

VETERAN ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

**Employee wellbeing
results in effective and
successful employer
outcomes.**

DEFENCE INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, 2022

RESEARCH REPORT

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	5
PROBLEM SPACE	8
INDUSTRY RESEARCH.....	9
DIMENSIONS OF WELLBEING.....	9
SOCIAL WELLNESS	10
SPIRITUAL WELLNESS.....	10
EMOTIONAL WELLNESS	10
OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS	10
INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS.....	10
ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS.....	10
PHYSICAL WELLNESS.....	11
FINANCIAL WELLNESS.....	11
WELLBEING PROGRAMS GENERAL.....	12
WELLBEING PROGRAMS REVIEW.....	13
VETERAN WELLBEING	15
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	18
CONCLUSION.....	21
WHERE TO NEXT?	22
REFERENCES	23
WELLBEING CALENDAR 2023.....	26

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DISCLAIMER

The contents of this research report are the opinions and conclusions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the author's organisations, the contributors, the contributors' organisations, the DILP or the Defence Teaming Centre (DTC).

SHARING GUIDELINES

It is the ambition of all those who contributed to this project that the findings of this research report are shared, used to benefit others, and to implement policies and practices which promote the betterment of wellbeing across the Defence Industry.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Veterans transitioning from military service to civilian occupations often face a number of challenges. There are some common challenges of transition from military service, and others specific to experience. The challenges relating to specific experience can vary based on the experience or time in service of the veteran, the rank or level of attainment achieved, if the veteran left by own will or via a medical discharge. Furthermore, the transitioning experience varies based on transitioning agents or organisations experienced, as well as the employment seeking experience, processes and culture of the new civilian employer that the veteran engages with.

This study examines the transition of veterans to civilian business and within this examination reviews civilian business people processes, wellbeing programs, and employee assistance that can, not only support the veteran to transition successfully, translating relevant Defence Skills appropriately, but to indeed flourish in work and life. This study explores, what has worked, what are the challenges, and what has not worked for transitioning veterans.

Through this research and examination though, it is clear that many of the issues faced by transitioning veterans are also faced by others who have not had military service or background. So, what are the similarities and what are the differences and how does industry account for both veteran and non-veteran wellbeing?

Furthermore, why is wellbeing important to industry including Defence Industry? This research looks at the management of workplace wellbeing generally, by examining wellbeing research, contemporary wellbeing and employee assistance programs in Australia, and provides recommendations so that Defence Industry and its veteran and non-veteran employees can flourish.

INTRODUCTION

People spend on an average nearly a third of their adult life at the workplace. Employment and working conditions have powerful effects on mental and physical health equity. Good working conditions can (World Health Organization, 2017):

- provide employees with social protection and status;
- improve social relations and self-esteem of employees;
- provide personal and professional development opportunities; and
- provide protection from exposure to physical and psychosocial risks.

Collectively, this can lead to positive health effects. The health and wellbeing of employees is an essential prerequisite for workplace productivity, household income and socioeconomic advancement. This is why it is of utmost importance that employers actively contribute to the wellbeing of employees (World Health Organization, 2017).

WHAT IMPACTS THE HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES?

Based on the conditions of employment, occupation and their position in the workplace hierarchy, employees may be subject to communicable physical and psychosocial ailments. Some of the most common physical ailments include chronic respiratory diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, noise-induced hearing loss and skin problems (World Health Organization, 2017). These are a result of exposure to heat, noise, dust, hazardous chemicals, unsafe machines, and/or physical strain. Some of the most common psychosocial ailments include stress, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. The development of these work-related communicable physical and/or psychosocial ailments can aggravate other health problems which can result in the development of work-related noncommunicable ailments include cardiovascular diseases and depression caused by occupational stress (World Health Organization, 2017).

These ailments, work-related and/or personal can lead to lost productivity, absenteeism, high levels of stress and anxiety, employee turnover, accidents, and critical incidents all of which impacts negatively on employers and can have financial repercussion (Better Place Australia, 2020).

RECENT GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

The outbreak of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and subsequent spread to all continents around the world has had a significant impact on society, economy and businesses (Deloitte, 2022a). Although humankind is now on the road to recovery, this pandemic has affected the attitudes of employees towards work and psychology of employees to a certain extent, and their work-related stress has also augmented accordingly (Lai et al. 2022). This has aggravated problems within the work environment such as work dissatisfaction, reduced engagement, burnout, quiet quitting, and changed

priorities which have caused increased turnover of employees across all industries (Lai et al. 2022; ABC News 2022; Deloitte, 2022b).

HOW DO EMPLOYERS EXERCISE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

Employers are increasingly establishing within their workplace an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), to ensure their employees and their families have access to professional assistance for work-related and/or personal issues that impact on their employment or work performance (Better Place Australia, 2020). Providing access to voluntary and confidential assistance with qualified psychologists, social workers or counsellors can lead to improvements in the wellbeing and mental health of employees which will improve workplace culture and increase staff morale, performance and productivity (Better Place Australia, 2020).

CHALLENGES WITHIN THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE SECTOR

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE AND AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

The Australian Department of Defence (ADoD) has committed \$38b to increase the permanent ADF roles by 30% to over 80,000 by the year 2040 (Sydney Morning Herald, 2022). During 2020-21, the ADF recruited more than 8,000 personnel to permanent and Reserve roles in the ADF, which only accounted for 90% of permanent force targets being filled (Australian Department of Defence, 2021). Furthermore, across 2020-21 the Australian Defence Force (ADF) faced an increase in separations from 9.0% to 9.5% and the Australian Public Service (APS) saw an increase in separations over the year, from 9.4% to 11.2% (Australian Department of Defence, 2021).

The unique work environments and associated challenges placed on the ADF personnel can lead to the potential for exposure to physical and psychological injuries. . The rates of both military and non-military related traumas are higher in the ADF than in the Australian community. It has been estimated that in Australia, rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are significantly higher in current serving current serving military personnel (8.3%), and former serving military (17.7%) than they are in the general community (7.3%) (Koenen et al., 2017; Van Hooff, Lawrence-Wood, et al., 2018; Australian Department of Defence, 2021). Between 5,500 to 6,500 ADF members transition out of service every year (Royal Commission, 2022). There are three main reasons for ADF personnel to transition out of service life, these include on medical grounds (27.2%), disciplinary reasons (~5%) or because of career opportunities or retirement (67.8%) (Royal Commission, 2022). The collective impact of these factors means that the ADoD faces numerous ongoing strategic challenges which includes (Australian Department of Defence, 2021):

- to meet targets in STEM and in some specialist professions and trades;
- to attract the required numbers of women and First Nations Australians;
- to recruit permanent, part-time and reserves into the ADF;
- to provision flexible work arrangements;

- to support the transitioning of serving members into civilian lives;
- to support veterans and their families with the challenges post discharge.

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE INDUSTRY

The Australian Defence industry has been considerably more insulated from the global impact of COVID-19. Nevertheless, most Defence industry employers are presently experiencing an attrition rate of between 10% and 15%. Collectively, the Australian Defence industry employs nearly 42,000 individuals. It is expected that in 2022, this figure will grow by 8.8% through the establishment of nearly 3,700 new roles (Kinexus, 2022). Employers need to prepare for recruitment to not only support workforce growth but also for the replacements of existing workers lost through attrition (Kinexus, 2022).

Workforce growth is being driven by SMEs, consultancies and industry primes alike. Much of the demand is for permanent workers and employers are more frequently considering contracted workers to meet surge requirements (Kinexus, 2022). This is an issue because there is a presently a significant shortage of skilled employees across all industries of Australia. The Defence industry is struggling in particular due to the requirement for potential employees to possess niche technical and non-technical skills, to hold security clearances, and due to non-competitive remuneration.

PROBLEM SPACE

The Australian Defence sector includes serving members, ex-serving members and civilians, whether they are behind a desk, on a base, at sea, on the ground or in the sky. These people are solving some of the most complex problems in a world which is becoming increasingly dynamic, uncertain, and more interconnected than ever before (Department of Defence, 2022). While these individuals are finding solutions to some of the most intricate issues facing Defence today, they are facing a host of strenuous challenges themselves which impacts upon their state of mental and physical wellbeing.

Veterans in particular, face unique challenges as a result of their service. Following discharge and transition to the civilian community, veterans who have had a very clear purpose are confronted with finding a new identity and purpose, an unfamiliar and complex social system and social norms and translating their military experience to the civilian employment context. Further to this, as the profile of a veteran is becoming more diverse, veterans face many different needs to those of previous generations.

To understand the challenges related to employee wellbeing and more specifically that of veterans more extensively, through their participation in the Defence Teaming Centre's (DTC) Defence Industry Leadership Program (DILP) and with support from the Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESHA), the authors of this research report have developed this research report. The research report is based on the following problem statement provided by MESHA:

“Organisations within the Defence Industry have been reporting issues of high dissatisfaction and poor wellbeing sporadically over the preceding years. To address this and to ensure growth, the industry needs to establish a wellbeing program that looks to incorporate existing EAP services and HR practices with industry trends to ensure attraction, retention, veteran transition and engagement, onboarding and wellbeing for all employees. The Leadership team have established and assigned a project team to engage the Australian Defence Industry and investigate these issues and provide them with recommendations on how to address this across the industry.”

INDUSTRY RESEARCH

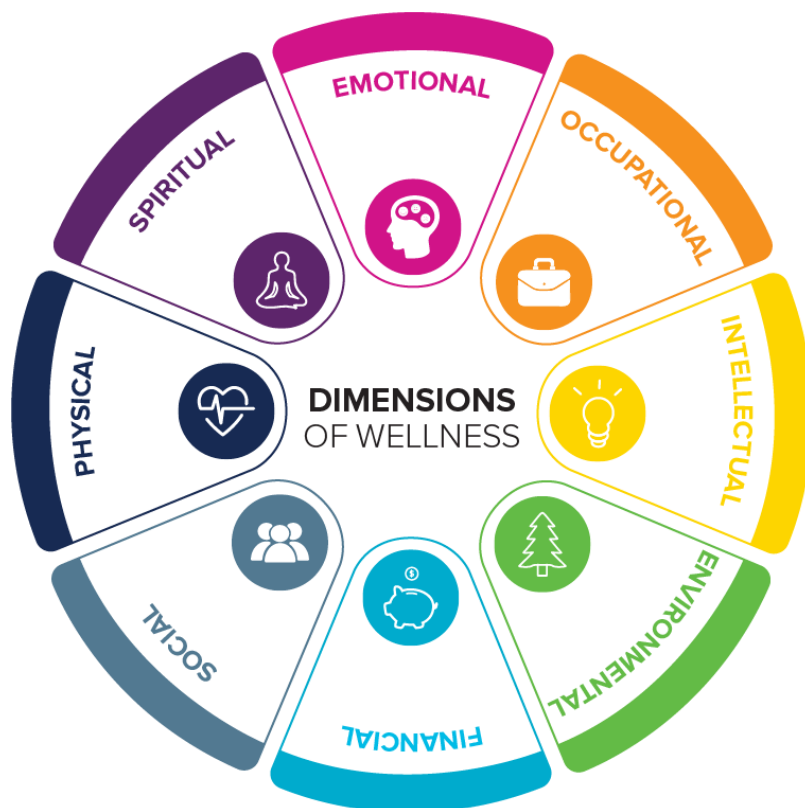
DIMENSIONS OF WELLBEING

Wellbeing has been defined as the combination of how a person perceives their life, and their experience of positive emotions such as contentment and happiness. A state of one's wellness has a direct impact on their wellbeing, and wellness encompasses physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions amongst others and it is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organisation, 2022).

"Wellness is the complete integration of body, mind, and spirit - the realization that everything we do, think, feel, and believe has an effect on our state of well-being."

Greg Anderson

Western and eastern philosophies alike have agreed that humans transcend body and mind, extending into the spiritual realm. The findings of the research conducted over the preceding years have shown that these three aspects of wellness can be further differentiated into eight dimensions which includes (UC Davis, 2022): (1) Emotional; (2) Occupational; (3) Intellectual; (4) Environmental; (5) Financial; (6) Social; (7) Physical; and (8) Spiritual, as shown in the figure below.





SOCIAL WELLNESS

Social wellness relates to the building and nurturing of meaningful and supportive relationships with individuals, colleagues, groups, and communities. Such wellness includes an understanding of correct social behaviours, conflict management, prejudice and bias, and showing respect to oneself and others.



SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Being in sync with one's spirit or inner self is the manifestation of spiritual wellbeing. Everyone has an identity and set of beliefs that helps determine the purpose of their lives.



EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Emotional wellness involves developing an awareness of one's inner feelings and one's response to everyday interactions. The better the understanding, the better one can actively respond to these feelings.



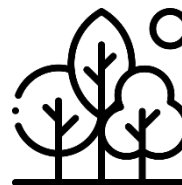
OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS

An important aspect of wellbeing is the importance of, satisfaction in, and the understanding of the meaning through work. Occupational wellness is the exploration of career opportunities, career improvement, and the encouragement to pursue these opportunities.



INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

Being a lifelong student helps foster one's intellect and creativity. Intellectual wellness is the encouragement to engage in creative and mentally stimulating activities which can be developed through academic endeavours, cultural and community involvement, along with personal hobbies and interest.



ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS

Realising the intimate relationship of humans with nature and valuing the dependence upon it along with a respectful consideration to all other species lead to this aspect of wellbeing. This aspect of wellness extends into the

immediate work environment and how it allows individuals and teams to flourish.



PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Physical wellness being the ability to maintain a quality of life that allows you to get the most out of your daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress. Simply put, being physically healthy with nourishing habits and

proven daily routines to suit individual lifestyle is what physical wellness is about.



FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Finance plays a critical role in all our lives. Understanding and managing its importance and limitations can help determine one's financial goals. Once these goals are clear, one can better manage personal finances; leading to financial wellbeing.

Work makes up a significant portion of a person's day to day life. It is important that organisations directly and/or indirectly contribute to the person's wellbeing through one or many dimensions of wellness. Within the workplace, psychosocial factors including job design, social, organisational, and management aspects of work have the potential to positively impact a person's health and wellbeing (Cox & Griffiths, 2005). This will ensure employee job satisfaction, support job retention, motivate progression, and fundamentally maximize the performance of the employee.

Conversely, the lack of wellness or wellbeing can have significant negative connotations for a person. Within the workplace, these connotations manifest as psychosocial hazards and risks, and any such risks need to be identified, and eliminated or minimized so far as reasonably practicable by the employer (Australian Government, 2019). These psychosocial hazards and risks need to be effectively managed otherwise they increase the risk of work-related psychological and physical injuries, incidents, and/or accidents (SafeWork NSW, 2021).

Consequently, prioritizing wellbeing within the workplace not only benefits organisations with the management of psychosocial hazards and risks, but also positively impact the lives of its employees.

WELLBEING PROGRAMS GENERAL

Wellness or the feeling of wellbeing is complex in nature, within the context of the unique and challenging Australian Defence environment we also want to shine the light on the veteran experience. Wellbeing programs would need to account for and assist individuals that may be struggling not only with difficult work challenges but also their personal circumstance(s). Consequently, there is no specific wellbeing program that meets the unique requirements of everyone within the Australian Defence environment. However, there are many dimensions that can be factored into existing programs that can lead to positive psychology and a heightened state of wellbeing.

“Wellbeing isn’t as straight forward as just being happy. Wellbeing looks at lots of different elements that make us complex humans tick.”

- Black Dog Institute

Wellbeing is amalgamation of five factors that contributes to human flourishing and provide positive psychology (Seligman, 2011). These five factors are:

- Positive Emotion;
- Engagement;
- Relationships;
- Meaning; and
- Accomplishment.

Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life worth living and considering this concept with regard to the factors above influence wellbeing (Peterson, Clark & Sweeney, 2008).

Understanding these positive psychological factors and building them and building onto them, will allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Whilst these theories are mostly academic, translation into concepts that can be applied within a business framework and wellbeing program is required. The concepts of wellbeing introduced in this section, along with the eight dimensions of wellness introduced in the preceding section can be taken further by applying underlying principles for psychological wellbeing not only in wellbeing programs, but in every day management functions and company people processes (Cook 2022; Grenville-Cleave et al. 2021).

These underlying principles for psychological wellbeing are (Grenville-Cleave et al. 2021):

- Feeling connected to others;
- Having a sense of autonomy;
- Feeling competent;
- Paying attention to what’s working; and
- Having a sense of meaning.

WELLBEING PROGRAMS REVIEW

In exploring the dimensions of wellness along with wellbeing programs it can be drawn that the need for wellbeing programs that encompass a multi-dimensional approach is important. Research is providing clear evidence that employee wellbeing matters for sustained organisational success, higher individual and organizational performance, improved productivity, improved collaboration, increased cognitive flexibility, and increased creativity (De Neve et al. 2013). Wellbeing programs, therefore, have a positive effect on not only on individuals but also the organization itself.

Numerous companies across Australian industries are struggling to fill roles with Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel (SQEP). Increasing wages, salaries, and/or bonuses is one strategy that organisations employ for retention and attraction. However, it is the employee experience that is often a key factor for determination of the effectiveness of such retention and attraction strategies (National Skills Commission, 2022). Therefore, businesses in particular SMEs, need to explore how they can improve wellbeing programs and employee assistance offerings to establish a positive workplace environment and work experience whilst, at the same time, dealing with the challenging environment of pay and salary (Reserve Bank Australia, 2022).

Aside from financial pressures, Australian Defence Industry Primes and SMEs face a number of challenges in implementing wellbeing programs, expanded and/or contemporary wellbeing programs, and expanded EAPs due to:

- Lack of government compliance;
- Lack of industry influence and support;
- Limited leadership understanding and/or commitment; and
- Competing business demands.

A view on contemporary wellbeing programs within Australia and across a number of Australian companies show a focus within three main areas. These are:

- Wellbeing Programs;
- Employee Assistance Programs; and
- Improved Personnel Management Practices.

The research conducted on these contemporary programs have been presented by many of the participants of the Marcus Evans Psychosocial Risk Management Conferences across 2018-22. A review of these presentations shows more contemporary programs already incorporating aspects of wellbeing programs already discussed in this research report. Furthermore, improved personnel management practices are expanding to adapt the underlying principles for psychological wellbeing.

Despite recognition that the field of employee wellbeing and employee assistance should extend beyond the individual, the broader aspects of family and community have received less attention

(Grenville-Cleave et al. 2021). Consequently, with the increasing understanding and recognition of a broadening of wellbeing and employee assistance, Australian companies are reviewing and expanding their EAPs to:

- Ensure programs are confidential and impartial in providing professional assistance, counselling, and coaching;
- Include services that assist employees to address both work-related and personal issues;
- Include services that are accessible by the employee's immediate family members; and
- Include services that cater to specific groups and communities such as first nation, LGBTIQ, veterans, etc.

This research project begins to ask whether EAP's and wellbeing programs are catering effectively for veteran employees as well.

VETERAN WELLBEING

WHY DO ADF SERVICE PROFESSIONALS TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE?

Between 5,500 to 6,500 ADF members transition out of service every year (Royal Commission, 2022). There are three main reasons for ADF personnel to transition out of service life, these include on medical grounds (27.2%), disciplinary reasons (~5%) or because of career opportunities or retirement (67.8%) (Royal Commission, 2022). The reasons for leaving military service impact greatly on the relative success of the transition process to civilian life. For those ADF members that transition for medical (approximately a quarter of all transitioning veterans) or disciplinary reasons, the decision is largely made by a medical professional (or disciplinary tribunal) and maybe unexpected, with the member given little time to prepare for the transition both mentally and physically (Royal Commission, 2022). Those that transition for career opportunities often have more time to plan for the transition, and they are more prepared mentally for the change (Becker et al. 2021).

In addition to the inability to prepare, ADF members that transition for medical reasons also experienced a number of factors that have a negative mental impact, including the symptoms of the medical injury, stigma experienced because of the injury or illness, lack of control over the process, and challenges in arranging and accessing care for their health issues (Royal Commission, 2022). These additional factors can also increase the difficulties in finding employment and stress relationships, and studies have indicated that these issues can compound and potentially lead to situations where suicide is a possible outcome (Flack and Kite, 2021).

Transitioning regardless of the reason involves a significant life-style change for the veteran, which includes factors such as changes in:

- Purpose and Identity - the military gives a strong sense of purpose and identity, a rank and a position in an organization contributing significantly to the security of the nation. The loss of this identity and purpose can leave veterans feeling lost, alone and diminished;
- Friendship Circles - veterans often become disassociated from their mates and struggle to form new friendships because of the differences between military and civilian cultures;
- Financial Compensation - obtaining civilian employment can be challenging, veterans have little experience in applying for jobs, compiling a resume and undertaking a job interview, or understanding and articulating how their military skill sets translate to civilian employment opportunities;
- Secure Housing - while in service a veteran has had their accommodation provided, the process and finance behind acquiring a property in the civilian world can be a stressful experience, and
- General living and expectations outside the structure and support of the ADF, e.g. insurance, groceries, education.

- Family pressure – often it is not just the veteran transitioning but also partners and children settling in the last location of their last post or returning to locations with extended family to start again, finding new schools, housing, medical support, and employment, often for partners as well as the veteran.

These changes can have significant psychological and physical impacts on the veteran and his/her family which will influence the success of the transition (Flack and Kite, 2021).

TRANSITIONING TO THE WORKFORCE - HOW IT HAS BEEN DONE PREVIOUSLY

Previously, transition was accessed by ADF members through the Career Transition Assistance Scheme (CTAS). A key shortfall of CTAS was the requirement that members could only access if they had served for 12 years or more (Royal Commission, 2022). However, evidence suggests that the median length of service for ADF members was eight years or fewer (Royal Commission, 2022), which indicates that many members could not access support programs. Key failures of the of the CTAS include:

- Length and complexity of the transition process;
- Process focused on administrative tasks, rather than individual needs or future plans;
- Minimal support for ADF members at higher risk of poor outcomes, including those that served less than 12 years and those aged 18 to 24 years;
- Inadequate support to prepare members for the social, cultural and psychological challenges of transition; and
- Absence of support for families.

TRANSITIONING TO THE WORKFORCE - CURRENT PROCESSES

In 2017, the ADF implemented a series of new policies under the Defence Force Transition Program (DFTP) to address the previously identified issues (Royal Commission, 2022). The new polices include:

- Transition coaching, involving an ADF transition coach to assist members to develop plans, identify skills sets and achieve goals;
- Job Search Preparation workshops;
- Career Transition Training, involving up to \$5,320 funding for relevant training and education;
- Financial Advice, involving up to \$1,000 for professional financial advice;
- Post-transition follow-up phone call and survey, involving follow up monthly phone calls by a transition coach for a period of 24 months post discharge;
- ADF Member and Family Transition Seminars
- Approved Absence, involving up to 23 days of leave for approved transition-related activities.

- Personalised Career and Employment Program (PCEP), involving up to three months of job and career support for younger members who have been involuntarily discharged with less than four years of service;
- Transition for Employment (T4E), focusing on medically transitioning ADF members and their specific requirements; and
- ADF Soldier Recovery Centres for those who may discharge medically are engaging Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESHA) to run Transition programs: Mindright (Identity change) and Storyright (translating Defence skills)
- Partner Employment Assistance Program, involving employment and care support for ADF members partners and family.

In addition to the programs of the DFTP the Productivity Commission in 2019 report A Better Way to Support Veterans recommended that the Federal Government establish a “Joint Transition Authority” which will oversee and be responsible for the implementation of the DFTP programs and will report publicly on transition outcomes and drive further improvements. The Joint Transition Authority will reach full capability by the end of 2022 and will then be able to provide an indication of the level of success of the DFTP (Royal Commission, 2022).

The Federal Government is not the only source of support for ADF members transitioning out of service. NSW (Veterans Employment Program, 2022), South Australia (Veterans SA, 2022), and the Northern Territory (Defence and Veterans Engagement, 2021) all have all have “Rank to Grade” guides which are designed to assist employers to understand how an ADF members skill set and experience can be of value in the workplace. A number of not-for-profit organisations support ADF members and/or their families during and after their transition from service including (Department of Veterans’ Affairs, 2022):

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Air Force Association | • Military and Emergency Services Health Australia |
| • Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans Association | • Naval Association of Australia |
| • Australian Special Air Service Association | • Royal Australian Regiment Association |
| • Australian War Widows Inc. | • TPI Federation Australia |
| • Bravery Trust | • Soldier-On |
| • Commando Welfare Trust | • The Returned and Services League, |
| • Defence Families Australia | • Vietnam Veterans’ Association of Australia |
| • Defence Force Welfare Association | • Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia |
| • Legacy Australia Inc. | |
| • Mates4Mates | |

Even though there exists an array of new programs to support ADF members, they are still required to engage with the programs. A key consideration in the ability of ADF members to engage with transition programs is their military experience. Members with more positive military experiences during their career are generally more trusting and accepting of assistance from the Department of Defence. However, those with more negative experiences during their career are less trusting and less likely to engage, and are often at risk from psychological stress, which also decreases the likelihood of a successful transition (Interview with Cameron Grant, 21 September 2022).

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of this research report it is evident that a multidimensional focus of wellbeing must be taken to ensure those within the industry, and specifically veterans, who are an important pool of future and current skilled employees, are supported. In reviewing contemporary programs across the Defence industry, it is evident that there is a broad range of concepts and resources utilized. However, there are aspects here that can be reviewed and recommended for practical action at different levels to support the wellbeing of employees and in particular veterans as detailed within the ensuring sections (Grenville-Cleave et al. 2021).

TO SUPPORT ALL EMPLOYEES

INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESS LEADERS

- Develop emotional intelligence and collaboration skills;
- Understand and find ways to use individual strengths;
- Find ways to craft what individual roles do and how it is done;
- Identify future skills needed in the field and seek to develop them;
- Organize friendly team-building and fitness challenges;
- Help individuals work towards professional and personal short-term and long-term goals;
- Identify the aspects of work that are most engaging, energizing, and meaningful to each individual;
- Develop friendships with individuals and learn about their lives as appropriate to time, culture, and personal boundaries;
- Arrange routine get-togethers with the team; and
- Encourage breaks and time-off-in-lieu.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY PRIMES AND SMES

- Educate the leadership team on the benefits of actively encouraging employee wellbeing;
- Build capabilities and knowledge of managers and supervisors;
- Appoint individuals within the organization as champions for wellbeing;
- Promote awareness of wellbeing throughout the organization through employee engagement sessions;
- Establish a pleasant and comfortable work and remote-work environment;
- Establish a crowd-funded wellbeing club to organize wellbeing activities;
- Implement measures of psychosocial wellbeing or ensure these are incorporated in engagement and exit surveys;

- Implement an anonymous 360-degree feedback to gather information from subordinates, colleagues, and supervisors, as well as a self-evaluation by the employees themselves to ensure that the behavioural standards exhibited positively motivate and impact the psychological wellbeing of others;
- Use the psychological principles as a basis for reviewing and re-designing people management processes to ensure these positively and healthily support wellbeing and motivation.
- Provide employees with anonymous access to tailored Employee Assistance Programs;
- Introduce wellbeing-based employee benefits such as discounted gym memberships, salary sacrifice schemes, and different types of leave;
- Organize virtual and in-person wellbeing workshops to educate employees about the different aspects of wellbeing;
- Allocate funding to support the workplace wellbeing program and for continued research into wellbeing;
- Develop Mental Health First Aid training strategy and implementation to support and assist transition to employee assistance programs;
- Through continuous improvement provide a sustainable wellbeing program; and
- Develop an annual wellbeing calendar (refer to Annex) that provides employees with activities on a monthly basis to address different aspects of wellbeing internal and external to the work environment.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY ORGANISATIONS AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

- Require the incorporation of wellbeing metrics within corporate accounts;
- Ensure business are held to account for societal and health impact of changes, redundancies, and re-structuring;
- Develop policies to support primes and SMEs accommodate for reservists; and
- Provide programs for the self-employed and those in SMEs to develop wellbeing skills and the skills and capabilities needed for the future.

TO SUPPORT VETERAN EMPLOYEES

INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESS LEADERS

- Provide a welcoming work environment for veterans and by extension their families;
- Develop an understanding of the ADF and veteran experience to develop cultural competency to better support former serving subordinates, colleagues, supervisors and customers; and
- Instil a sense of purpose through communication of the 'big picture' and specificity of the employee role within this; and

- Facilitate information, resources, support and participation when required in veteran specific support services where additional tailored support is needed for veterans and not offered by a generalist EAP.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY PRIMES AND SMES

- Provide a supportive veteran engagement and onboarding process, utilising transition workshops and resources as needed which includes information on how to support veterans transition into a civilian workforce and ongoing challenges they may face - focusing on conveying the nuances that may be experienced;
- Build strong partnerships with other veteran wellbeing focused organisations and services;
- Promote the social and emotional development and wellbeing of veterans and their families - to facilitate meaningful connections within the workplace;
- Explore the addition of training elements to lead to greater cultural competency across business levels but in particular human resources departments and senior leadership.
- Honour the service and sacrifice of our veterans and their families; and
- Ensure that the wellbeing program established specifically focuses on and can adapt to the changing needs of the veteran community.
- Facilitate information, resources, support and participation when required in veteran specific support services in addition to EAP services which are tailored for the specialised psychological needs of veterans, such as the Group Emotional and Relationship Skills (GEARS) program delivered by Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESHA).
- Within the Mental Health First Aid Training strategy, consider trauma informed practice and response to assist further with more nuanced veteran mental and physical health challenges and referrals to specific support.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY ORGANISATIONS AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

- Translation of veteran skills and experiences into civilian equivalent utilizing and publicizing tools such as the Military Rank to Grade Guide, the Storyright and Mindright programs (offered by MESHA), and the utilization of this to perform a gap analysis, communicate roles and responsibilities, expectations and facilitate competency training (where required) - specially to support veterans with specialist skills; and
- Facilitate greater access and awareness of essential physical and mental health and wellbeing services needed by veterans and their families.
- Establish Defence industry policy for the advocacy of employment of Defence veterans whether have been full time or reserve. This would ensure retention of and knowledge transfer within Defence and Defence industry.

CONCLUSION

Humans have an innate need to feel safe and secure, and beyond that to flourish in life to reach their full potential. The continuous changing state of wellness and wellbeing, along with the fulfillment of requisite needs by oneself, and one's family, friends, communities and employers contributes to their individual experience and human condition.

This research report investigated the concept of wellbeing and wellness within the context of the Australian Defence Industry and ADF. Through investigation of the existing concepts and its implementation to support employee wellbeing it was found that, there are numerous initiatives and programs available to address employee wellness, however the issue lies with the limitation of its effectiveness. It was concluded that this was resultant of the modern tendency to generalize, industrialize and provide a one-size-fits-all solution that cripples the efficacies of these programs. Nevertheless, across the Australian industries and businesses, a shift to more contemporary Wellbeing programs and EAPs can be observed which incorporates the broader aspects of wellness and wellbeing discussed in this report, which offers greater inclusion beyond the individual employee.

Service in the ADF is considered to be an identity and lifestyle, rather than just a career. An appreciation and understanding of this is important to enable veterans to transition into civilian life after their service life, especially for those that faced traumatic experiences and/or was deployed in conflict situations. This report has identified that, a more tailored approach with a clear and structured transition will help improve the current initiatives in place to support veterans such as identifying transferrable skills even when it is not apparent. Following their transition, businesses that employ veterans need to develop awareness within all levels of their organizational hierarchy, establish wellbeing programs and/or EAP services to accommodate veterans and their families and ensure their collective wellbeing, and to encourage veterans and their families to access specialized support outside of the workplace for their unique needs.

Through the findings of this report it is recommended that a personalized approach and contemporary wellbeing programs are adopted within the Australian Defence industry and ADF which places the responsibility of ensuring the wellbeing and wellness of oneself and that of others all throughout the organization from an individual level through to senior management and leadership level. For Defence Industry, which works closely with the ADF and with a competitive recruitment market, seeks to be a strong employer of veterans, these programs and initiatives will need to accommodate veteran wellbeing specifically. This veteran wellbeing strategy needs to encompass the more nuanced aspects of veteran transition and subsequent wellbeing which had not been widely incorporated. This is as important now as ever, given the ongoing want and requirement for employee wellbeing in a time of acute industry skill shortage and demand on industry performance.

WHERE TO NEXT?

While the recommendations of this report provide practical means for the betterment of employees and veterans specifically. To further advance ADF and Australia Defence Industry, the findings of this research report will need to be:

1. Communicated throughout Defence industry to improve individual and organizational awareness about employee wellbeing and the veteran experience;
2. Utilised to support further research on the topic of Veteran Transition and Wellbeing;
3. Utilised to develop pilot wellbeing programs within Defence Industry Primes and SMEs without a wellbeing program and/or EAP; and
4. Utilised to seek further information from subject matter experts.

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WELLBEING CALENDAR 2023

MONTH	FOCUS AREA	WELLBEING ACTIVITY	EMOTIONAL	OCCUPATIONAL	INTELLECTUAL	ENVIORNMENTAL	FINANCIAL	SOCIAL	PHYSICAL	SPIRITUAL
JANUARY	Getting financially fit for the New Year!	Organise financial coaching seminar			Financial Wellbeing 101 - alleviate some financial stress involved with holiday spending with sound advice		Financial Wellbeing 101 - alleviate some financial stress involved with holiday spending with sound advice			
FEBRUARY	Cultural connection	Aboriginal smoking ceremony	Welcome to Country - an opportunity for staff to participate in Aboriginal spiritual practices			Welcome to Country - an opportunity for staff to observe an indigenous way of interacting with the environment				Welcome to Country - an opportunity for staff to participate in Aboriginal spiritual practices
MARCH	Give back	Encourage participation in Clean Up Australia Day	Clean Up Australia Day - gives staff the opportunity to give back to the community			Clean Up Australia Day - encourage staff to participate in clean up Australia Day		Clean Up Australia Day - encourage staff to organise teams to participate together		
APRIL	Healthy eating	Provide healthy snack boxes Host a healthy BBQ						Heathy options social BBQ	Swap It, Don't Stop It 12-week planner - encourage alternatives to unhealthy choices Healthy options snack boxes provided in the break room	
MAY	Connection to others Australia's Biggest Morning Tea	Guided stargazing activity	Fundraise and host Australia's Biggest Morning Tea (19 th) and encourage staff to bring healthy dishes for sharing		Stargazing Tours - staff can broaden horizons and learn about a new topic	Stargazing Tours - spending time in the environment/fresh air		Stargazing Tours - group participation in enjoyable activity Fundraise and host Australia's Biggest Morning Tea (19 th) and encourage staff to bring healthy dishes for sharing		Stargazing Tours - connection to something larger than our small world
JUNE	Stress management EOFY tax seminar	Learn to meditate and let go of stress.	Meditation for Wellbeing - learn to lessen the impact of stress on your mental wellbeing				Financial Wellbeing 101 - get financially ready for EOFY and tax time			

		Get prepared for tax time								
JULY	Alcohol awareness Mental health first aid	Encourage employees to participate in Dry July. Offer mental health first aid training certificate		Mental Health First Aid Training - offer subsidised mental health first aid training to any staff who wish to gain a certificate				Dry July - encourage participation in sobriety challenge. Morning tea towards the end of the month to celebrate.	Dry July - highlight the negative effects of excessive alcohol consumption and the positive effects of having a break	
AUGUST	Challenge your brain Keep Australia Beautiful Week	Wellbeing themed puzzles, winter reading challenge Encourage staff to get involved in maintaining the local community			MIND puzzles to challenge your brain Reading competition between staff	Keep Australia Beautiful Week (15-21 st August) - encourage participate in various activities over the week		Book recommendations and connection with others through shared interests		
SEPTEMBER	Physical activity Mental health	Run a steps challenge & promote walking meetings R U Okay Day	R U Okay Day (8 th) - encourage staff to participate in initiatives. Provide morning tea and material to facilitate conversations					STEPtember - walking groups at lunchtime/before/after work so staff can socialize while exercising	STEPtember - challenge yourself to hit 10,000 steps per day	
OCTOBER	WorkSafe Month Mental health	Attend free WorkSafe Month events World Homeless Day	World Homeless Day (10 th) - encourage fundraising activities to support people suffering homelessness	Safe Work Australia - encourage staff to attend events to increase their OHS knowledge. Provide a platform for staff to share learnings with others				World Homeless Day (10 th) - encourage fundraising activities to support people suffering homelessness		World Homeless Day (10 th) - encourage fundraising activities to support people suffering homelessness
NOVEMBER	Men's health and women's	Get involved with Movember or have a women's	Movember - Encourage staff to participate in Movember challenge or fundraising activities.			National Recycling Week (7 th - 13 th November) - Encourage competition between			Movember - Encourage staff to participate in Movember challenge or fundraising activities.	

	mental health PTSD National Recycling Week	health workshop Recycling competition	Ensure equal focus on fun aspect and mental health support			departments re who can raise the most money from recycling. Issue certificates to winners. Proceeds to fund social activities			Ensure equal focus on fun aspect and mental health support	
DECEMBER	Celebrate!	Get everyone involved and celebrate your successes!							BBQ or morning tea with healthy options to celebrate success with all staff	

REFERENCE GUIDE

Clean Up Australia Day - <https://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/>

Drug Education Network - www.den.org.au

Dry July - <https://www.dryjuly.com/>

Financial Wellness - <https://financialwellbeing101.com.au/>

Keep Australia Beautiful - <https://kab.org.au/campaigns/>

Meditation for Wellbeing - www.meditatewellbeing.com

Mental Health First Aid - <https://mhfa.com.au/>

MIND - <https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/how-can-i-distract-myself/games-and-puzzles/>

Movember - www.movember.com.au

Safe Work Australia - <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/national-safe-work-month>

Stargazing Tours - <https://www.bigbend.com.au/experiences/dark-sky-night-tour/>

STEPtember - <https://www.steptember.org.au/>

Swap It, Don't Stop It - www.swapit.gov.au

Welcome to Country - <http://online.cityofpae.sa.gov.au/community/atsi/welcome-to-country>