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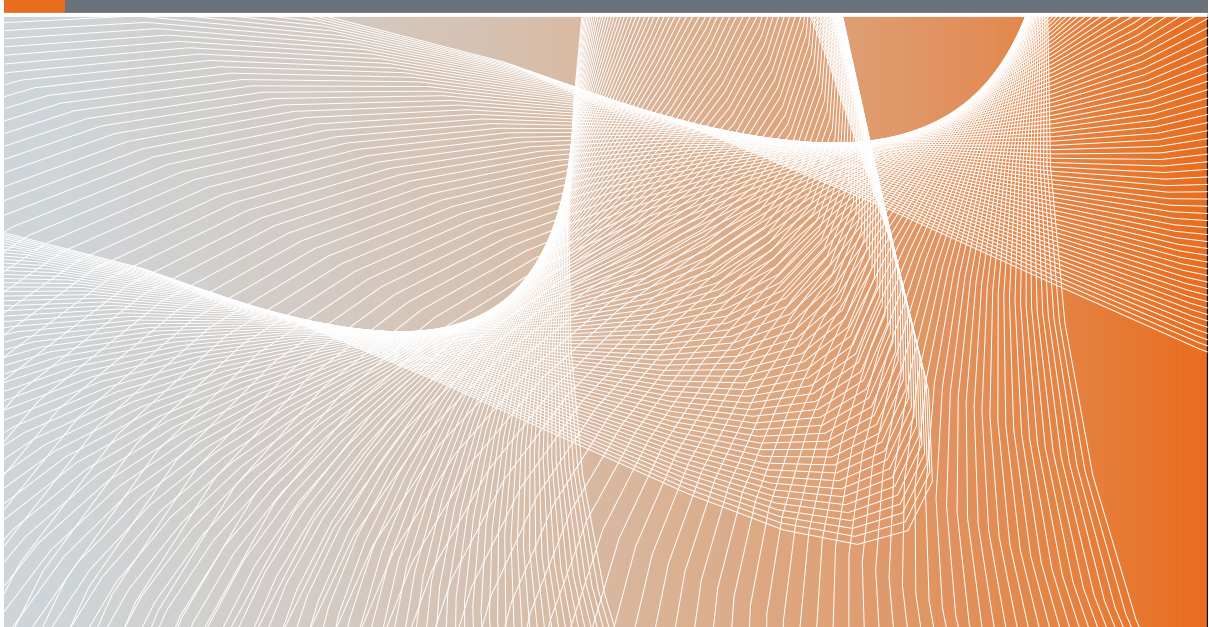
**Defence**

# Military Personnel Organisation

Joint Transition Authority (JTA)

Annual Progress Report

2022-23



November 2023

Version 1.0

**Transition**

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The journey of a member, and their family, from a predominantly ADF service-centred life to a predominantly civilian-centred life.

Acknowledgement of Country

Defence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, seas and air in which we live, work and train. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We also pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have contributed to the defence of Australia in times of peace and war.

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## 1. Introduction

The Department of Defence (Defence) acknowledges that Australian Defence Force (ADF) members, and their families, should be supported through their transition journey. The purpose of this support is to ensure that members and their families go on to lead productive and fulfilling lives, and continue to make meaningful contributions to the Australian community. The Joint Transition Authority (JTA), along with its partner agencies the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC), is committed to supporting ADF members and their families to achieve positive post-transition outcomes.

Transition from a military-centred life to a predominantly civilian-centred life can be a significant and life-changing event. Transition is a relatively smooth journey for most; however, for some it can present challenges.

In response to recommendation 7.1 of the Productivity Commission's 2019 *A Better Way to Serve Veterans* report, the JTA was established in October 2020. The JTA sits within Defence and partners with DVA and CSC to support whole-of-government efforts to synchronise, integrate and assure transition policy and practice across the Commonwealth. Throughout 2023 the JTA, and its partners, have extended their collaborative efforts to include Services Australia.

Through broad consultation, and collaboration that supports reform, the JTA is building a more connected transition system that provides members and their families with an increasingly streamlined and user-friendly experience. As the broader transition system becomes more efficient, and more responsive to the needs of members and their families, the support that is delivered is more focused, with the intent that the transition stressors associated with complex administrative burdens are increasingly relieved.

The JTA continues to drive reform within Defence at the program level, through governance arrangements that include internal and external committees, and through multiple engagement channels that seek to raise awareness, create advocacy, and shape transition policy and practice into the future. Through collaboration with partner agencies DVA and CSC, the JTA is also influencing broader transition system reform.

Member-centricity underpins JTA decision making regarding improvements to transition support. This has led the JTA to focus on member and family wellbeing through the consideration of extending, delaying, or accelerating key transition activities based on the needs of the individual member and their family.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has acknowledged that 'systemic issues with separation and transition from service' was the fifth most frequent topic arising from submissions received at the time of its Interim Report, tabled 11 August 2022 (Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report, 2022, page 33).

Delivering reform and improvements to transition practice requires on-going and productive engagements with stakeholders across all transition ecosystem touch-points. These include members, families, Chain of Command, Defence more broadly, partner Commonwealth agencies, Government, Ex-service Organisations (ESO), transition service delivery providers across the Commonwealth, states and territories, Not-For-Profits and the private sector.

The JTA has delivered system and service delivery refinements across multiple lines of effort throughout FY2022-23. However the work of improving transition policy and practice is ongoing and the FY2023-24 program of work is already underway.

## 2. Govern to oversee and enhance the transition ecosystem

JTA governance arrangements within the Defence-DVA-CSC partnership, and more broadly across whole-of-government, remain crucial to the delivery of its mission: ensuring 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 arrangements the JTA has delivered meaningful reforms, in partnership with stakeholders across whole-of-government, enhancing the integration and synchronisation of transition policy and practice.

In FY2022-23 the JTA's governance structure has included JTA Synchronisation Forums, JTA Steering Groups, the Defence Links Steering Committee and the newly formed Joint Transition Oversight Panel, led by the Secretary of DVA, the Chief of Personnel and the Deputy Secretary Defence People. These structures are supplemented by a range of continuous improvement projects and operational working groups with representatives from Defence and its partner agencies DVA and CSC. The Joint Transition Oversight Panel also includes membership from Services Australia and Department of Health.

JTA facilitated Understanding the Veteran Experience workshops during FY2022-23, with support from the single Services. These workshops have provided DVA the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of contemporary ADF service.

The JTA also routinely consults with ESOs and utilises the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) and the Commonwealth States and Territory Committee (CSTC) as a conduit for communication with the States and Territories and the veteran community post-transition. Stakeholder Engagement Forums, the CTSC and ESORT, provide the JTA with insights from across the ecosystem and support the inclusion of diverse voices in the continuous improvement of transition policy and practice.

The Veteran Transition Strategy (VTS) was released in August 2023 and will further enable the transition ecosystem to operate in an integrated and synchronised manner. The VTS, with its six distinct priorities, aligns stakeholders on a shared definition of transition, articulates a shared ambition for member and family outcomes and experiences, and sets the priorities for the transition system to follow for the next three years.

Defence, DVA, CSC, and Services Australia are undergoing a deliberate planning process to formulate a combined VTS Program Delivery Plan. This plan will include measures of effectiveness and performance that will track the health of the transition system. This activity has been combined with a previously completed functional mapping exercise that delivered a system view of the transition ecosystem, with stakeholders identifying shared equities and opportunities to evolve service delivery.

The JTA's ongoing mapping exercise has identified processes that support transition across Defence, and their linkages to DVA, CSC, and Services Australia. The JTA has subsequently continued to work with its partner agencies DVA and CSC to build their transition-related processes into the map.

### 3. Plan to design reforms to the transition experience from a veteran and family perspective

Continued refinement of the ADF Transition Manual, engagement practices, assurance activities, and regular training sessions for Transition Coaches are integrated into the JTA's business to enable the continued improvement of support to transitioning members. Transition data analytics are supporting evidence-based system and service-delivery design. The improved data analytics capability launched through a new Information Management System (March 2023) is enabling Defence to better identify areas for improvement.

Assurance activities have included an independent evaluation of Transition Coaching, the ongoing development of an assurance mechanism across the transition journey (rather than segments of the journey), and completion of an internal evaluation of Transition Seminars. These activities aid the JTA's efforts to continuously improve and to provide a level of confidence across Defence and whole-of-government in the quality of service provided.

The assurance work conducted to date has provided the baseline for a routine Transition Assurance Program. Additionally, work is currently underway to develop and undertake assurance activities by risk cohorts across the transition journey. Over time, assurance activities will expand and incorporate a wider transition system remit, including potential assurance activities which span more than one of the partner agencies (such as the Veteran Support Officer function which spans Defence and DVA).

The Human Security Framework (HSF) has been integrated in the development of transition support within Defence. The HSF is a framework underpinned by seven principles used to address transitioning member needs in a complex environment. Subsequent to the HSF, Defence and DVA agreed on the following Wellbeing Factors: Health, Social Support and Connection, Education and Skills, Employment, Spirituality, Housing, Income and Finance, Justice and Safety, and Respect and Recognition. These wellbeing factors are now embedded in transition service delivery, publications, collaterals and front-facing engagement activities. Transitioning members have their transition needs reviewed through the lens of each of the aforementioned Wellbeing Factors, with referrals to supports matched according to the needs identified.

As the JTA embeds the Wellbeing Factors throughout transition systems, the data gathered is being used to identify opportunities and gaps across the ADF Transition Program. In late 2023 Defence commenced a trial of using the information gathered to develop a Transition Readiness Summary for each individual. The Transition Readiness Summary is intended for the member and their supervisory chain to be informed of preparedness level against each of the Wellbeing Factors. Initially this has been integrated into the voluntary transition process, and contingent on feedback will be integrated into the involuntary transition process in 2024. There is opportunity available for the Wellbeing Factor data to be integrated more widely to enable better prioritisation and escalation of support provision, DVA claims, and feedback into the wellbeing management of our veterans. This will be considered in consultation with DVA.

#### 4. Manage the transition ecosystem to provide effective transition supports

The JTA is working to evolve data collection and analytics across the transition system to identify trends, assure services are meeting the needs of the transitioning ADF members and their families, report performance on an on-going basis, and build an evidence base for reform.

Regular sharing of transition data across Defence, DVA and CSC means the three agencies are now able to better cue 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 and DVA have progressed work to develop the Defence/DVA Data Sharing and Analytical Solution (DSAS), which is underpinned by a complementary Wellbeing Framework. The DSAS and Framework aim to reduce lifetime compensation and support costs by providing insights through an evidence-based (or data driven) feedback loop.

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 to support Defence and DVA's design of current and future veteran support systems. The DSAS is being achieved across four stages, and is expected to be completed in 2024. Work is underway to integrate DSAS data into the JTA Transition Readiness Summary. This is expected to occur Quarter 3 2024. DVA is also using DSAS data to build a baseline wellbeing data set.

A key program of work for the JTA during FY2022-23 has been the development of process singularity to alleviate the administrative burden on transitioning members and their families through minimising duplications and redundant touchpoints. Originally confined to Defence transition systems, the expansion of transition governance arrangements is providing opportunities to consider broader singularity goals.

The JTA manages a complex set of interconnected data sources: the Defence Force Transition Program's (DFTP) Information Management System (IMS), Transition Preparedness Questionnaires, the Post-Transition Survey, ADF Member and Family Transition Seminar Exit Surveys, transition website analytics, and traffic generated via QR Codes on JTA collaterals and merchandise. Insights and analytics contribute to JTA's strategic planning and drive program design.

In order to gain feedback on changes to transition systems and their impact, the JTA has shifted the focus of the Transition Stakeholder Forums from information delivery to interactive engagement with stakeholders across the system, to ensure that issues occurring in the regions are identified and, where necessary, rectifying actions are applied and assigned. The regional nature of each Forum informs the assurance framework by allowing the JTA to explore whether problems are local, state or national issues.

In July 2023 the JTA introduced an After-Hours Coaching capability with the support of ADF Reserve personnel who bring lived experience of transition. It is expected the After-Hours Coaching also provides greater opportunity for working families to be involved in the transition coaching process.



## 5. Deliver needs-based transition services to members and their families

The DFTP is comprised of the Defence internal services and supports that are detailed in the Defence Pay and Conditions Manual (PACMAN), the Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN), and the ADF Transition Manual, alongside a number of outsourced career-specific program elements delivered under a Transition Support Services contract. Central to these service delivery elements is the role of Transition Coach.

Transition Coaches deliver the DFTP and ensure that transitioning members complete mandatory requirements including attending a Transition Seminar, undertaking a Transition Health Examination (THE), and finalising relevant transition clearances (e.g. Unit Security Debrief, Conflict-of-Interest Declaration). Transition Coaches work with members and their families to design a bespoke curriculum of supports based on each member's circumstances, needs and post-transition goals.

The JTA utilises the Transition Preparedness Questionnaire (TPQ) suite to identify a member's transition support needs, enabling the development of more tailored ADF member transition plans. The TPQs are undertaken at the time of the transition decision (be it member initiated or Service initiated), at two weeks prior to transition, and at six months following transition. After an 18-month trial and external validation, the JTA Steering Group endorsed the TPQ in May 2023.

The introduction of the TPQ has operationalised the Defence-DVA Wellbeing Factors, providing Transition Coaches with detailed circumstance, preparedness and satisfaction data across each of the wellbeing touchpoints. These insights support the creation of an individualised plan of supports specific to member and family circumstances and post-transition goals. Alignment of the Wellbeing Factors across Defence and DVA supports continuity of service delivery and continuity of care as members move through the Defence system and into the DVA system.

Service delivery reforms in 2022-23 have occurred from a strong evidence-base, and with consideration of their potential impact on broader system policy and practice. Reforms include implementation of six new DFTP meaningful engagement and social connectivity modules, expansion of access to coaching modules for serving members who have not yet commenced the transition process (see below – Transition at a Glance), expanded eligibility parameters for Career Transition Training funding to include meaningful engagement activities. In addition to these developments, under the DVA Wellbeing Package Veteran Employment Program, Defence undertook an expansion of civil recognition program to include micro-credentialing and advanced standing towards identified tertiary courses.

As part of the DFTP, transitioning members have access to up to 23 days leave to support employment upon transition (20 Days) and transition administration (three days). In late 2023, the JTA Steering Group endorsed a proposal to the provision of up to five days for the purpose of transition administration. This is expected policy will be amended in 2024.

Operational reforms undertaken in FY2022-23 include the expansion of required Transition Coach qualifications to include 'equivalent CERT IV' and/or minimum of four years ADF experience within the last five years, the creation of an After Hours Transition Coaching capability which is enabling increased participation, and the roll out of the Transition

Preparedness Questionnaire suite into business-as-usual, enabling tailoring and mapping to transition supports. A re-designed health and claims process at CSC is also providing improved outcomes to transitioning ADF members. An Enhanced Veteran Support Officer Pilot at DVA is assisting veterans and their families with personalised support in navigating DVA claims administration.

The 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. The JTA has also developed a Command Checklist tool (ready reckoner) for the transitioning member's Chain-of-Command to utilise to assist an individual with their transition. This will be integrated with the Transition Readiness Summary and Individual Welfare management practices and policies in 2024.

Through the data referred to above, the JTA has identified opportunities for improvement in terms of Respect and Recognising a member's ADF service. The JTA Steering Group has endorsed the provision of a medallion and a testimonial/reference to each transitioning member at a farewell function. This practice is expected to be operationalised with supporting logistics systems and policies in Quarter 1 of 2024.

## 6. Transition at a Glance

Mode of Separation or Transfer	FY21-22	FY22-23	+/- %
Voluntary	4,111	4,144	+0.8%
Medical	1,886	1,881	-0.3%
SERVOP C/CFTS	767	669	-12.8%
Administrative	302	243	-19.5%
Compulsory Retirement	201	132	-34.3%
Command-initiated transfer to Reserves	56	51	-8.9%
Redundancy	10	1	-90.0%
Total	7,333	7,121	-2.9%

Note 1: Numbers include Gap Year, and those who have undertaken Continuous Full Time Service Contracts (known as SERVOP-C)

Note 2: Data sourced through HR Data Warehouse (HRDW) and the Information Management System (IMS)

Key Metrics	FY21-22	FY22-23	+/- %
Total Permanent/Full-time Member Transitions	7,333	7,121	- 2.9 %
Transitioning Member Transfers to SERCATs 3, 4 and 5	2,606	2,552	- 2.2 %
Transition Planning Sessions	7,039	7,107	+ 0.9 %
Total Transition Coaching Sessions	32,419	37,246	+14.9 %
Post-Transition Follow-ups	6,675	7,133	+ 6.9 %
Career Transition Training (CTT) Program Referrals	3,049	5,958	+95.4 %
Career Transition Coaching (CTC) Program Referrals	2,817	4,508	+ 55.5%
In-Service Career Transition Coaching (CTC) Referrals	0	507	+100.0%
Transition For Employment Referrals	486	342	- 29.6 %
Personalised Career and Employment Program Referrals	153	147	- 3.9 %
Face-to-Face, Virtual Live and Virtual Static Seminars	31	41	+ 32.3%
Members and Guests Who Attended Seminars	5,496	7,093	+ 29.1%
Stallholders Across National Annual Seminar Program	1,147	894	- 22.1%
Reserve member Transitions	193	574	+197.4%

Note 3: Numbers include Gap Year, and those who have undertaken Continuous Full Time Service Contracts (known as SERVOP-C)

Note 4: Data sourced through HR Data Warehouse (HRDW) and the Information Management System (IMS)

## 7. Programs of Work

Defence collects extensive information to help better support the member on their transition journey. Defence and DVA are exploring how to utilise ADF transition risk information to support DVA's identification, prioritisation and escalation of claims for at-risk transitioning ADF members. The exploration of this initiative is at an early stage. Addressing consent arrangements and facilitating exchange of sensitive personal information remain key matters.

There are numerous functional areas where the integration and synchronisation of services needs improvement. The development of a shared Veteran Transition Strategy Program Delivery Plan will ensure a deliberate approach is taken to understanding the gaps through effectiveness and performance data, and then addressing each issue through a common prioritisation process that harnesses the finite resources available to each agency.

Transition communications are crucial to member, stakeholder and Command awareness of transition supports, and to the creation of advocacy for transition systems and service delivery. To support these objectives, the JTA is developing an enhanced suite of communications products that include a revised transition website, introduction of new social media channels, and greater engagement with Service newspapers. Consultation with partner agencies DVA and CSC will inform the development of these products.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide is expected to hand down its final report in mid-late 2024. The JTA anticipates that the final report will include findings and recommendations that will impact transition systems and service delivery.