



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



# Veteran Employment Toolkit


A guide to planning your  
move to the civilian workforce



Veteran  
Employment  
Program



 GPO Box 9998, Brisbane QLD 4001  
 [veteranemployment@dva.gov.au](mailto:veteranemployment@dva.gov.au)  
 [veteranemployment.gov.au](http://veteranemployment.gov.au)

 [au.linkedin.com/company/veteranemploymentau](https://au.linkedin.com/company/veteranemploymentau)  
@Veteran Employment Program



**Australian Government**  
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# Introduction

Your experience in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) means you have invaluable skills, like leadership, organisation and resilience.

These can make you a highly attractive civilian employee, but how do you make the leap?

This Veteran Employment Toolkit is packed with information to help you launch your civilian career.

## The Veteran Employment Toolkit

The Veteran Employment Program (VEP) has developed this toolkit to help you:

- plan your move to a civilian career
- apply for jobs
- adjust to the civilian workforce.

For more information about the VEP initiatives visit our website at

[www.veteransemployment.gov.au](http://www.veteransemployment.gov.au)



The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land throughout Australia and their continuing connection to country, sea and community. We pay our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and to their elders past and present. DVA also acknowledges the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans who have contributed to serving Australia.

## Rach's story

### Rach Ranton, Veteran Employee of the Year 2018 Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards

Rach joined the Australian Army in 1997, straight after she finished Year 12. She worked as an Electronic Warfare Operator and deployed to Afghanistan in 2006. It was there she realised it was time to transition out of service, to pursue a career that allowed her to be at home with her family.



Separating from the Army, Rach struggled with her sense of identity, questioning who she was if she wasn't a soldier anymore. Building a new life outside the military took time, but for Rach, the first step was finding meaningful employment.

"When I left the Army I started a career in banking as the Branch Manager at St. George Bank, Toowoomba. I was lucky to join an organisation that really valued the skills and experience I could bring to them, like leadership, critical thinking and creative problem solving, and who were prepared to teach me the technical know-how, like banking."

Having been through this experience, Rach believes every veteran has the skillset to succeed in a corporate career.

"Some of the things I think military members undersell themselves on are exactly the things that civilian employers are looking for. Veterans know how to push a project forward, achieve an objective and get things executed even if they have limited time, resources and information. This is something that businesses really need, but veterans often don't see it as a skillset."

Building a reputation for being able to "get stuff done," Rach spent 11 years at Westpac Group, working as a key driver of the organisation's autism hiring program and its veterans' employment initiatives.

Having carved out a successful corporate career, Rach has left the world of banking and is now self-employed, scoring her "dream job" of owning her own consultancy firm, being an author, a TED speaker and surfer. In early 2020, she published a book on leadership called *Dauntless: leadership lessons from the frontline*.

#### Employment tips

"Ask yourself what are your strengths? What do you like doing? What are you good at? And most importantly – where is that kind of work? That last question is a really important one. I talk to lots of people who are transitioning who want advice about how to get that first job after separation. If you want to be an investment banker, then that type of work isn't in Byron Bay. Be practical and do your research."

She also recommends reaching out to other veterans and asking them about their experiences, work and lives.

"Talking to others can help open up your eyes to careers you hadn't considered and opportunities you didn't know about. Knowledge is power!"

# Thinking about your move to civilian employment

For many veterans, moving to the civilian workforce is not just about changing careers, it's also about changing their way of life. You can miss the strong sense of commitment, purpose and belonging experienced in the ADF. One of the best ways to tackle this is preparation.

## Start planning early and use the resources and support available to you

Don't wait until you leave the ADF to start planning your move to civilian life. The earlier you start plotting your course, the better. One of the best ways to start is talking to your local ADF Transition Centre and accessing a Transition Coach. A Transition Coach is a consistent point of contact throughout your transition journey. They provide advice, and work with you and your family to design a personalised transition plan. Find your Transition Centre here [www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/transition-centres-contacts](http://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/transition-centres-contacts)

There are also many resources on our website at [www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans/support-employment](http://www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans/support-employment)



## Prepare mentally for the change

Moving to civilian life from the ADF can be an exciting but challenging time. Prepare by:

- talking to friends or family who have made the change
- connecting with groups set up by veterans (in person or on social media)
- connecting with ex-service organisations
- seeking professional assistance services tailored for veterans seeking employment.

## Think about the right career for you

Changing your career is a significant step and it is important that you plan and prepare for these changes. Consider what you want your next career to be. Reflect on what you enjoy doing (in the military and your personal life) and how you could pursue these interests in your next career move.

Ask yourself:

- What are you passionate about?
- How do your personal values influence the kind of work you are interested in?
- What motivates you to come to work?
- Are there locations you want to live? What industries are available there?

Think about your transferable skills. For example, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork are skills highly valued in the civilian workforce. Taking the time to research industries and roles that match your values, skills and interests can also help you in your planning.

You can find more questions to consider via speaking to a Transition Coach or in the ADF Member and Family Transition Guide under the 'Employment and Meaningful Engagement' section.

[www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/adf-member-and-family-transition-guide](http://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/adf-member-and-family-transition-guide)



The Department of Veterans' Affairs Veteran Employment Program delivers the Veteran Employment Commitment (VEC), an Australian Government initiative where organisations show their commitment to employing Australia's veterans. These organisations also commit to creating an environment where veterans can perform at their best. You can search organisations that have signed the VEC via the website [www.veteranemployment.gov.au/show-your-commitment/commitment-supporters](http://www.veteranemployment.gov.au/show-your-commitment/commitment-supporters)

## Set realistic expectations

Getting a new job can take some time, so it is a good idea to start looking for positions early and have a plan if it takes longer than expected. When exploring opportunities, make sure you research the salary ranges, as you may be paid less than you were in the ADF.

## Start networking

A strong network of contacts can be important because it's how many veterans find their next career.

Boost your networks through social media sites like LinkedIn, ex-service organisations and sporting or other interest groups.

You should consider both Defence and non-Defence contacts. When preparing to separate from the ADF, reach out to your networks to let them know you're job hunting.

## Find a mentor

A mentor can be a great source of advice, guidance and expertise. They can introduce you to networks to help you find a new job or to adjust to the civilian workplace. You can find a mentor through ex-service organisations, your networks or professional organisations.

## Consider the impact on your family

When you begin the process of moving out of the ADF, consider the impact on your family. Some questions you may wish to think about include:

- Will work and caring responsibilities change?
- Where would you like to settle – is this a good place for your partner's employment, for your children's schooling, and access to support?
- How will your change of career affect the family income and, if applicable, how will you and your family adapt to a reduction in salary?

### Advice from an employer

"I would really implore anyone thinking of leaving the Defence Force and making that transition, to start talking to others in their networks that have been there and done that. You'll be amazed at the high level of advice that people want to share."

– Mat Jones, BAE Systems Australia

## Other pathways for you to consider are:

### Self-employment

Many veterans find starting their own business rewarding and a great way to use and build on skills obtained in the ADF. Get support at:

- Self-Employment Assistance via Workforce Australia [www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/businesses/help/new-businesses/self-employment-assistance](http://www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/businesses/help/new-businesses/self-employment-assistance)
- The King's Trust Australia [www.kingstrust.org.au/defence-members-and-their-families](http://www.kingstrust.org.au/defence-members-and-their-families)

### Volunteering

Volunteering is a positive way to contribute to your local community and connect with like-minded people. It can also bring you a sense of commitment, purpose and belonging. There is a huge range of opportunities which can be short-term, long-term or one-off events. To learn more about volunteering opportunities in your area visit [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au) or [www.disasterreliefaus.org/get-involved/volunteer](http://www.disasterreliefaus.org/get-involved/volunteer)

### Study

You may choose to study to support your next career move. Talk to an ADF Transition Coach about educational opportunities available to you, such as the Defence Career Transition Training Program.

To learn more about Defence employment assistance visit [www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/employment-assistance](http://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/employment-assistance)

You can also search online for 'veteran education' and the state or territory of your choice.

Some universities offer special entry pathways which recognise the valuable service provided by ADF members. Universities may assist you to gain entry by assessing your service in the military and converting this to an entry rank, similar to an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). They may also provide other benefits to veterans, such as unit credits as Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) and support to learn essential study skills.

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

### What is it?

Military skills, knowledge and experience can be formally recognised through a process called RPL. All competencies and qualifications provided are based on national legislated standards regulated by the Australian Standards Qualification Authority and the Australian Qualifications Framework and are applicable across industry sectors. ADF members can have their military skills recognised through a national qualification prior to separating.

### Who does it?

ADF Transition and Civil Recognition provides transitioning members, and recently transitioned, the opportunity to have skills recognised through RPL and accredited where possible.

RPL assessments include micro-credentialing of ADF training, and an advanced standing program which maps ADF unaccredited courses to civilian University programs to provide agreed credit transfers with partnered universities.

RPL is at no cost to transitioning ADF members. For more information on RPL through the Defence Registered Training Organisations (RTO), visit the ADF Transition and Civil Recognition Project [www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/military-skill-recognition](http://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/military-skill-recognition)

RPL is also offered by universities, TAFEs and RTOs. There may be a fee if you are seeking RPL through these organisations.

### Advice from a veteran

“Look at the social media community and look at a workplace that already has a military family there. You will already have a connection that way.”

– Linda Porter, veteran

## Getting the job

### Job search tools

If you want to find a job, it's important to approach the challenge from a number of angles. You can find work through:

- career or company websites
- job boards or fairs
- dedicated veteran employment or support organisations
- recruitment agencies
- social media networking
- referrals or cold calling.

### Creating a profile

Many online job search sites will need you to create a profile. LinkedIn is a social media platform dedicated to professional networking. It can be a useful job seeking tool. Visit our website for tips on creating a good profile [www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans-getting-job/professional-social-media-networking](http://www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans-getting-job/professional-social-media-networking)

### Social media

Prospective employers may search for you on social media. Ensure any photos, posts or content that you do not want prospective employers to see are set to 'private'.

### Recruitment/employment agencies

Recruitment or employment agencies:

- find people to fill a vacancy
- find positions for people who have registered with them.

Some agencies specialise in placing veterans or filling jobs in specific industries.

Registering with a recruitment agency as a job seeker does not usually incur a cost. Employers pay recruitment agencies to find staff for them.



## Nathan's Story

**Nathan Bligh, Informatech, Veteran Entrepreneur of the Year  
2023 Prime Minister's National Veterans' Employment Awards**

After he separated from the Royal Australian Navy, Nathan spent a period of time unemployed, followed by working in a series of unfulfilling jobs. He struggled to identify and secure a role that interested and excited him. He then obtained employment in a test and evaluation role in the Australian Public Service and found his niche.

Over 5 years, Nathan worked on a number of key projects for government agencies, before finding himself back in Defence, working on complex, high-profile ICT projects.

Nathan then made the decision to leave his middle management position to start his own business and established Informatech, a consultancy service. Having studied the market to identify opportunities, Nathan was able to position his company to deliver services in an area of strong demand and limited supply. This led to early success for the business.

Many of the skills and attributes Nathan used to establish and grow the business were learnt and reinforced during his service with the ADF. These are paramount to Nathan's interactions with his customers and employees, and how he manages Informatech.



## Carly's Story

**Carly joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in 2001.  
She trained as a supply clerk and enjoyed a six-year career.  
Carly's husband also served in the RAAF.**

Carly enjoyed her Defence Force career, but when she started her family, job flexibility became a priority. Joining the Reserves provided the flexibility she needed in the career she loved.

Carly wanted a job that was both meaningful and supportive of her family priorities. She considered leaving her reserve career to pursue greater stability and benefits in a civilian workforce. Carly heard about a job at Boeing Defence Australia through her personal networks.

Carly successfully won the position at Boeing but she maintained her role in the Reserves as a precaution in case the job at Boeing wasn't the right fit for her.

Carly's new career at Boeing utilises the skills and experience gained in her regular and reservist career. She has also found a workplace that aligns with her values. She enjoys working in a Defence environment with many other ex-military colleagues.

Carly's advice to anyone looking to leave the Defence Force for a civilian career, is to take the time to get as much information as you can. "There are many people out there who are willing to help, but it's also about knowing who to go to."



# Skills and attributes you can bring to the civilian workforce

You will have gained a wide range of skills and attributes during your ADF service. These are highly valuable to employers, so it's very important you highlight these in your job applications and interviews.

## **Communication**

Through your time at the ADF, you have learned that clear, concise and accurate communication is vital for an effective operation.

## **Driven by values**

The ADF values integrity, loyalty, self-discipline and perseverance. You have a strong work ethic, dedication to task and attention to detail.

## **Leadership**

Leadership is demonstrated at all levels in the ADF. You have developed a range of leadership qualities and have experience working in and leading teams. You have been expected to delegate, motivate and inspire to deliver results.

## **Teamwork**

In the ADF, effective teamwork is required for success and is ingrained from the moment you join. You recognise that teamwork has a direct impact on an organisations ability to plan and be productive. You know how to work well with others and in a team environment to get the job done.

## **Adaptability**

As an ADF member, you have been trained to perform in dynamic and often unpredictable environments. Your adaptability allows you to swiftly adjust to changing circumstances, tackle challenges and remain composed under pressure.

## **Achieves Results**

ADF members are committed to their duties and take pride in their work. You are experienced in meeting deadlines, following strict protocols and working hard towards a goal, even under difficult conditions.



## Planning

In the ADF, you were trained to plan your activities to ensure the best result at all times.

You are experienced in planning, executing and then debriefing to ensure 'lessons learned' are incorporated into planning for the next activity.

## Problem solving and critical thinking

The ADF trains members to use their knowledge and available facts to solve issues. You understand the importance of situational awareness and have developed a strong analytical mindset. You are able to think critically and apply 'think on your feet' problem solving.

## Other skills and attributes

Veterans and employers have identified the top skills and attributes that veterans can offer the civilian workforce. They are:

- dedicated
- task driven
- organised
- respectful
- integrity
- resourceful
- resilient
- assertive
- loyal
- committed
- quick thinking
- reliable
- disciplined
- goal-oriented
- multi-skilled
- punctual



### Advice from a veteran

"There are things that are difficult to teach in civilian life, that concept of duty, mateship, integrity and the determination that goes with being in uniform, those things have absolutely served me well in business, they translate so well."

Nathan Bligh, veteran

# Core tasks at rank

## ENLISTED RANKS

In this section, you will find the core tasks for each officer and other ranks expressed in language commonly used in the civilian workforce. The information provided here is a starting point to help you when preparing your application and in the interview process.



- SEAMAN (SMN)**
- PRIVATE (PTE)**
- AIRCRAFTMAN (AC)**
- AIRCRAFTWOMAN (ACW)**



- Communicate effectively (including presentations)
- Comply with policies, directives, governance requirements and standard operating procedures
- Comply with workplace expectations in often complex, difficult and challenging environments



- PETTY OFFICER (PO)**
- SERGEANT (SGT)**
- STAFF SERGEANT (SSGT)**
- SERGEANT (SGT)**



- Effective and ethical leadership of a large team
- Apply expertise to training delivery and development to maintain skills essential to the functioning of the organisation
- Ensure compliance with policy, directives, instructions, regulations, standard operating procedures, and technical frameworks



- ABLE SEAMAN (AB)**
- LANCE CORPORAL (LCPL)**
- LANCE BOMBARDIER (LBDR)**
- LEADING AIRCRAFTMAN (LAC)**
- LEADING AIRCRAFTWOMAN (LACW)**



- Apply ethical leadership skills and knowledge in the workplace
- Lead and develop an effective workplace team
- Monitor, maintain and report workplace skilling needs, education and training



- CHIEF PETTY OFFICER (CPO)**
- WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2 (WO2)**
- FLIGHT SERGEANT (FSGT)**



- Apply effective and ethical leadership across the organisation
- Develop skilled teams to meet organisational requirements
- Prioritise, allocate and manage the effective use of an organisation's logistics and resources



- LEADING SEAMAN (LS)**
- CORPORAL (CPL)**
- BOMBARDIER (BDR)**
- CORPORAL (CPL)**



- Lead and manage small teams to achieve workplace goals and tasks
- Analyse directions and develop a plan to achieve goals and tasks
- Analyse risks to operations and present opportunities to achieve satisfactory outcomes



- WARRANT OFFICER (WO)**
- WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 1 (WO1)**
- WARRANT OFFICER (WOFF)**






- Apply effective and ethical leadership across the organisation and in support of organisational direction
- Use advanced communication skills with an executive team and the organisation
- Oversee and supervise the use of organisational, social and recreational resources to enhance deep-rooted professionalism and positive spirit in the workplace

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# Core tasks at rank

## OFFICER RANKS

 **ACTING SUB LIEUTENANT (ASLT)**  
 **SECOND LIEUTENANT (2LT)**  
 **PILOT OFFICER (PLTOFF)**






- Learn and apply effective and ethical leadership with teams
- Support the development of teams
- Assist with planning and coordinating workplace activities in complex and challenging work environments

 **LIEUTENANT COMMANDER (LCDR)**  
 **MAJOR (MAJ)**  
 **SQUADRON LEADER (SQNLDR)**



- Apply effective and ethical leadership and management to multiple teams
- Oversee and conduct complex organisational administration
- Manage and develop a workforce able to work in complex, difficult and challenging environments
- Ensure organisational plans, actions and controls meet national / international standards and policy

 **SUB LIEUTENANT (SBLT)**  
 **LIEUTENANT (LT)**  
 **FLYING OFFICER (FLGOFF)**






- Apply effective and ethical leadership of small and large teams
- Monitor and manage team performance, administration and welfare in the workplace
- Provide advice to senior managers to develop staff and achieve workplace goals and outcomes

 **COMMANDER (CMDR)**  
 **LIEUTENANT COLONEL (LTCOL)**  
 **WING COMMANDER (WGCDR)**



- Apply effective and ethical senior leadership to manage multiple, integrated large teams
- Oversee and conduct complex administration ensuring adherence to values and expectations
- Recognise and adjust to changing situations using flexible leadership
- Communicate effectively to inform, persuade, substantiate, negotiate or present information
- Set the vision, purpose and goals, to focus and motivate all teams

 **LIEUTENANT (LEUT)**  
 **CAPTAIN (CAPT)**  
 **FLIGHT LIEUTENANT (FLT LT)**



- Apply effective and ethical leadership of large teams
- Contribute to and participate in management planning for contingencies and organisational goals
- Monitor, maintain and ensure equity and safety standards and behaviour in the workplace

 **CAPTAIN (CAPT - RAN)**  
 **COLONEL (COL)**  
 **GROUP CAPTAIN (GPCAPT)**



- Apply effective and ethical leadership and strategic management within a complex organisation
- Analyse, determine and report to the executive on current and future resource requirements to meet organisational goals and objectives
- Lead organisational strategic initiatives and reform
- Develop major goals to support organisational objectives
- Act as organisational executive representative in meetings, strategic planning or high-profile engagements

For more information on the recognition of transferable military skills, go to [www.defence.gov.au/adc/adfctr/veterans](http://www.defence.gov.au/adc/adfctr/veterans)

For specific advice/questions associated with civil qualifications, contact the ADF Transition and Civil Recognition Project team [adf.civilrecognition@defence.gov.au](mailto:adf.civilrecognition@defence.gov.au)

# Applying for jobs

Prospective employers will look at your job application to determine whether you'll be a good fit for their workplace. The application process can vary from job to job and is often different between the private and public sectors.

## Private sector

In the private sector, application requirements can vary between jobs. It is important to read job advertisements carefully and provide the documentation specified by each individual employer.

Businesses may consider your:

- resume
- cover letter / statement of claims
- response to job criteria questions
- abilities during a practical assessment
- profile on a job search website.

For tips on how to develop these documents, including free online learning modules, visit the Workforce Australia website: [www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/coaching/job-applications/job-application-tips](http://www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/coaching/job-applications/job-application-tips)

## Public sector

The public sector refers to positions in either local, state or territory, or federal governments.

The Australian Public Service Commission offers resources to help you apply for APS jobs: [www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/joining-aps](http://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/joining-aps)

Australian state and territory governments recognise the importance of veteran employment. You can find out more on our website at [www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans/support-employment](http://www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans/support-employment)

### Advice from a veteran

“Identify your value. During our time in uniform we have developed many unique skill sets but also many that are transferrable to the civilian workplace.

Don't make the mistake of underestimating your worth.”

– Todd Berry, veteran

## Resume

A resume is a short (1–2 pages) document summarising your work experience and qualifications. It is an important marketing tool for job seekers and is generally required as part of your job application.

One of the hardest things about preparing your resume is translating your ADF specific capabilities into civilian skills. The Core Skills Identifier tool can help you translate your military skills into language understood by the civilian workplace. [www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans/identify-your-skills](http://www.veteranemployment.gov.au/veterans/identify-your-skills)



## What to include in a resume

### Personal details

- Name
- Contact information – email address and phone number (with voicemail)
- Level of security clearance.

### An introduction

Start with a short paragraph giving a high-level overview of your key skills and experience as they relate to the job you are applying for.

### Work history overview

- List your most recent position first and work backwards. Include the different positions you held throughout your military career.
- Include the dates you were in each role, and a brief description of the responsibilities.
- Consolidate information wherever possible to prevent your resume becoming too long.
- If you have relevant experience in volunteer roles, include these as well.

### Education and Training

- List any formal qualifications, starting with your highest level of achievement. This can include educational qualifications, professional accreditation, licences or certificates.
- Include the full qualification name, the institution that awarded it and the date completed.

### Referees

You need at least two referees for every job application. Ideally referees should be people you reported to in your most recent positions. Always ask permission before including anyone as your referee. It is acceptable to protect your referee's privacy by writing "Referees available on request".

## Additional tips

- Tailor your resume for each job and take into account the needs of the prospective employer. Make sure you have addressed the job criteria and that your resume showcases your achievements and doesn't simply list duties.
- Ask for help: is there someone who can provide useful tips on how to present yourself positively? It is also worth asking non-ADF contacts to read and comment on your resume.
- Translate ADF jargon into language that will be understood by a civilian employer.
- Omit any information that is not relevant to your ability to perform in the new role.
- Remember that you cannot include classified information.
- Carefully check your resume for any typing or formatting errors and ask someone you trust to proofread the document before sending it to a recruiter or employer.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has useful resume templates on its Jumpstart page as well as advice and tools to help you tailor and quality-check your resume. [www.jobjumpstart.gov.au](http://www.jobjumpstart.gov.au)

Your Career is another Australian Government website that offers tips and checklists to improve your resume. [www.yourcareer.gov.au](http://www.yourcareer.gov.au)

The Defence Force Transition Program provides support to help you prepare for a career after separation. Defence's Job Search Preparation Workshop provides training on how to build a resume and how to apply for jobs, as well as ongoing access to an online library of resources. [www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/employment-assistance](http://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/military-life-cycle/transition/employment-assistance)

The Department of Veterans' Affairs Support for Employment program is also able to provide assistance with preparing your resume. [www.veteransemployment.gov.au/veterans/support-employment](http://www.veteransemployment.gov.au/veterans/support-employment)

## The interview

Preparing for an interview is essential. Interviews allow you to demonstrate your skills to prospective employers and help them identify if you're a good match for the position. It's your job to help the person interviewing you understand how you will apply your skills to the job they have advertised.

Styles of interview can vary depending on the type of role and the organisation. It may:

- Be a formal one-on-one meeting or an informal conversation. Always treat an 'informal chat' either face-to-face or over the phone as an interview, and prepare accordingly.
- Be conducted in person or via telephone, or online.
- Include a single interviewer or panel of interviewers.
- Include a group of other interviewees being interviewed in addition to yourself.
- Include multiple rounds, which could include a combination of online questionnaires, group testing and/or face-to-face interviews.

### Make time to prepare

The employer will want to hear from you, not only to better understand the information in your resume, but to get a sense of your personality and how you would fit into their organisation. Think about what you can bring to the role and organisation that will set you apart from others. Prepare any questions you may want to ask – these may be about the role, organisation, culture, pay etc.

### Understand the employer

Gather information about the organisation from its website, annual reports, press releases, social media, and through your networks. Understand how the position you have applied for fits into the organisation and how you can contribute to helping achieve its goals.

#### Advice from a veteran

"It's ok to ring up and ask questions"

– Lisa Conway, veteran

Things you may wish to learn about the employer include their:

- priorities and vision
- services and products
- values and culture
- structure and workforce.

### Make a good first impression

First impressions are important, so think about how you want to present yourself. Be confident and dress in an appropriate and presentable manner for the relevant profession, industry and work location. You should aim to arrive at least ten minutes early, this allows you time to check in, compose yourself and review your application notes.

#### Advice from a veteran

"It's about selling yourself, which we are not very good at in the military. You're not taught to talk yourself up but it's about knowing what you have to offer and really owning that."

– Zoe Copland, veteran

### Think about your language

When working in team environments, it is normal to use 'we' when talking about the work you have done. At interview try to change your language from 'we' to 'I' and explain the role you played in the team and tasks you performed.

### Use relevant examples

Make sure the examples you use meet the need of the question. If you do not have direct work experience, think about other examples from your life where your skills and experience translate. You can always ask them to repeat the question or whether your response provided enough information. While it is important not to get too detailed, describe your relevant qualifications, training and other specialised experience. Always relate your answers back to your skills.



Describe situations in the military in which you achieved your end goal.

Employers may ask you to tell a story about a past job experience to assess how you conduct yourself.

Be prepared to outline one or two brief examples of how you put your skills into practice and how these skills translate into the job you are applying for.

It is important to focus not just on the actions you took, but also on the outcomes that you achieved and even lessons learnt.

A common technique is to use the STAR method. Frame your answer by outlining the:

- SITUATION** Describe the situation
- TASK** Explain what you were responsible for in the situation
- ACTION** Provide details about the actions you took
- RESULT** Detail the results and outcomes of your actions.

#### Advice from a veteran

“Look at the STAR method - Situation, Task, Action and Result. It’s a good way to break down experiences you had to then be able to relay that in your interview”

– Michael Herron, veteran

#### An employer’s perspective

“Veterans bring an incredible skillset and experience often learnt through the hardest and most challenging environments.

There is a resilience that they have, and there’s an adaptability and outcome focus that is really appreciated by business.”

Andy Keough CSC, Saab Australia

#### Avoid using ranks, military acronyms, and other military jargon

Practice translating military language before the interview to align your military experience with the experience and skills required for the role. Many civilians will not know what your ADF rank or job title mean, therefore it is critical that you are able to explain your examples in plain English.

#### TIP:

Consider highlighting any lessons learnt and what changes you made to your work.



## After the interview

Waiting for a prospective employer to contact you following an interview can be one of the hardest parts of any job search. Depending on the organisation you've interviewed with, it may take days, weeks or months to hear back about whether you've been successful or not. There are many reasons why employers may take longer to contact you, so staying patient is important. Some recruitment processes, such as for some public service roles, can attract hundreds of applications.

### When to follow up after an interview?

Towards the end of your interview is a great opportunity to seek clarification about next steps and when you can expect to hear back from the employer. Job advertisements may also include information about the proposed timeframes for the recruitment process and when, or if, applicants will be contacted.

If no timeframe has been provided and you haven't heard back within two weeks, consider reaching out to the employer or recruiter to follow up.

#### **TIP:**

It is important to stay active in your job search while you wait. Keep applying and interviewing for jobs you're interested in to keep your momentum going.

### What to do if you're unsuccessful

If you're unsuccessful in your interview, it is normal to feel disheartened, particularly if it's a job you really wanted. Try not to take the setback personally and use the experience as a learning tool by:

- Asking for feedback – ask what you did well and where you could improve. Discuss this with a friend, mentor or career coach.
- Reflecting on your interview – think about how you could make your responses stronger.
- Practising your interview techniques – you should consider practising with a career coach, in front of a mirror, with a friend, or by recording yourself.
- Revising your approach – plan what you want to change to improve your performance.



# Settling in to your new workplace

## Tips for adjusting to the civilian workforce

Civilian workplace cultures can be quite different to the ADF and it can take a while to adjust. Ask your supervisor, mentor or a workplace buddy for advice to help you settle in.

### Workplace culture

The civilian workplace can be very different to the military. It may not be as fast nor as structured and it could take you a moment to get your bearings. This is perfectly normal.

There are a few tricks that could make it easier.

### Communication

In the ADF, personnel are often referred to formally as “sir”, “ma’am”, or by rank. However, in the private sector it is more acceptable to refer to co-workers, regardless of their position, by their first name.

Just as in the ADF, all workplaces use unique jargon and acronyms. Take time to get to know the jargon in your new workplace, and avoid using military jargon.

### Build workplace relationships

Interpersonal relationships are key to settling into a workplace. Be positive and look for opportunities to learn from and share your skills with your new co-workers. Discover mentors and build your network by finding other veterans in your workplace, and in the wider community.

### Military understanding

Only a small percentage of the Australian population has served or are serving in the ADF. Most people don't know how the ADF works nor understand the culture. It is up to you how much you want to talk about your time in the ADF.

### Managing your own career

Don't forget, you're in charge of your own career, including promoting yourself and planning your future. It's important to actively seek feedback. Think about where you want to go with your career and determine the steps you need to take to get there. Seek out learning and development opportunities that will help you achieve your goals.

### A veteran's perspective

“The inherent skills that are developed through defence service such as – teamwork, comradery, a will to win, mateship - those things drive veteran employees to excel in the jobs that they do.”

Aaron Cornwall, veteran



## Next steps and additional resources

There's a range of resources to help you move to the civilian workforce.

Take the time to review and plan and then turn those plans into action.

Use the checklist in this toolkit.

Visit our website for more information and the range of resources available.

[www.veteranemployment.gov.au](http://www.veteranemployment.gov.au)

## Checklist – thinking about moving to civilian employment

Research <i>Tip: check out the Support and Resources page on our website: <a href="http://www.veteranemployment.gov.au">www.veteranemployment.gov.au</a></i>	
Prepare mentally for your separation from the ADF <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk to friends or family who have moved out of the ADF</li><li>• Connect with informal groups set up by veterans on social media</li><li>• Connect with Ex-Service Organisations (ESO)</li><li>• Seek professional assistance services tailored for veterans seeking employment</li></ul>	
Start/continue to network	
Find a mentor	
Consider and research your eligibility for recognition of prior learning	
Research professional memberships you may be eligible for	



## Checklist – Getting the job

<b>First Steps</b>	
Identify your skills	
Apply for recognition of prior learning (if applicable)	
Develop your resume	
Identify your referees and obtain their permission to be listed for future job applications	
<b>The Job Search</b>	
Create profiles on your desired employment and social media platforms	
Contact recruitment agencies or dedicated veteran employment organisations	
Use job search boards as well as career and company websites	
Develop your application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update your resume to suit the job requirements</li> <li>• Tailor your cover letter/statement of claims based on the job advertisement</li> <li>• Answer any additional job criteria questions</li> </ul>	
Apply for positions	
<b>The Interview</b>	
Get to know the employer	
Prepare examples to use when answering the interview questions	
Practice interview <i>Tip: you can do this in front of the mirror or with a family member, friend, or mentor.</i>	
Present yourself well	
Develop questions to ask during the interview	
<b>After the interview (particularly if you have been unsuccessful)</b>	
Ask for feedback from the employer	
Reflect on your interview including debriefing with a mentor (if applicable)	
Review and revise your approach	

## Notes

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# Veteran Employment Program



[veteranemployment.gov.au](http://veteranemployment.gov.au)