

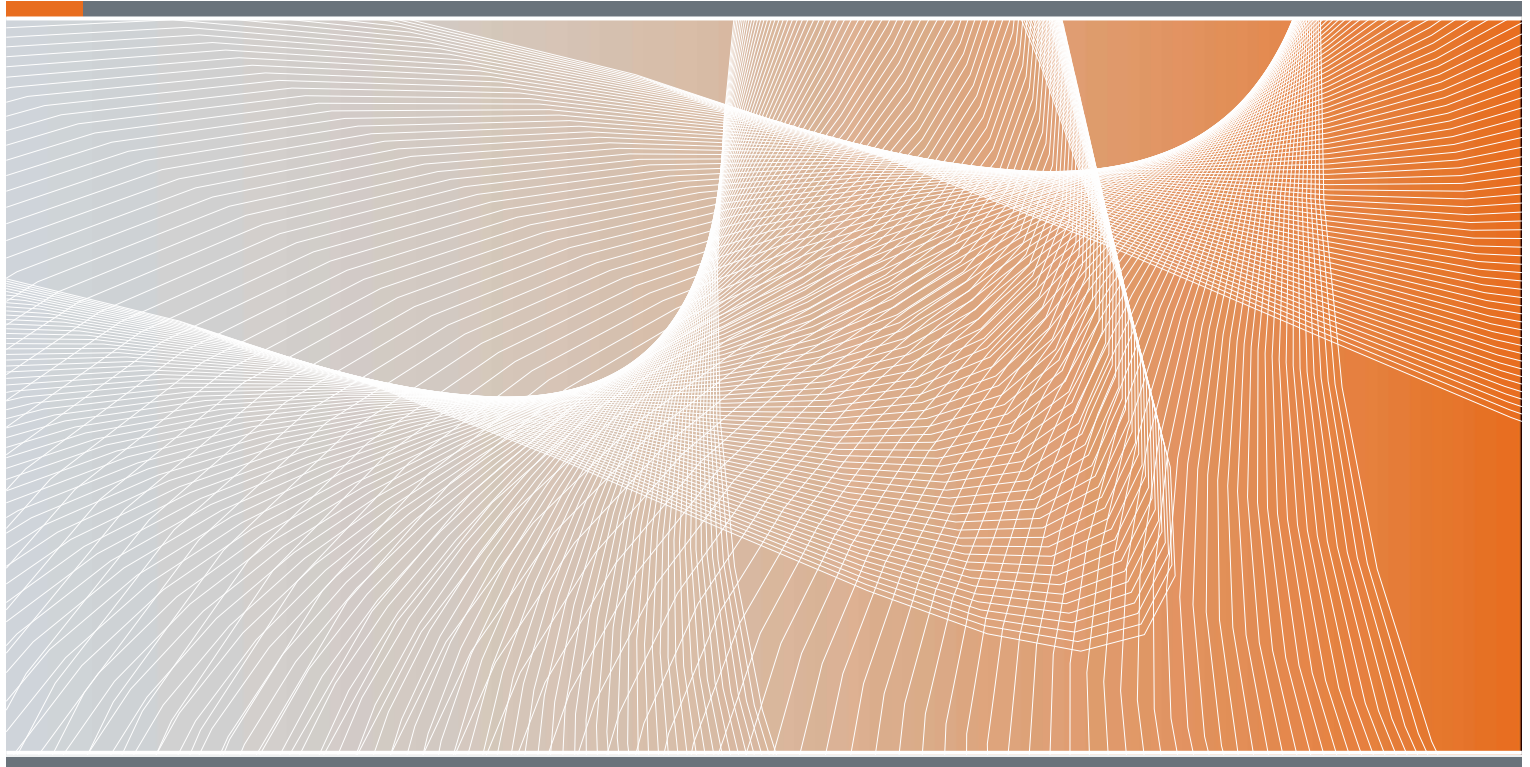


Australian Government

Department of Defence

Joint Transition Authority Annual Progress Report 2022

Joint Transition Authority



30 January 2023

Contents

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Introduction | 3 |
| 2 | Govern | 3 |
| 3 | Plan | 4 |
| 4 | Manage..... | 5 |
| 5 | Delivery..... | 6 |

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Introduction

Transition to a predominantly civilian-centred life can be a significant event and it is acknowledged that, although this is a relatively smooth journey for most, for some it can be difficult and create uncertainty. This is evidenced by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide acknowledgement that 'systemic issues with separation and transition from service' was the fifth most frequent topic arising from submissions received at the time of the Interim Report tabled in Parliament on 11 August 2022.

The Productivity Commission (PC) Report, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*, recommended the Joint Transition Authority (JTA) be established with the Department of Defence (Defence) to ensure serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families are better prepared and supported through transition from military to civilian life (Recommendation 7.1).

The Australian Government established the JTA in October 2020, which sits within Defence and works in partnership with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC). This builds on the close working relationship the three agencies have in place with regard to improving and integrating transition services.

Throughout 2022, JTA has continued to identify how transition services can be better connected and improved, and sought to better understand transition risk factors against the Defence/DVA-agreed Wellbeing Factors. The Directorate of Transition Coaching and Support, previously within Defence Member Family Support, integrated into the JTA on 29 September 2022. This has placed the Defence Force Transition Program under the direct control of the JTA, and reflects implementation of the JTA's full operational capability as articulated in the Government Response to the aforementioned PC Report. Progress beyond the current capability, including future service delivery options will be integrated through the JTA's business of continuous improvement.

This report provides an update of the JTA under the themes of Govern, Plan, Manage and Delivery. This is in line with the JTA's operating model. The order does not necessarily reflect their priority.

Govern

The JTA has established governance arrangements to oversee its delivery against its purpose - to ensure serving members and their families are better prepared and supported through transition from a predominantly ADF service-centred life to a predominantly civilian-centred life.

Through these governance arrangements, the JTA works in partnership with transition stakeholders across Defence, DVA and CSC to:

- a. provide strategic oversight'
- b. review the progress of key activities and decisions
- c. improve the coordination and synchronisation of resources and services across Defence, DVA and CSC.

The JTA Steering Group (SG) was established in 2021 and is responsible for oversight and integration of reforms and ensuring agencies are connected, taking a strategic view and providing advice and considering risk that is reflective of the whole transition ecosystem. The transition ecosystem refers to all stakeholders involved in a member's transition, including those within Defence and external to the Defence organisation. The JTA SG is chaired by the Technical Authority for transition within Defence, Head People Capability (HPC) and comprises membership from across Defence, as well as DVA and CSC.

Many of the decisions and oversight pertaining this report content have been via the JTA SG. HPC also provides regular reports to relevant committees, including external forums such the Ex-Service Organisation Roundtable and the Industry Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment.

The Transition Synchronisation Forum is a mechanism to assist the JTA and transition stakeholders in identifying and recommending improvements to transition policy and processes. Data is shared in this Forum so that services and support can be better targeted to transitioning members and their families.

The development of an Assurance Framework has an initial focus on areas of responsibilities that are within the JTA's technical authority (i.e. within the transition system). Over time, assurance activities will expand and incorporate a wider transition ecosystem remit. It is intended each year the assurance plan will evolve and feedback with a continuous improvement focus to a compliance driven, risk based approach to improve accountability across the transition ecosystem.

A program of assurance activities will commence in 2023. These assurance activities will be delivered under two initial Lines of Effort (LoE). Each LoE will focus on continuous improvement and feedback on the targeted activities and practices that are detailed in the ADF Transition Manual and the Veteran Transition Strategy.

Plan

The JTA conducted an Evaluation of Transition Services across ADF bases through engagement with transition stakeholders at ten ADF bases/work locations in four state/territories around Australia between March and May 2022. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify the activities undertaken by transition stakeholders to identify and source opportunities, efficiencies, gaps and duplications within the process and procedures across the transition system.

While the evaluation largely focused on Defence services there are a considerable number of touchpoints across the Defence transition system with the DVA and CSC. Accordingly, DVA and CSC were consulted and incorporated in the evaluation activity.

During the evaluation the JTA collected data across the system. The data collected will be analysed by the JTA, to inform and provide recommendations with respect to:

- a. Amendments to the ADF Transition Manual
- b. Any corrective action or opportunities for improvement and/or synchronisation
- c. Potential Service Delivery Options for transition
- d. An enduring mechanism for measurement, assurance and evaluation of the transition system.

The work conducted has provided the baseline for a routine Transition Assurance Program.

In addition to the evaluation activity above, JTA conducted 13 Transition Stakeholder Forums across Australia commencing April 2022 and concluded August 2022. A virtual Transition Stakeholder forum was presented to members located in Cairns, Wagga Wagga and the Shoalhaven in September 2022. The purpose of the forums is to educate and provide updates on improvements to the transition ecosystem about transition supports and services available.

Over recent years Defence has leveraged the Human Security Framework (HSF) in the development of transition support. The HSF is a framework underpinned by seven principles which is used to better address people's needs in a complex environment. In alignment with the HSF, Defence and DVA agreed on the following Defence/DVA Wellbeing Factors:

- a. Health
- b. Social and Support Connection
- c. Respect and Recognition
- d. Safety (inclusive of feeling safe and secure place to live and work)
- e. Employment
- f. Education and skills
- g. Income and finance.

Defence and DVA have focused their planning and continuous improvement of the transition ecosystem against the abovementioned factors. This means as Defence embeds the wellbeing risk factors across all transition coaching sessions, the data gathered is planned to be integrated more widely to enable better prioritisation and escalation of DVA claims, and feedback into the welfare management of our veterans. Some Information and Communications Technology (ICT) risk and some privacy constraints will mean limitations exist with implementation.

In concert with its partners DVA and CSC, the JTA developed a Veteran Transition Strategy that will set the transition system up to operate in an integrated and synchronised way, with a shared vision for success. Internal and external feedback from those consulted throughout 2021 were incorporated into the Strategy's development. An Action Plan against each priority will be developed in 2023.

The Veteran Transition Strategy:

- a. Aligns stakeholders on a shared definition of transition and what a successful transition looks like
- b. Sets a shared ambition for outcomes and experiences members and families should expect when transitioning
- c. Sets the priorities for the transition system to follow for the next three years.

Following JTA's mapping process to document and understand the transition system showing the processes that support transition across Defence, and their linkages to DVA and CSC, JTA worked with DVA and CSC to build their transition-related processes into the map.

Establishing this view allows the JTA to identify linkages, areas for improvement, reduce duplication, and support the transition system to become further integrated, synchronised and assured. The primary value was the enabling of a system wide view of the transition ecosystem, with stakeholders identifying both relevant synergies, and opportunities to evolve service delivery.

Manage

Mapping of the Transition System across the ecosystem in conjunction with DVA and CSC has been completed. This comprehensive process has provided the JTA an understanding of the transition system and will allow the JTA to take a systematic approach to improving transition. There were a number of recommendations from this mapping activity which have partially been implemented, some have been incorporated into longer term activities, and others have been considered and not accepted.

The JTA is working to develop a process to collect and analyse data across the transition system to identify trends, assure services are meeting the needs of the transitioning ADF members and their families, and report on performance on an ongoing basis.

Additionally, the regular sharing of transition data across Defence, DVA and CSC means the three agencies are now able to better queue their services by understanding when, where and who is transitioning at any one time. Work is also underway to capture data on risks associated with individuals who are about to transition allowing services to be targeted to these individuals.

Defence-DVA Electronic Information Exchange (DDEIE) went live on 23 May 22. This data exchange capability enables direct two way flow of personnel record data between Defence and DVA.

Defence and DVA have progressed work to develop the Defence/DVA Data Sharing and Analytical Solution (DSAS), which is underpinned by the complementary Wellbeing Framework referred to above. The DSAS and Framework aim to reduce lifetime compensation and support costs by providing insights through an evidence-based (or data driven) feedback loop, to ensure Defence leadership receives consistent and timely information with regard to health, wellbeing and safety outcomes. The DSAS will combine Defence and DVA health, safety and workforce data for serving and ex-serving ADF members to support ADF injury prevention and management, and provide insights into current and future veteran support system. The DSAS is being developed in three stages, to be completed in 2023-24.

The JTA received the four Military to Civilian Cultural Re-integration review reports commissioned in 2021 and 2022. These are ‘Selves in Transition’ (December 2021), ‘Women in Transition’ (May 2022), ‘Families in Transition’ (May 2022) and ‘Sporting Parallels’ (July 2022). JTA is now conducting a synthesis activity to evolve a broad understanding of these research outputs to better identify opportunities for future transition policy and program design.

Delivery

A refresh and update to the 2021 ADF Transition Manual (ADFTM) was carried out during 2022. The ADFTM aligns with the guiding principles developed by Defence and incorporates reforms identified to-date. The ADFTM will incorporate further reforms and business improvements as they are identified.

A feasibility study in regards to a mandatory transition course is complete. Findings include the majority of training has been incorporated into existing programs, and the capacity to formulate a transition course which adequately addresses the vast array of individual circumstances is impractical at this time. Additions to the Defence Force Transition Program expected in 2023 will address some gaps, this includes six new Defence Force Transition Program modules. Where additional gaps are identified, these are to be addressed as part of JTA’s continuous improvement activities.

Support for Reserve members transitioning became fully operational, achieving Defence’s objective of optimising the Total Workforce System to deliver transition support to all members that have a minimum of one day of service regardless of mode of service.

The total number of transitions for FY2021/22 was 7,333 across all modes of transition. This is 821 more transitions than FY2020-21 (6,512). The projected total transitions for FY2022-23 is approximately 7,700.

| Mode of transition | FY19/20 | FY20/21 | FY21/22 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Voluntary Transition | 3,323 | 3,278 | 4,111 |
| Involuntary Transition (Medical) | 1,149 | 1,769 | 1,886 |
| SERVOP-C (contract expiry) | 759 | 834 | 767 |
| Compulsory Retirement Age | 99 | 134 | 201 |
| Involuntary Transition (Administrative) | 566 | 432 | 302 |

ADF Member and Family Transition Seminars continue to be a cornerstone of Transition Service Delivery. With effect from 01 February 2022 the attendance of ADF members at an ADF Member and Family Transition Seminar within 12 months of their transition date has been mandated. This measure, originally an interim solution in response to recommendation 7.7 of the interim report of the Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, is now enduring with the Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN) updated in October 2022 to reflect the mandating of attendance within 12 months of transition. Due to increasing attendance at ADF Member and Family Transition Seminar following the introduction of the attendance mandate, the JTA will be increasing the number of Seminars from 30 to 33 for 2023. Seminars are delivered in virtual-live, virtual-static and face-to-face modalities to maximise ADF members’ opportunities to participate in these events.

The Transition for Civil Recognition Program has continued throughout 2022. This program provides a suite of comprehensive Skills Guides for civilian employers to map a veteran’s military experience against commensurate civilian qualifications. The program also conducts individual skills, training and attribute assessments for transitioning members and, through an RTO, provides members with matching accredited civilian qualifications. From 2020 year-on-year approximately 1,600 qualifications have been awarded every calendar year.

JTA continues to deliver intensive transition programming to at-risk cohorts including young (18-30 years) members, early leavers, administrative transitions and medical transitions with complex bio-social circumstances.

Transition coaching session data for FYTD2022-23 indicates a 98.4 per cent service delivery standard across all transitions for the period to 31 October 2022. This is a marked increase from the 93.5 per cent standard reported for FY2021-22.