



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE

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BETTER TRANSITION OUTCOMES FOR VETERANS

AUSTRALIAN Defence Force (ADF) personnel transitioning from military to civilian life will be better supported with \$17.7 million provided for the establishment of the Joint Transition Authority (JTA) as announced in the 2020–21 Budget.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said all ADF personnel make this transition at some point in their career, and supporting their ongoing health and wellbeing is a priority for the Australian Government.

“Transitioning from the ADF is a significant life event and we want to ensure it can be made as smooth as possible. The JTA will ensure ADF members and their families are prepared and supported through transition from military to civilian life,” Mr Chester said.

“The Government has recognised the importance of getting the transition right for ADF personnel and their families, and the JTA builds on improvements made to the transition system in recent years.”

Since 2017, Defence has significantly improved transition and now all ADF members with at least one day of permanent service can access comprehensive support for up to 24 months after they leave. Support is based on individual needs, and additional support is provided to younger, at-risk members and those transitioning medically with complex needs.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) also has Veterans Support Officers located on more than 55 Defence bases across Australia, offering face-to-face, personalised advice to support members with their transition to civilian life, such as assistance registering with DVA or advice on available pathways to additional support or help with entitlements.

“Since 2016, ADF personnel who have joined or transitioned from Defence are automatically registered with DVA and provided with a Veteran White Card, providing access to a fully-funded comprehensive health assessment every year for five years and access to free mental health care for the rest of their lives,” Mr Chester said.

“The JTA will build on these improvements to ensure all transition services and support mechanisms are working together for the benefit of transitioning ADF personnel and their families.”

The JTA will operate within the Department of Defence and partner with DVA and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation. Over the coming months, the transition system will be reviewed to identify where improvements can be made, including opportunities to better integrate services and share information.

Brigadier Wade Stothart DSC, AM, CSC has been appointed as the Director General, Joint Transition Authority and will lead the consultation process. He has significant operational and personnel staff experience. BRIG Stothart has overseen the Army workforce generation systems, including transitions and employability classifications.

The authority will work closely with organisations, including ex-service organisations that deliver transition support services to veterans. This will include input into the review of the transition system. More information will be available in due course.

The establishment of the JTA acts on Recommendation 7.1 from the Productivity Commission report, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*, and is a vital part of ensuring ADF personnel are provided the appropriate support during this crucial life event.

The funding provides for the JTA to:

- improve service delivery and transition, including connection with medical professionals in civilian life
- enhance programs which can be accessed by individuals when they need them
- through a whole-of-system approach, deliver a more connected transition for ADF members and their families, catering to their individual needs
- identify opportunities, address gaps, integrate existing services and influence new ones as they are developed
- undertake stakeholder consultation on the final functions and design of the JTA.

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