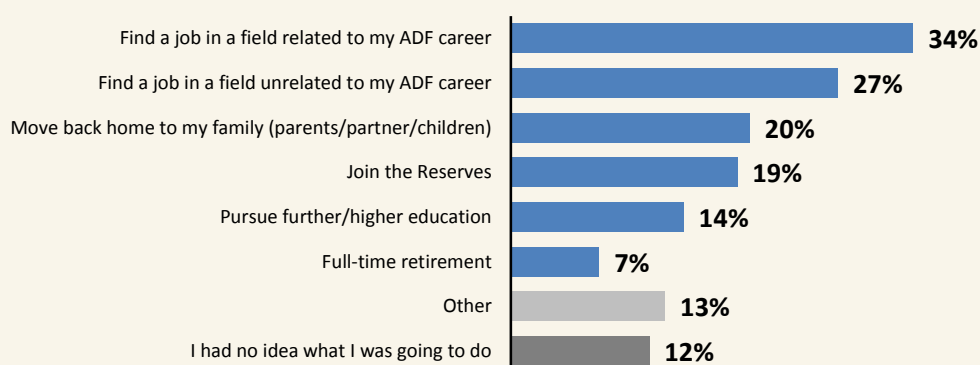


Figure 8: Most useful source of information/support during the separation process (q7mr)

Base: Previous ADF members, n=356

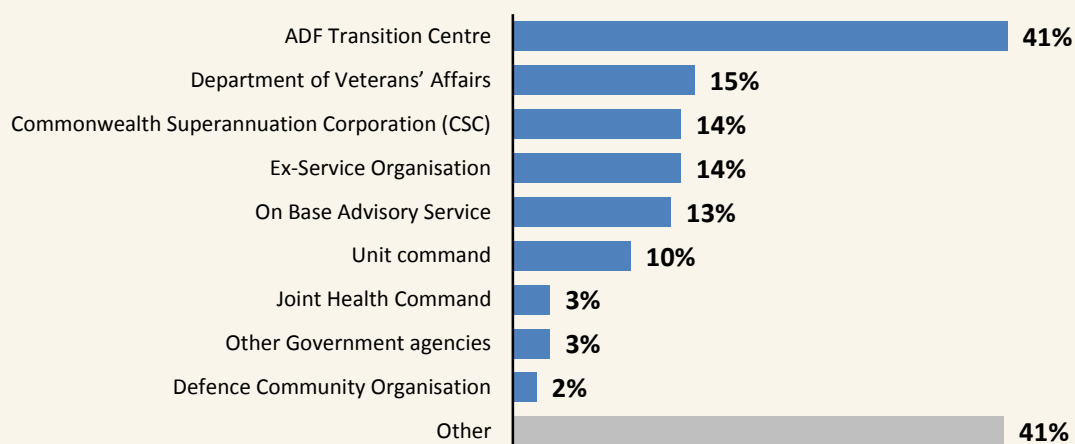


Figure 9: Awareness and usage of ADF transition services (q8@)

Base: Previous ADF member

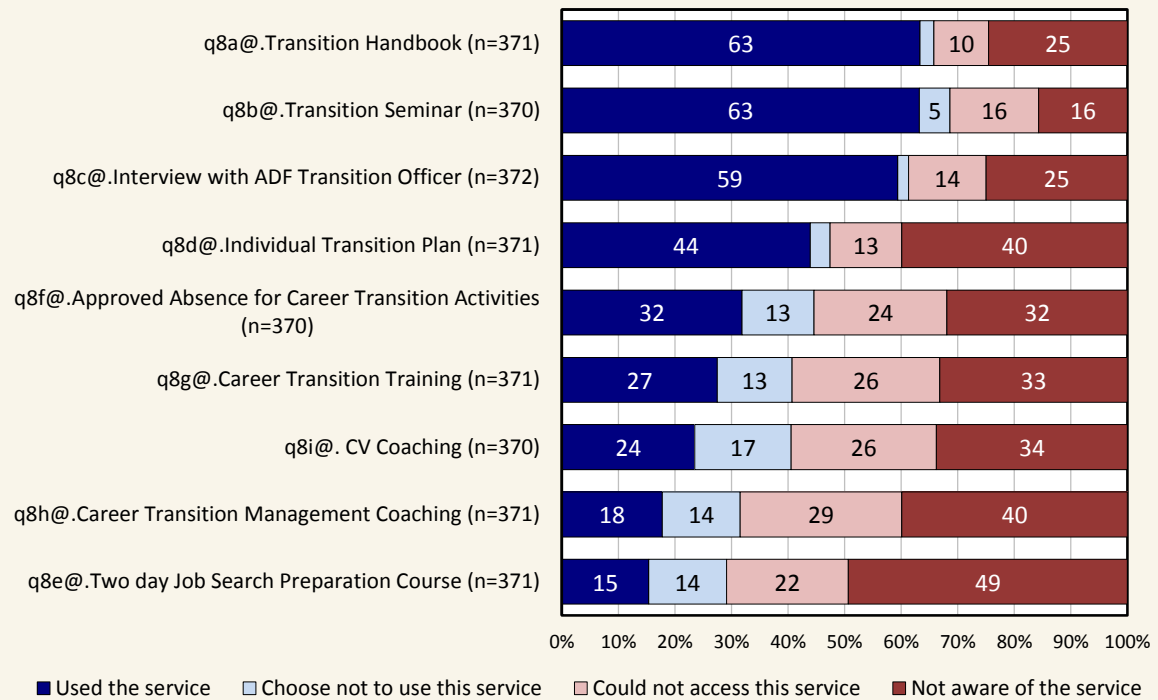


Figure 10: Usefulness of services during the ADF transition process (q8)

Base: Previous ADF member

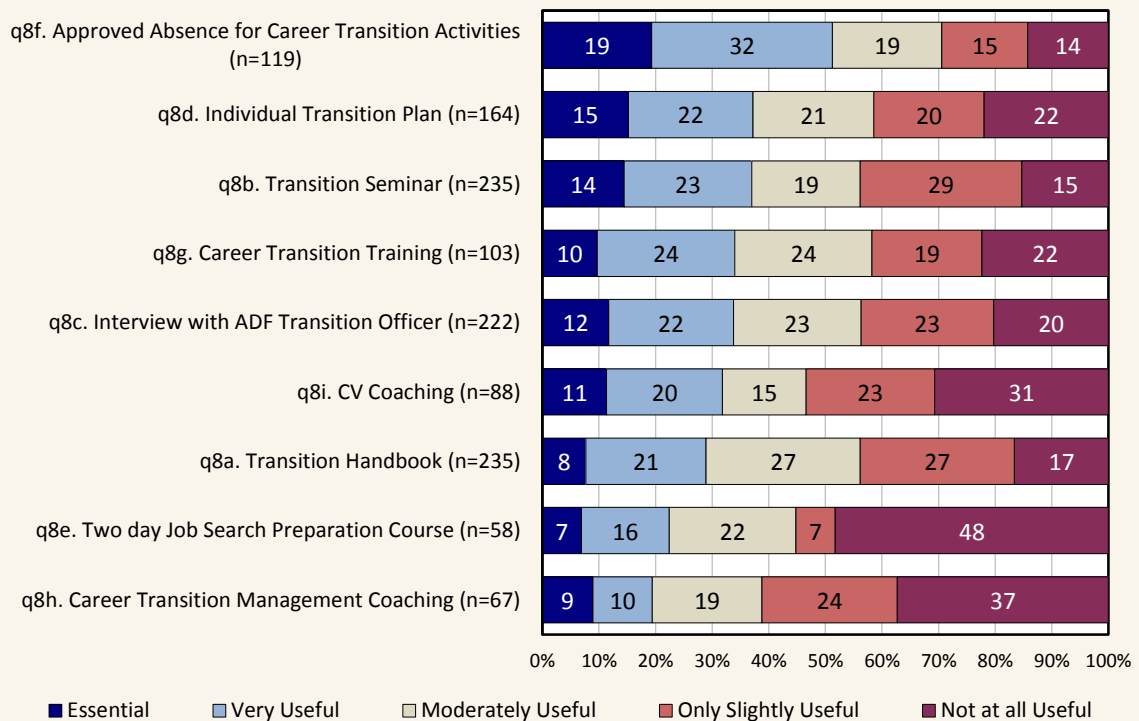


Figure 11: Usage vs satisfaction of ADF Transition services (q8@ vs q8)

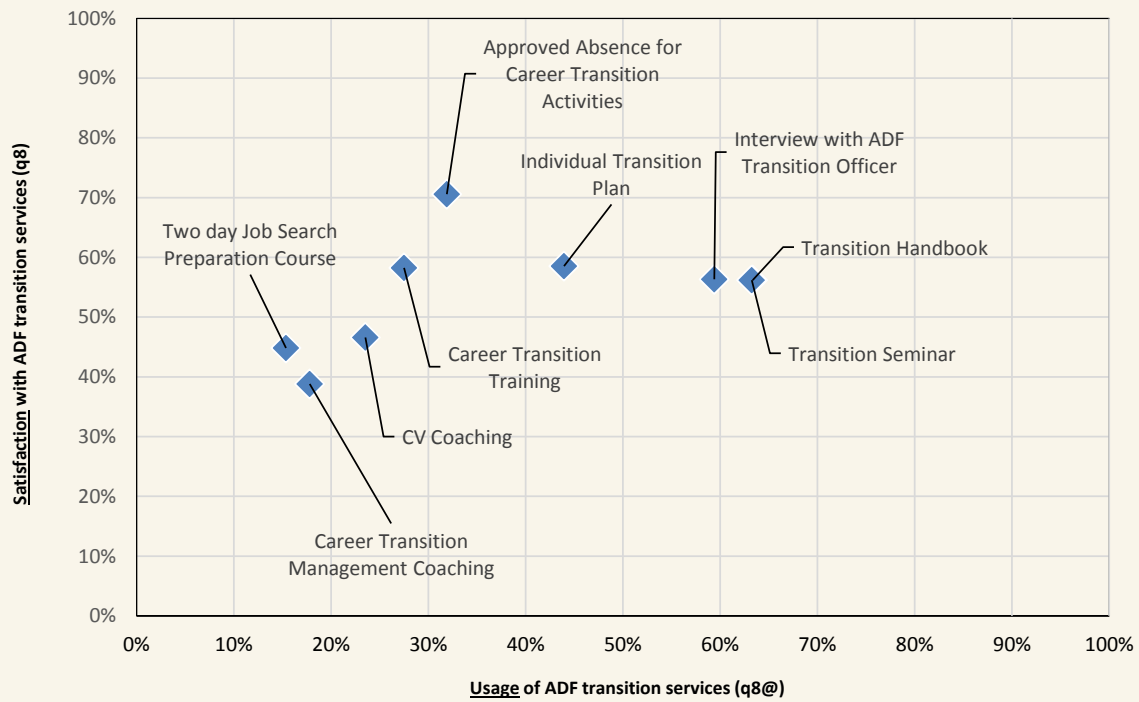


Figure 12: Extent of agreement in relation to statements about the transition process (q10/q24)
Overall (People, process, state of mind)

Base: Previous ADF Member (n=273-369); Family/Friends of ADF member (n=19-20)

% Strongly Agree, Agree



Figure 13: Transition process - Process ratings

Base: Previous ADF Member (n=359-369); Family/Friends of ADF member (n=19-20)

% Strongly Agree, Agree; * Strongly Disagree, Disagree

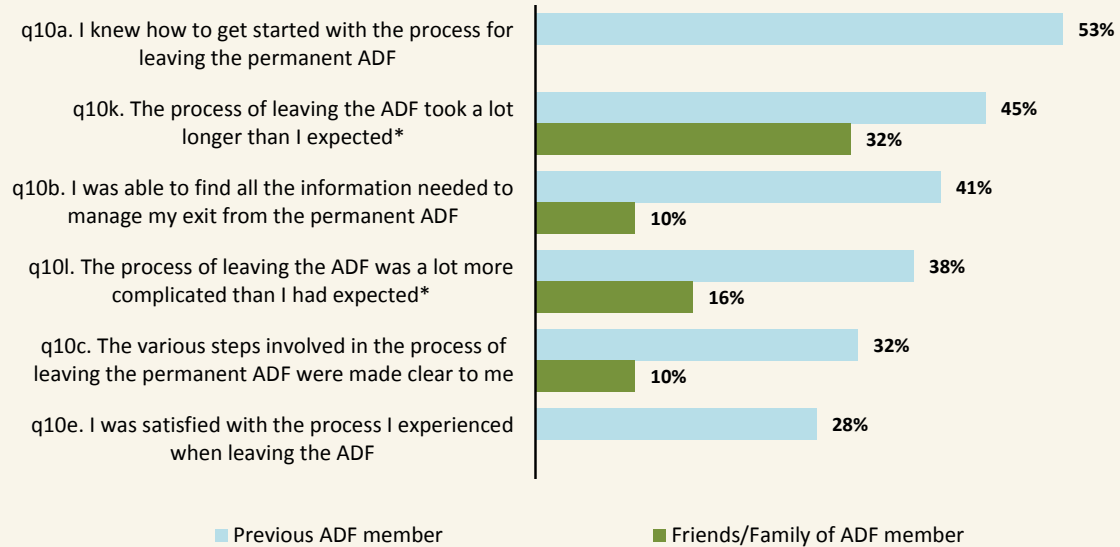


Figure 14: Transition process - People ratings

Base: Previous ADF Member (n=273-356); Family/Friends of ADF member (n=19-20)

% Strongly Agree, Agree

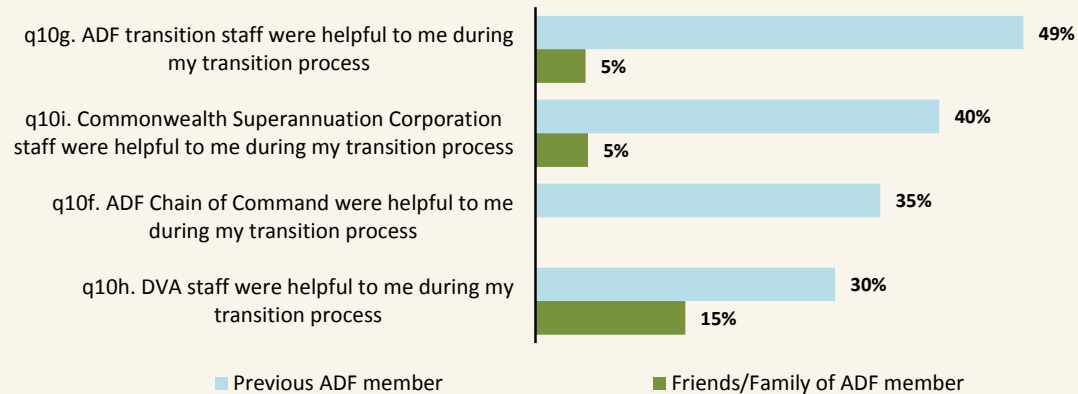
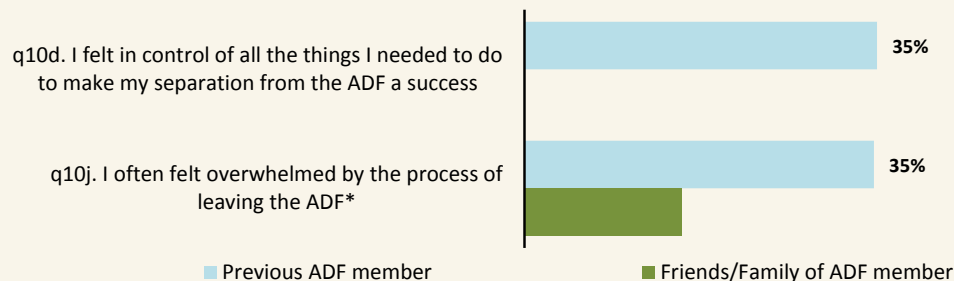


Figure 15: Transition process – State of mind ratings

Base: Previous ADF Member (n=357-368); Family/Friends of ADF member (n=19)

% Strongly Agree, Agree; * Strongly Disagree, Disagree



Civilian life

Figure 16: Most concerned vs least concerned issues in relation to prospects of life after service in the ADF (q11mr vs q12mr) – Top five options

Base: Previous ADF members and Family/Friends of ADF members (n=383-394)

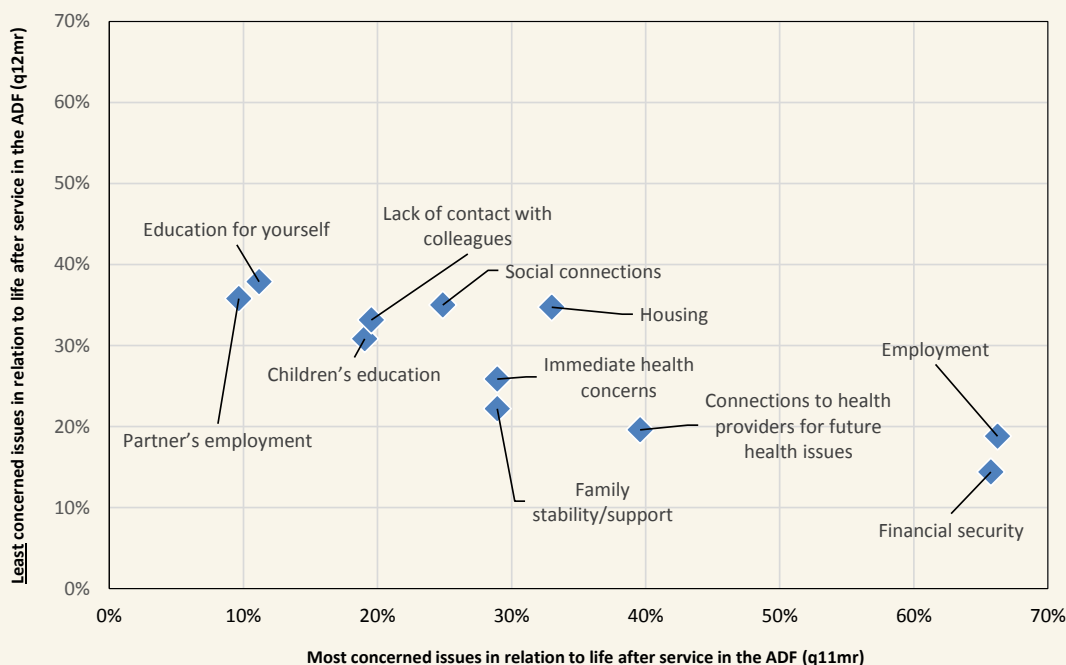


Figure 17: Hardest vs easiest aspects of transition into civilian life (q16mr vs q15mr) – Top three options

Base: Previous ADF members and Family/Friends of ADF members (n=369-372)

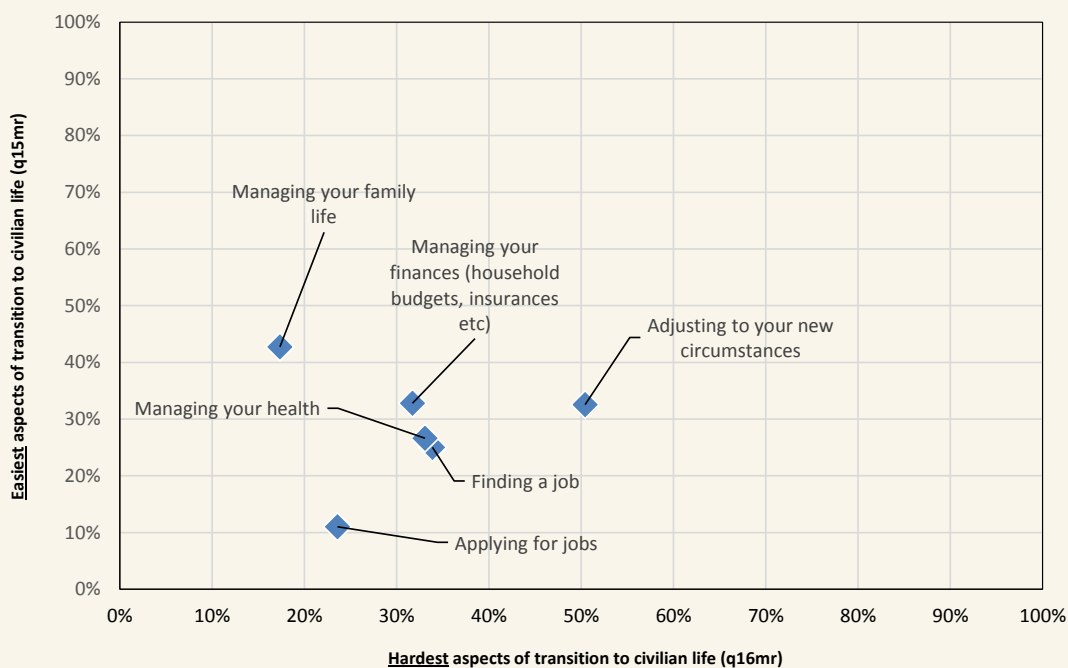


Figure 18: Have you had civilian employment since leaving the ADF? (q17)

Base: Previous ADF member

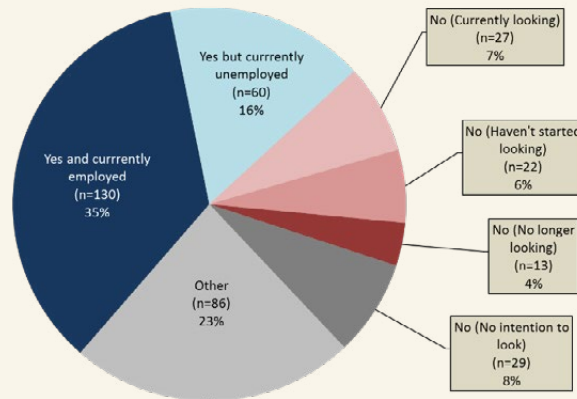


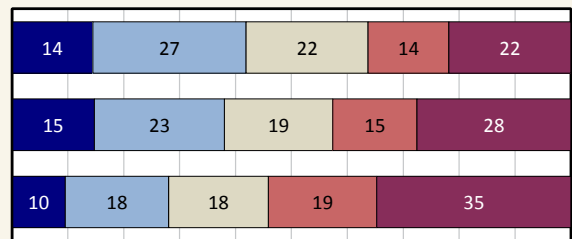
Figure 19: Preparedness for transition to civilian employment (q18)

Base: Previous ADF member

q18a. On leaving the permanent ADF, I felt well equipped to apply for civilian jobs (n=339)

q18c. I have been able to transfer my ADF skills to my civilian job relatively easily (n=305)

q18b. It was easy to find civilian jobs that align with my ADF skills (n=314)

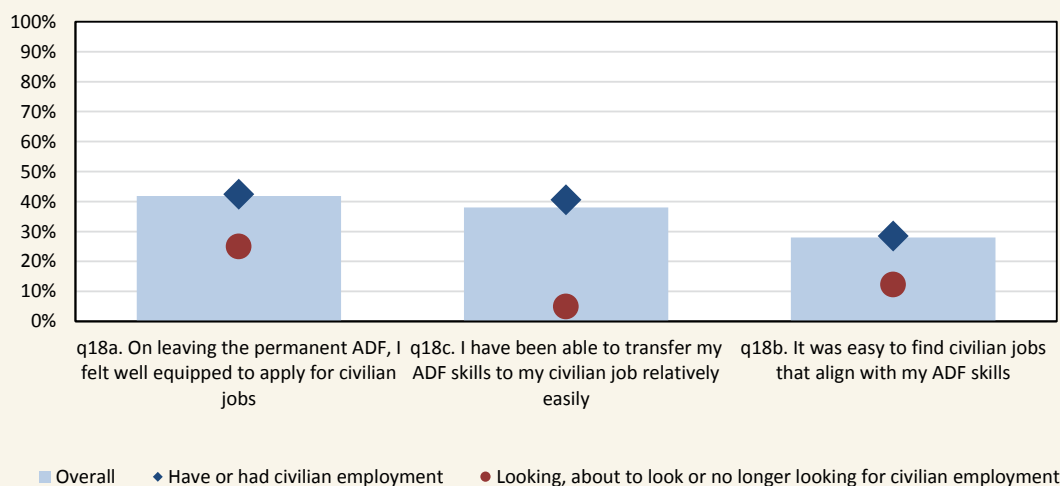


0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Mixed ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Figure 20: Civilian employment level vs preparedness for transition (q17 vs q18)

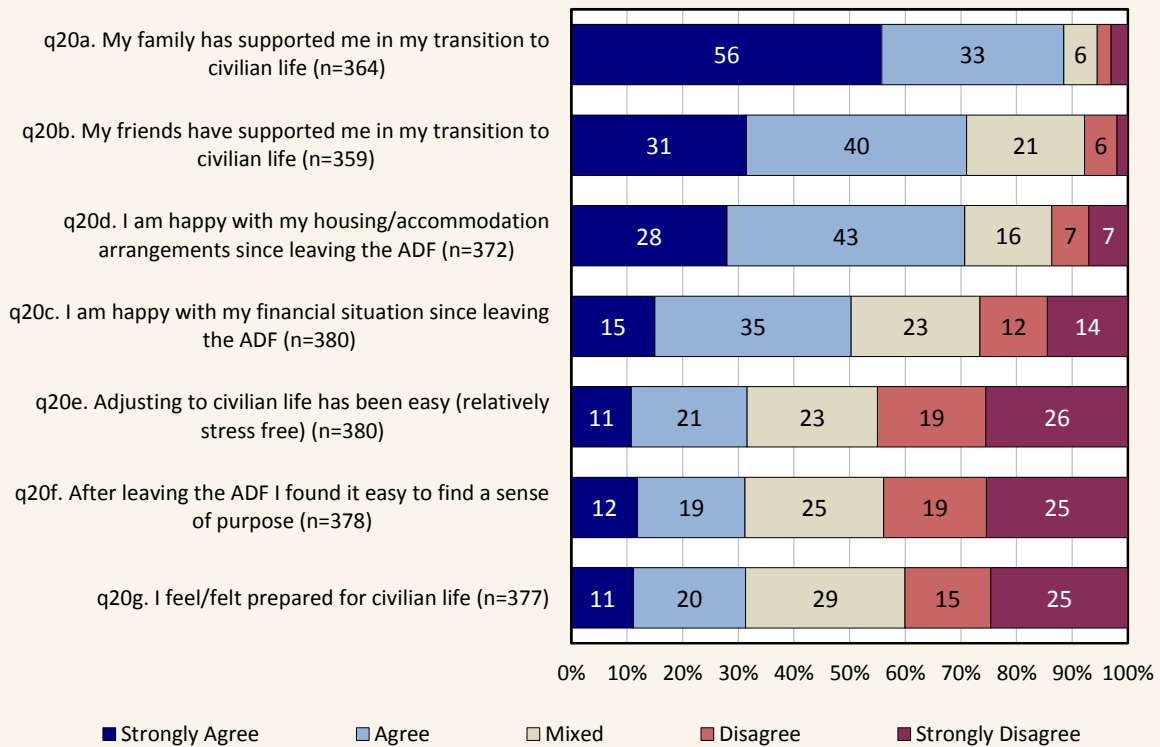
Base: Previous ADF member



■ Overall ◆ Have or had civilian employment ● Looking, about to look or no longer looking for civilian employment

Figure 21: Extent of agreement with statements in relation to transition and civilian life (q20)

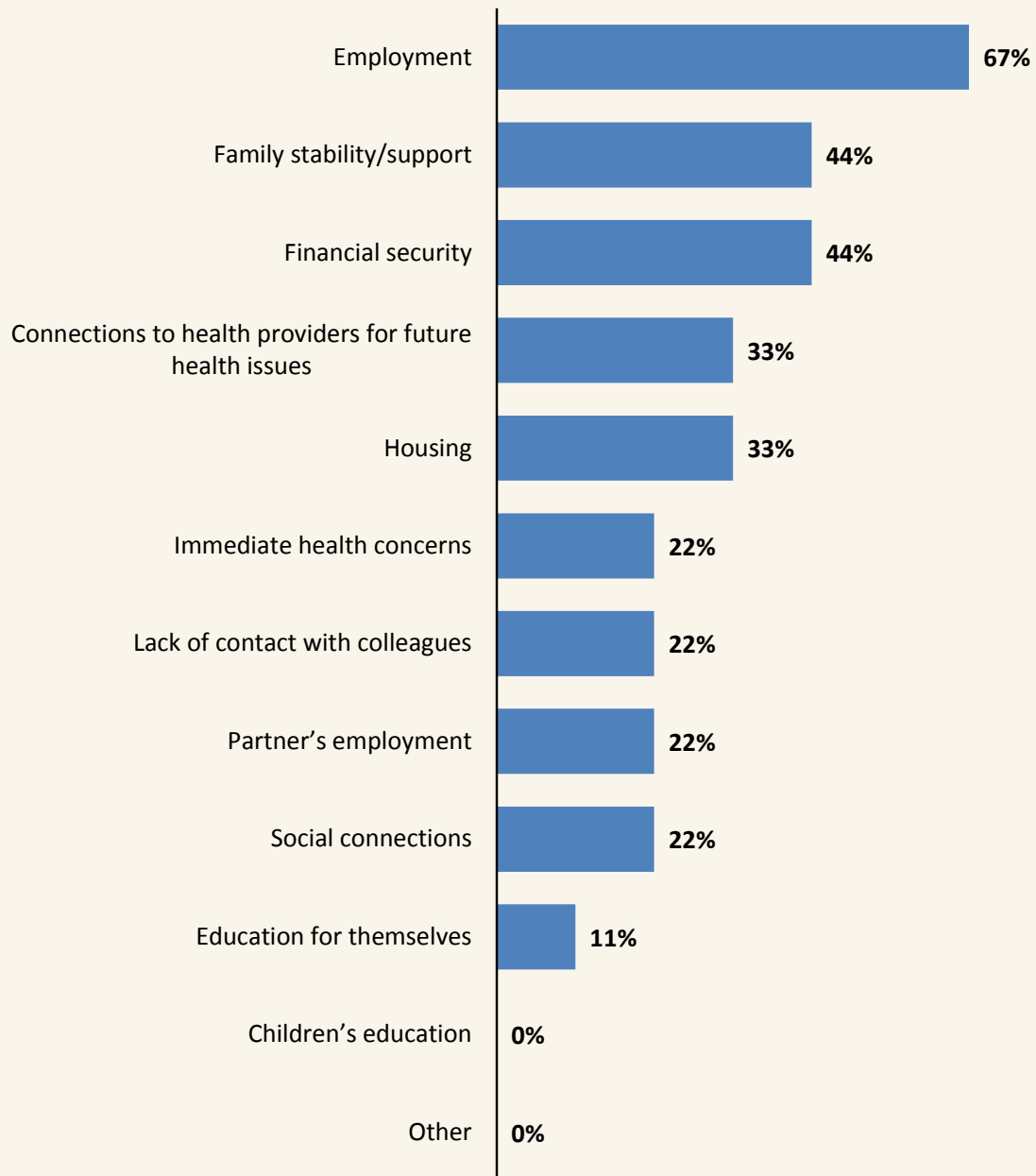
Base: Previous ADF members and Family/Friends of ADF members



Support organisation

Figure 22: Most significant challenges or barriers to successful transition encountered by ADF members when they leave the service (q45mr) – Top five options

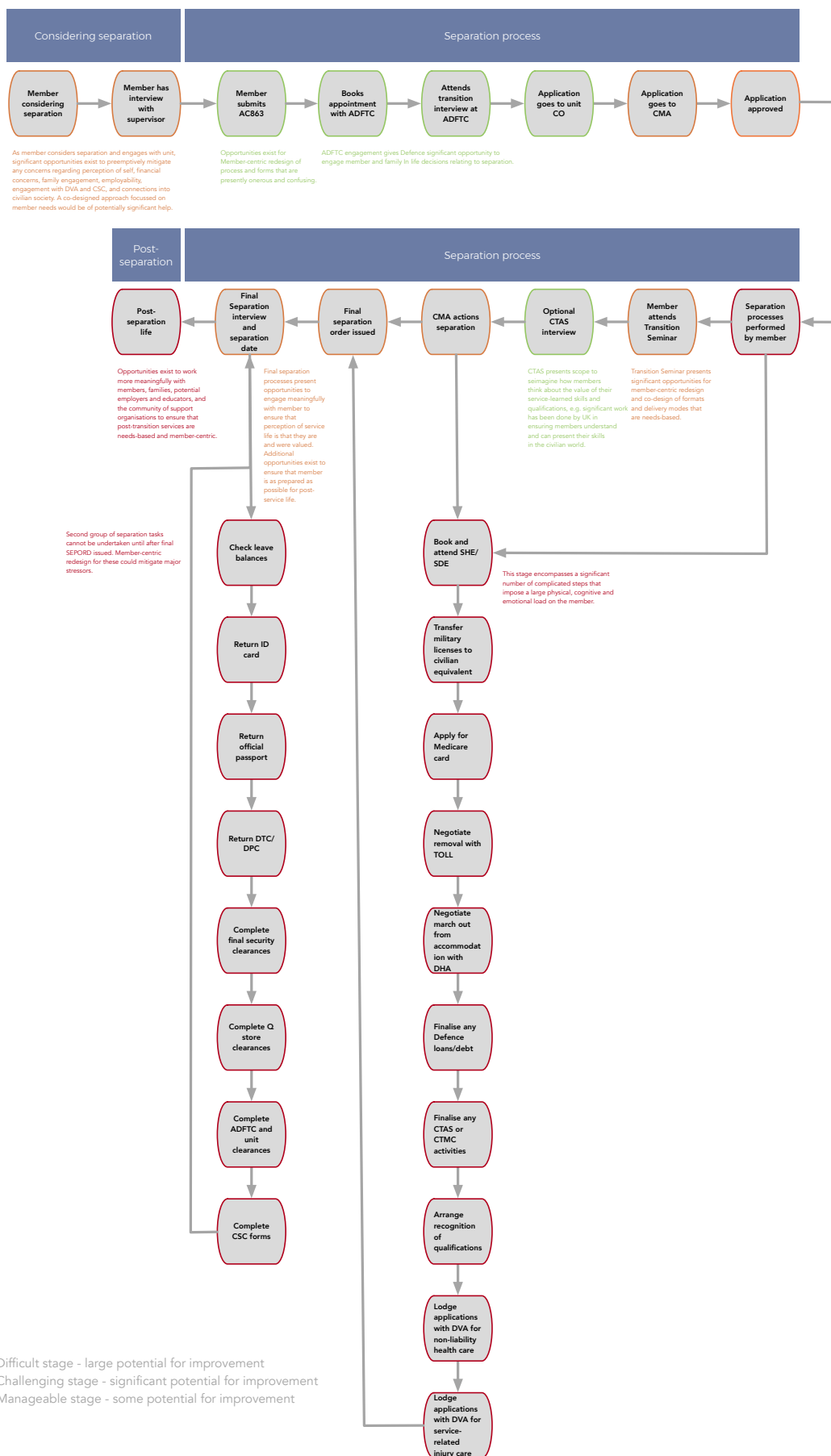
Base: All support organisation (n=9)



ATTACHMENT D

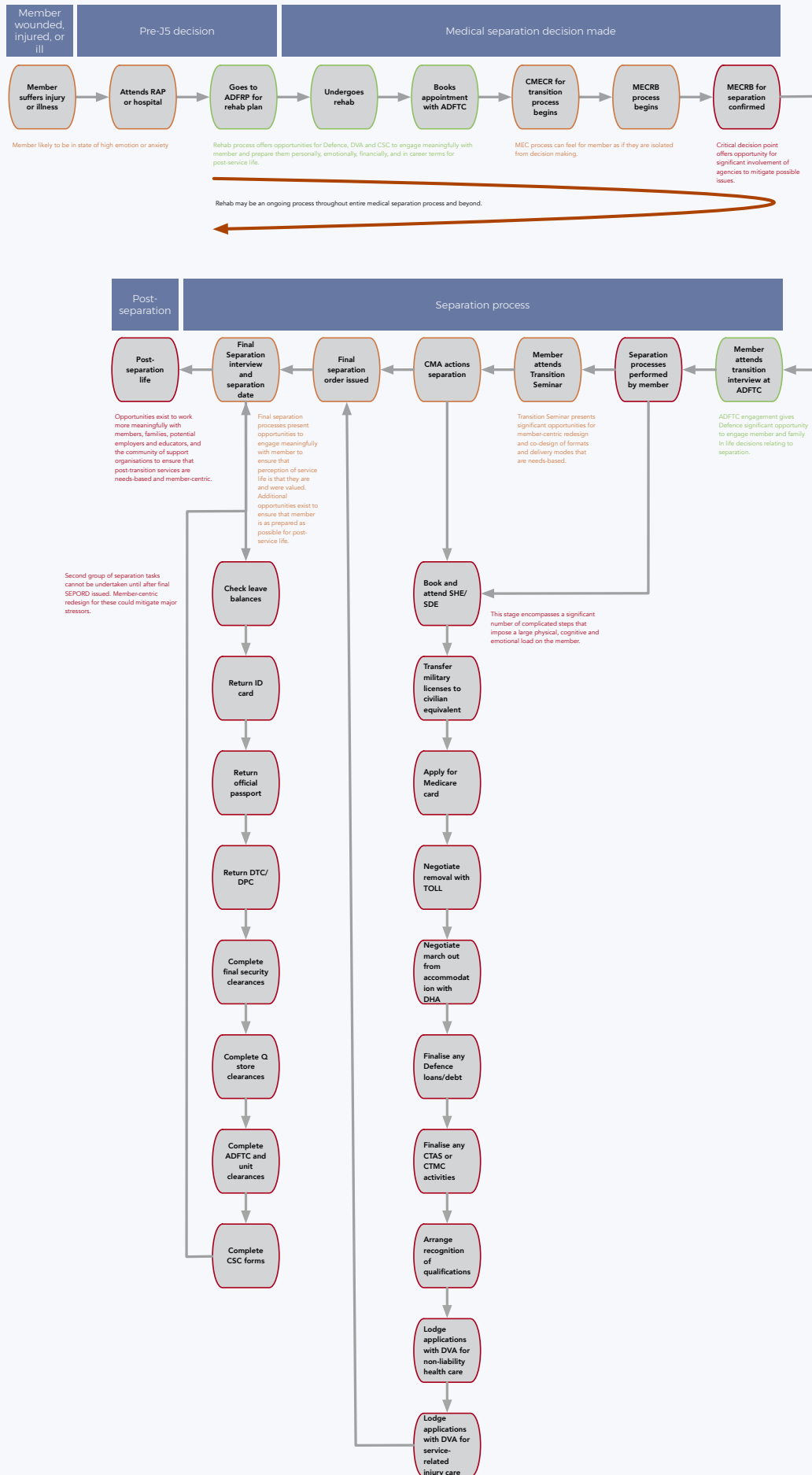
Transition for the member - Voluntary separation

This high level service and journey map shows the stages a member must pass through successfully in order to complete their separation from the ADF. It shows the process as perceived and experienced by the member as opposed to the process as planned and implemented by the agencies involved. A detailed version of this map with full annotations of all the touchpoints forms a part of the Transition Taskforce report.



Transition for the member - Medical separation

This high level service and journey map shows the stages a member must pass through successfully in order to complete their separation from the ADF. It shows the process as perceived and experienced by the member as opposed to the process as planned and implemented by the agencies involved. A detailed version of this map with full annotations of all the touchpoints forms a part of the Transition Taskforce report.



ATTACHMENT E

Transition stakeholder overview

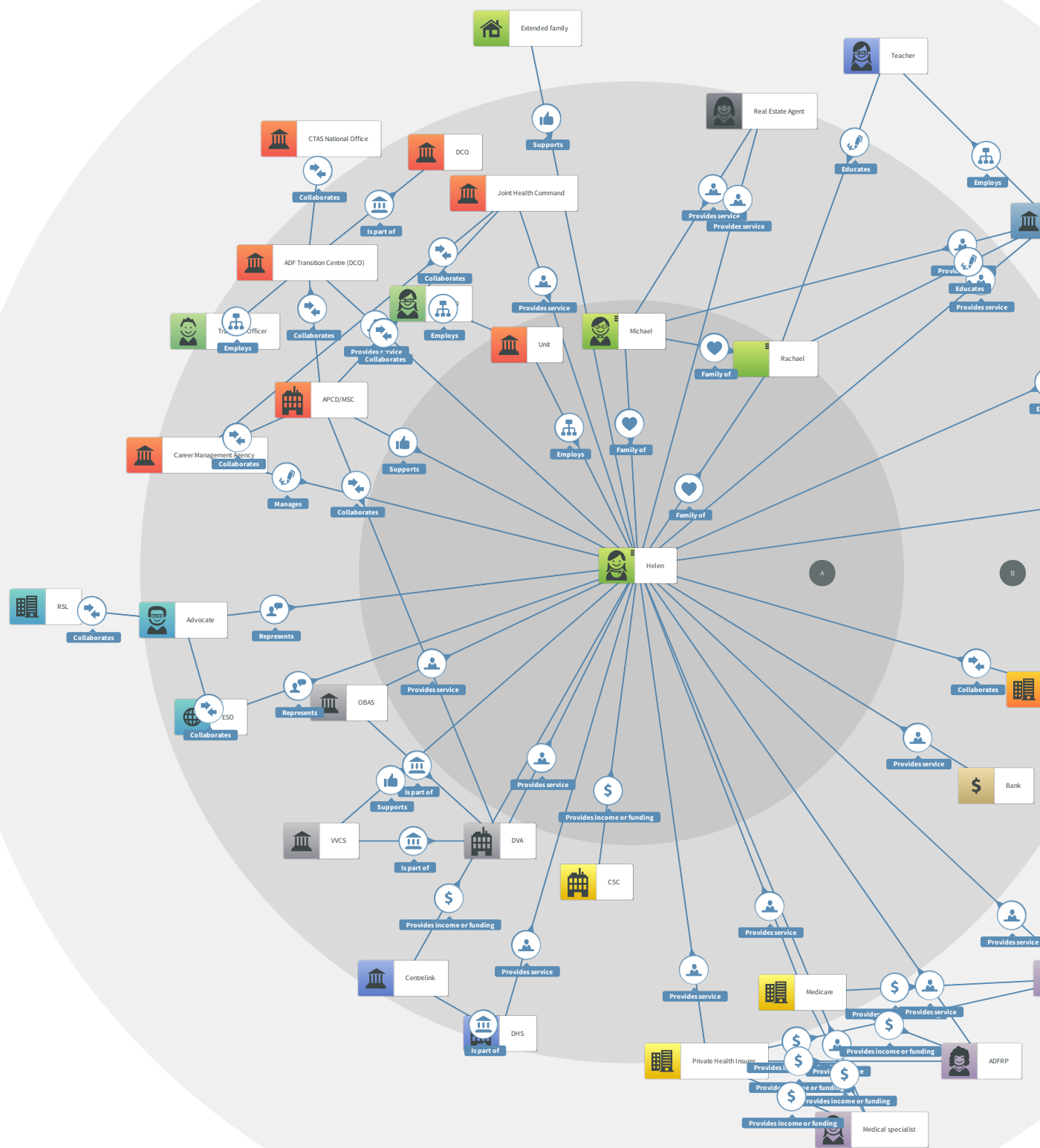
STAKEHOLDER MAP

DVA Transition

PROJECT

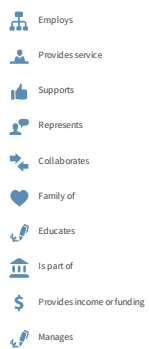
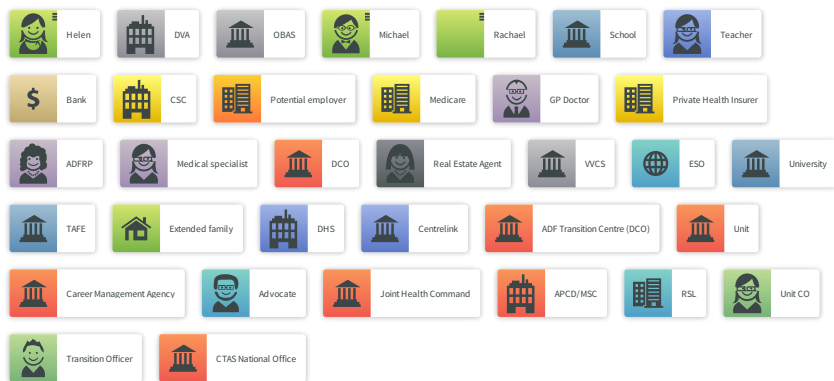
14 June 2017

EXPORT DATE



B Core transition needs

C Additional transition needs





ADF Transition Transformation

ADF Transitions has changed the way it works to better support ADF members' transition to civilian life. Improvements to the transition process aim to deliver a consistent and efficient experience for all ADF members.

The changes support the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program which aims to make it easier for businesses to recruit former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and for industry to reap the benefits of their skills and professional expertise.

There are three initiatives Defence is implementing as part of the Program:

- 1 Improvements to the transition process: ADF Transitions improved the Transition Clearance Documentation and now personnel have appropriate documentation available by the time they leave Defence.
- 2 Tailored coaching services: coaching services were launched nationally in July 2017. ADF Transition Officers work with ADF members to develop a career plan based on their unique skills, interests and career aspirations. Coaching is available to members for up to 12 months after their transition.
- 3 Reinstating post-transition surveys: Members who have left since December 2016 have received the post transition survey. The survey is sent to former members four, seven, ten and thirteen months after their transition date.

In addition to these initiatives, Defence, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) are piloting a new Transition Health Assessment at Holsworthy Barracks that enables ADF members to undertake a single medical process to facilitate their Defence transition, DVA claim and CSC application requirements in one process. This results in members transitioning with more certainty around the support they will receive from DVA and CSC and the ability to better plan their lives. This pilot will be evaluated to ensure it is delivering the intended outcomes and a determination made about next steps for implementation.

Defence has commenced a review and re-design of the Career Transition Assistance Scheme and interdependent transition support services. The findings of the review will ensure Defence support services for transitioning members: align to the objectives of the Prime Minister's Veteran's Employment Program initiatives, support the Government's response to the Senate Inquiry into Veteran Suicide; and factors in whole-of-government considerations.

Australian Defence College is investigating options to improve qualifications for transitioning members and is working with NSW Government and other organisations to map ADF skills to roles and qualifications.



THE DVA TRANSFORMATION

The veteran experience needs to change, and this is how we're going about it. To really be there for those including veterans facing mental health challenges, we're working to take the effort out of accessing DVA through an improved choice of channels, and make better use of data so we know all veterans well enough to help them early. That's how we'll put veterans and their families at the centre of everything we do.

"I'm jumping through hoops. Every time I have to explain what happened, I'm reliving it again."



"As a DVA staff member, I can respond to veterans faster without waiting for paper files to be delivered."



"I'd heard it would take weeks, but my treatment was approved on the day."



WHERE WE STARTED

WE DON'T KNOW MOST VETERANS

We only know 1 in 5 veterans. ADF can't notify us when someone enlists or stops serving, so we rely on veterans reaching out to us. To understand each veteran, staff need to request paper files and look at dozens of systems.

VETERANS DON'T HAVE CONTINUITY OF CARE

Veterans start treatment while serving, but it ends when they transition and it's harder to find services through DVA. Many spend a long time in rehabilitation for issues that could be better treated through continuous care or early intervention.

ACCESSING DVA IS HARD

It's too hard for veterans to get help when they need it. Many rely on advocates to help them navigate DVA processes and legislation. It takes too long to make a claim, and too long to get an answer.



EXPENSIVE AND COMPLEX

More than 200 aged technology systems create a significant risk for DVA. They cost a lot to maintain and cause frustration for veterans and staff.

FY 16–17 YEAR 0

PREPARE FOR OUR TRANSFORMATION BY:

Starting digitisation of files to reduce wait times while paper files are transported.

Working with veterans to co-design improvements to DVA systems.

Registering everyone who joins or separates from the ADF, so we're ready to support future clients.

Investigating opportunities to streamline proof of conditions based on the work veterans did while serving.

Understanding our internal culture and identifying where we need to change.

Identify how we need to change behind the scenes to deliver a better veteran experience.

FY 17–18 YEAR 1

KNOW AND CONNECT WITH VETERANS AND FAMILIES BY:

Connecting to ADF health data to understand the support veterans need, and registering those who are eligible for Qualifying Service or are seriously wounded, injured or ill.

Piloting smarter ways to identify veterans at high risk and how we can help them.

Investing in cultural change to prepare staff for our second century of service.

Piloting new locations for physical outlets so we're visible to more veterans.

Piloting best practice case management for veterans and families with complex needs.

STREAMLINE ACCESS BY:

Integrating nine compensation systems, reducing approval time for urgent mental health treatment from 18 days to as little as 30 minutes.

Launching digital self-service options:

- MyService (beta) to enable easier processing for the most commonly claimed injuries
- The 'Engage' portal for veterans and families to quickly and easily find support and services
- A client portal launched to Education Scheme recipients.

Consolidating 135 DVA phone numbers into 26, to reduce phone transfers.

Upgrade servers and roll out Windows 10 to improve stability, security and digital capability. Target business areas to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Progressively train staff on using digital tools.



who need our support,
A services. We'll connect
gh to reach out to

"Because the simple stuff is automated, I can
spend more time doing what I joined DVA to
do — helping veterans with complex issues."



"I didn't have to ask — they
understood the work I was doing and
reached out with tailored support."



"My transition from the ADF
felt seamless, and I can access
anything I need myself."



FY 18–19 YEAR 2

BECOME PROACTIVE BY:

Understanding the links between service history and conditions, reducing the burden on veterans to prove claims.

Starting early interventions for veterans identified as high risk.

FURTHER ENHANCE ACCESS BY:

Expanding our new client portal to Income Support payments, delivering faster, digital access to more veterans.

Enhancing MyService and expanding it across all services, enabling 'straight through' processing for all simple claims.

Launching a new website to help veterans and their families to find information more easily, including a web-based service finder.

Expanding our physical network to make us more accessible for veterans who prefer to deal with us face to face.

YEAR 3 & BEYOND

SUPPORT EVERY VETERAN BETTER BY:

Connecting to Defence's records to create a comprehensive profile for each serving veteran.

Equipping case managers with more information so they can make tailored decisions with individual veterans.

Using DVA and ADF data to reach out proactively to veterans who are most likely to need particular services.

IMPROVE THE DVA EXPERIENCE BY:

Using sophisticated analytics and research partnerships to understand and improve all touch points with veterans.

Launch a single 1800 VETERAN phone line with voice recognition, so the first person a veteran speaks to can help them.

WHERE WE'LL BE

WE KNOW ALL VETERANS

We know everyone who's serving and connect them to the services they're most likely to need. Veterans and their families only need to tell us things once, and their needs and wellbeing are the foundation of DVA business.

THOSE WHO NEED HELP GET BETTER FASTER

For veterans who need support with health and wellbeing, continuous care and early intervention are the new norm. Getting help early prevents chronic issues, improving outcomes for veterans and families while reducing treatment costs.

ACCESS IS EASY THROUGH ANY CHANNEL

Veterans and their families can access our services easily through the channels that are most convenient for them. They can often manage what they need independently. They don't always have to make a claim to receive assistance, but if they do it will be painless and streamlined.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT TO SECURE FUNDING

Train staff in policy roles on using more evidence and behavioural insights to update policy in line with the needs of veterans and their families.
Develop the internal data analytics capability to match our new sophisticated analytics tools.

Decommission old technology systems, reducing our technology risks and maintenance costs.
Refine our analytics 'engine' as we test improvements and learn from veterans.

STREAMLINED AND MODERN

Old systems have been replaced by modern technology systems that make the most of government capabilities and enable digital solutions for veterans.

