

Australian Veteran Opportunity Report

No veteran left behind.



What's Inside

The Australian Veteran Opportunity Report, powered by LinkedIn insights, is a social impact report that explores veteran transition to the civilian workforce.

The transferability of experience gained by veterans during their time in the military is often overlooked and this can affect a veteran's post-service journey.

The report outlines simple changes employers can make to hiring practices to better support our veterans.

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Introduction

Veterans are an exceptional pool of talent.



Inclusive companies stand to benefit.

Across the Australian Defence Force (Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army and Royal Australian Air Force) approximately 5,500 personnel leave the military each year and transition to civilian life¹.

This is a talented pool of individuals with a wealth of experience and transferrable skills, working across more than 200 different roles in the ADF¹.

“Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel are among the most highly trained and capable workforce in the world — they can adapt quickly to solve challenging problems, and have the professionalism, dedication and leadership skills that make them an asset to any organisation.

With the average career in the ADF now around eight years, veterans are transitioning to the civilian workforce and are ready to contribute to businesses across the nation.”



The Hon Darren Chester MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs and
Minister for Defence Personnel

Veterans need to overcome the network gap.

When it comes to securing a job, networks matter. LinkedIn measures network strength based on the size and openness of an individual's network.

A year after leaving the ADF, the average veteran has 90% more connections than a civilian in their first year of work post-study.

While veterans have large networks, they tend to be closed, meaning they are more likely to be connected to other veterans.

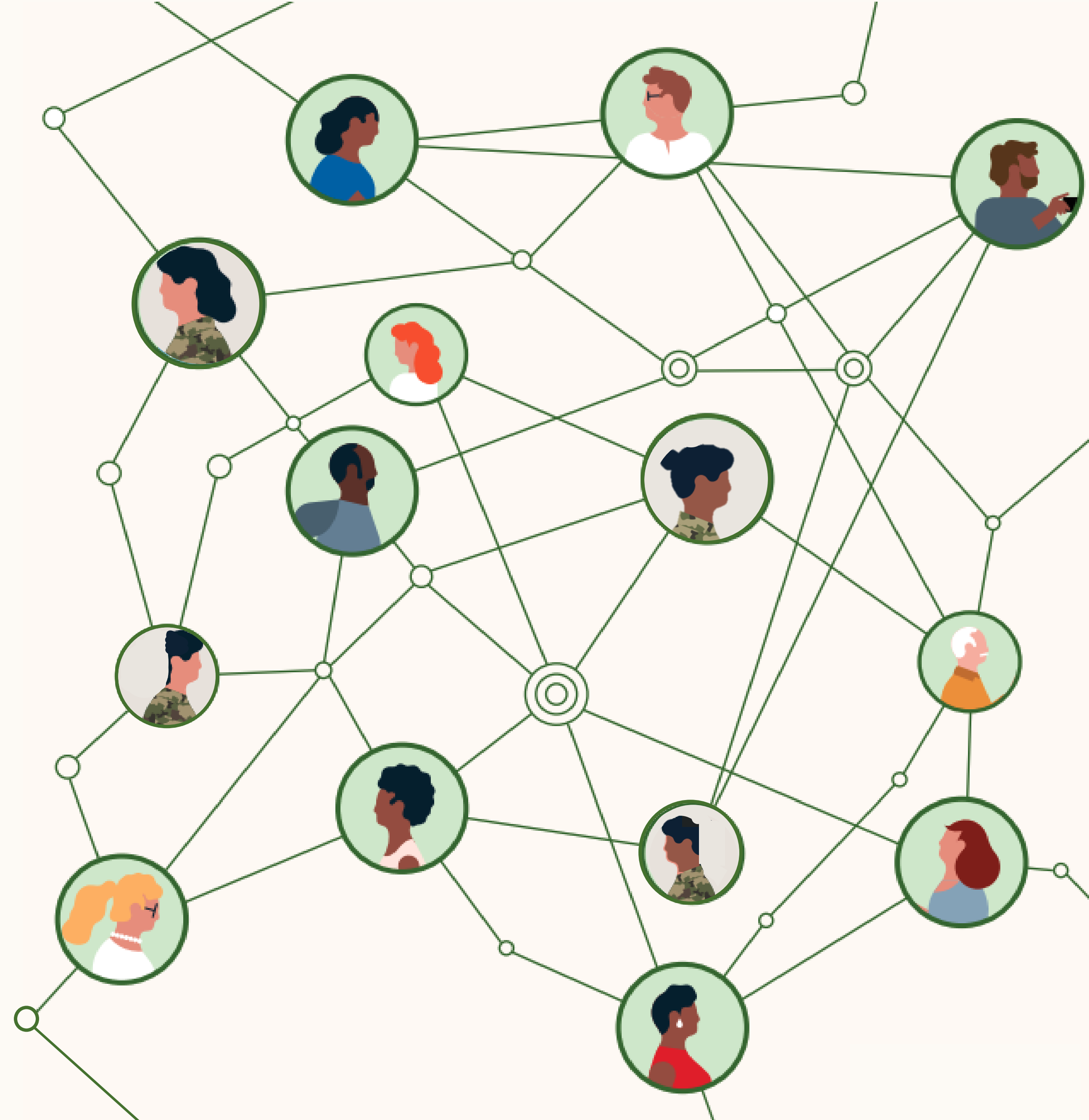
Civilians, by contrast, have more open networks and often lack connections with the veteran community.

This civilian-military divide can be categorised as a 'network gap'.



31%

of a veteran's network is other ADF veterans.



Veterans have transferrable skills and a willingness to learn.

For many employers, a willingness to learn is a highly prized attribute among job seekers.

Veterans are eager to learn, with LinkedIn data showing that **the average veteran gains 19 skills each year**. That's two more than a university graduate, who develops an average of 17 skills a year.

Common transferrable skills among veterans include leadership, management, operational planning and project management.

With this transferrable skillset, veterans commonly move into technical or coordination focused roles, including Project Manager, Operations Manager, Software Engineer and System Engineer.

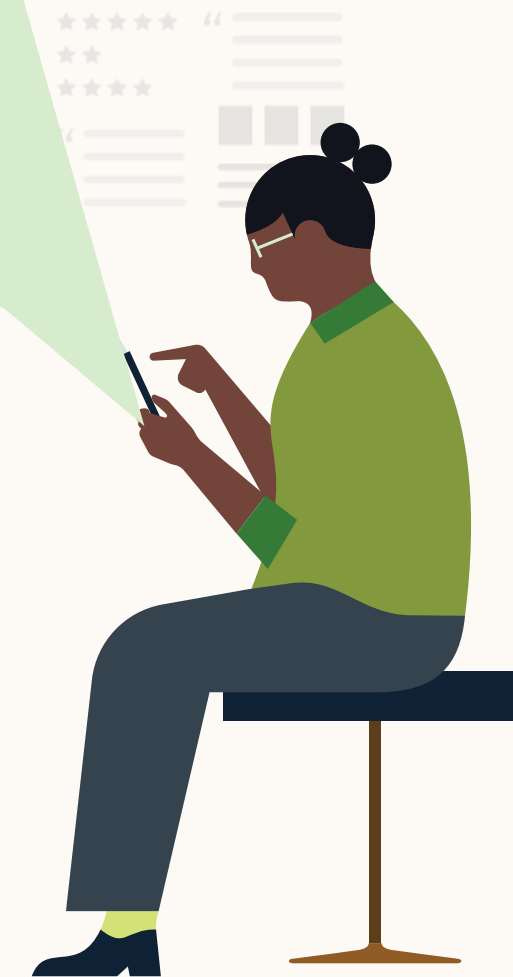
+2 more skills per year
are developed by veterans in
comparison to university leavers.

Transferrable skills of veterans

1. Leadership
2. Management
3. Operational Planning
4. Project / Program Management
5. Microsoft Office
6. Operations Management
7. Project Planning
8. Risk Management
9. Change Management
10. Strategic Planning

Top roles veterans move into

1. Project Manager
2. Operations Manager
3. Administrative Assistant
4. Electronic Technician
5. Pilot
6. Communications Specialist
7. Software Engineer
8. Operational Specialist
9. Chef
10. System Engineer



Veterans experience challenges transitioning despite their employability.

LinkedIn data shows it takes female veterans 1.6x longer to find a role than their male counterparts. The time taken to secure another job is not from lack of skills, as the average veteran has 90% more work experience than their civilian counterparts and once hired, are 23% more likely to be promoted. Not only do veterans need to overcome the network gap, employers also need to understand the transferability of military work experience and its relevance in the civilian workforce.

Time to transition

Female veterans take **1.6x** longer to find a role post service than male veterans

7 months for a male ADF veteran



11 months for a female ADF veteran



Employability

In comparison to civilians:

- Veterans have **90%** more work experience
- Veterans are **23%** more likely to be promoted earlier



Veterans need more support from employers.

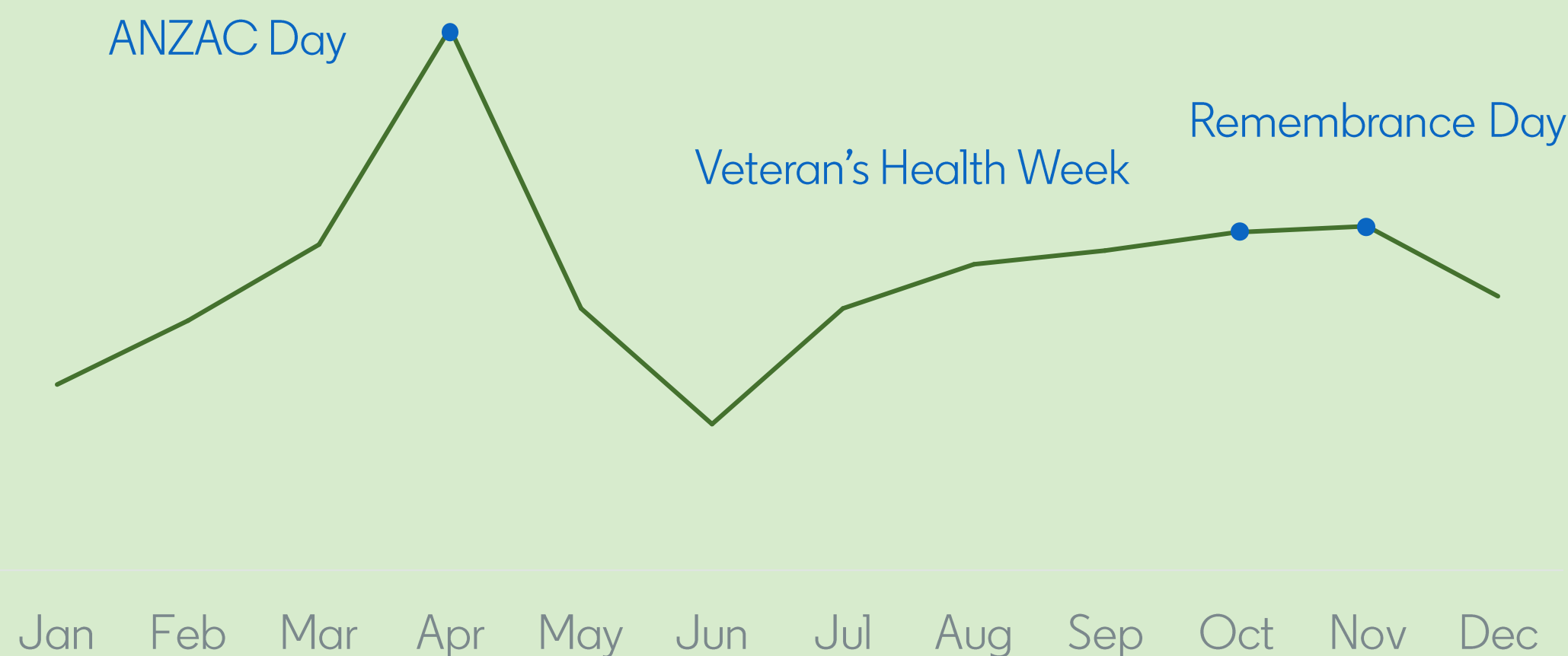
While veterans are the centre of attention on ANZAC Day, during Veteran's Health Week and Remembrance Day, LinkedIn posts mentioning veterans are uncommon outside of those periods.

Companies that post about veterans all year round tend to be organisations founded by veterans, government organisations and charities that specifically support veterans.

Organisations can do more to support the veteran community throughout the year.

While diversity hiring is a hot topic for many employers, more organisations can think about how to incorporate veteran hiring into their diversity programs. Trident Services and Downer are examples of two organisations doing just this.

Number of Companies posting about Veterans



Companies posting most about veterans are:

- ✓ Organisations founded by veterans
- ✓ Government organisations
- ✓ Veteran supporting charities

“

My mantra is ‘recruit for attitude, train for skill’.

When you’re interviewing a veteran, you need to look at it with a lateral mindset. If you’re looking for, say an electrician, a veteran might be one subject short or they don’t have the civilian accreditation. They’ve probably got years of experience being an electrician in an austere environment where they have to be adaptable.

If we need to help them get their certificate to get the accreditation for high voltage or whatever it may be then we can do that because what they also bring is a whole heap of other experience particularly in the leadership and teamwork space.

Once a veteran has found their niche, generally speaking they will be loyal, and that company will have them for a very long time.



Sue McGready
General Manager Strategy, Relationships
and Growth, Downer Defence Systems

Downer

is a founding member
of the Australian Veterans
Employers Coalition.

Sue McGready is the General Manager Strategy, Relationships and Growth at Downer Defence Systems. She believes that veterans are pool of exceptional talent that inclusive companies should be taking advantage of, and the myth out there that all veterans are broken is wrong.



Trident Services pledges to support veterans through **Soldier On.**

"Each industry has its own network which they typically hire from within. For veterans, it's difficult to break the mantra of 'I've never done anything like this before, but please read my résumé'.

At Trident Services, all opinions matter. Everyone gets a seat at the table."



Blake Simmons
Executive General Manager,
Retail and Commercial, Trident Services

As part of its commitment to equal employment opportunities, Trident Services signed a pledge in 2018 to support veterans through charity Soldier On Australia's Pathways Program.

"We will aim to ensure that no man or woman who has served for our country, or their family, faces disadvantage in gaining employment because of their service to our nation. We will support their future as they have supported ours."

The program provides free employment support and enables veterans to secure their future careers in collaboration with supportive companies.

Soldier On Program Pathways Director, John Hardgrave, says "businesses can help by taking the time to identify veteran applicants and give applications extra time and consideration in regards to transferable skills a veteran will bring to the organisation."



Conclusion

Employers, help bridge the civilian-military divide.



Veterans are educated, willing members of the workforce and an untapped pool of exceptional talent.

Diversity matters, include veterans

Include veterans in diversity, inclusion and belonging initiatives. Whenever possible, include service members on hiring and interview panels, and leverage veteran hiring managers.

Think skills, not qualifications

By asking applicants for their transferable skills as opposed to their qualifications, you're being inclusive of on-the-job training that can be common among veterans.

Shift the focus

Conduct an audit of your current veteran-hiring program and identify where in the hiring process veterans are most likely to be removed from the hiring funnel.

Raise awareness and collaborate

Develop programs and share best practices to elevate hiring managers' understanding of the value of a veteran's experience. Consider partnering with a veteran support organisation to help find the talent you need.

Celebrate successes

Share your positive experiences with veterans, to create a network that outwardly welcomes veterans and encourage others to do the same.

Conclusion

Veterans, advice when looking to transition.

"Leaving the security of a military career and moving into the civilian world can be a scary time, so it is important to get the right support around you as you make the transition.

The additional benefit of asking for help is that it can help you build a new network in your future career as well.

Some things veterans can do to open up their network is to get in touch with leaders in the field they wish to work in and ask their advice about how they might recommend a successful transition can be made.

Ask for advice on how to translate some of the military terms for your expertise and skills into the language of the sector you want to work in.

It is also worth finding other military veterans who have successfully built a civilian career after their military service and asking for them for advice as that will also help build new relationships and create others."



Kirstin Ferguson
Former Royal Australian Air Force Officer and
Non Executive Director, SCA Property Group



Acknowledgements

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- The Hon Darren Chester MP Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel
- Sue McGready of Downer – General Manager Strategy, Relationships and Growth, Downer Defence Systems
- Blake Simmons of Trident Services – Executive General Manager, Retail and Commercial
- John Hardgrave of Soldier On – Director, Pathways Program
- Kirstin Ferguson of SCA Property Group – Non Executive Director

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Methodology

Veterans

An ADF veteran was defined as any member on the platform who has:

1. Attended a military school; OR
2. Worked for the Australian Army, Royal Australian Navy or Royal Australian Airforce; OR
3. Works/worked for the Department of Defence in a military role

Network

‘Network’ refers to a member’s connections on the LinkedIn platform. The network analysis on slide 3 compares veterans who had completed a bachelor’s degree (by the time they had left the ADF) against university leavers.

Skills

The skills added by a veteran in the years proceeding their service were compared against the skills added by a civilian university leaver in the years proceeding their education.

Transition

Transition time was calculated as the median time veterans take to find their first role after service.

Experience

Veteran experience considers the time worked by veterans both during and after service.

LinkedIn