

# VETERANS EMPLOYMENT

Labor is committed to ensuring our veterans move into fulfilling employment after their time in the ADF.

The unemployment and underemployment of veterans is a serious issue which requires our immediate attention. A recent report undertaken by WithYouWithMe listed the unemployment rate of veterans at 30.2 percent, underemployment at 19 per cent and for those who are employed they experience an average of 30 percent drop in income from their ADF wages. In addition, they found that those who didn't medically discharge face a jobless rate of 11.2 percent, which is almost twice the national rate.

As a number that represents 1,500 of the 5,500 who discharge each year who cannot find or maintain employment and of those who do, WithYouWithMe found that they have accepted up to a 30 percent pay cut. This level of unemployment would not be tolerated in many groups in the community and shouldn't be accepted for veterans.

Individuals leave the ADF with a wealth of practical and desirable experience but these can be lost in the translation from military life to the civilian workplace.

Labor believes it is important to support veterans to move smoothly into employment and to work with employers to ensure they reap the many benefits of hiring ex-serving defence personnel.

This is why Labor has announced a suite of policies which will strengthen the quality and number of career opportunities for our ADF personnel.

These policies will address barriers to employment and increase access to effective career guidance and support for veterans.

## Helping business to train veterans

A future Shorten Labor Government will ensure any short term civilian skills gaps are not a barrier to employment by providing employers with training grants.

Labor believes it is important that businesses are able to attain the many benefits of hiring a veteran but recognise they may not have the specific civilian qualifications or civilian experience necessary for a specific vacant employment opportunity.

Labor will provide eligible business with a training grant of up to \$5,000 in order to address any specific skills gap that may exist as a barrier to civilian employment for an otherwise suitable transitioning veteran applicant.

Strict guidelines will be in place to ensure funding is used for the training of the veteran. This program will be reviewed at the three year mark to ensure it is providing the most benefit to both employers and veterans.

In addition, Labor will undertake an education campaign on the many benefits and translatable skills of veterans, to be developed by the Industry Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment. The campaign will highlight the many benefits and translatable skills of veterans and will be directed by the Industry Advisory Committee to be delivered across different multimedia platforms.

The Industry Advisory Committee was established to develop practical measures to assist veterans into employment and play a role in the broader promotion of the skills and experiences that veterans have to offer employers. As such, we believe they are best placed to determine the scope and methods for delivery of the education campaign.

Transitioning ADF personnel have considerable skills and businesses are open to employing veterans. However, military life is unique and the skills a veteran acquires are not always easily translated to civilian workplaces.

Labor is committed to providing greater awareness of the skills which our veterans and ex-service personnel have and how these can be adapted by business.

#### A new veterans' employment service

A future Shorten Labor Government will establish an employment and transition service which provides greater individualised, tailored support to veterans over a longer period of time.

Currently when individuals transition they receive some assistance and career support through Defence. However, this is time limited, reactive and focused on immediate needs.

Labor believes we have a duty of care to proactively and holistically support veterans through transition into employment. As such, Labor will establish a Defence Employment and Transition Service.

Staffed by qualified Transition Advisers who understand the unique skills of our ADF personnel and how to best translate these skills for civilian employers, this service will focus on providing greater one-on-one support before, during and after a member's transition from the ADF to civilian life.

Importantly, this service will include detailed career advice and will identify possible barriers to successful transition and employment in order to link people, where necessary, with appropriate support services, such as housing, health and community support services.

Transition Advisers will also undertake a comprehensive audit of the skills the member has acquired over the course of their career within the ADF, determine any partial qualifications, identifying any civilian qualifications and acquiring appropriate recognition.

In addition to providing greater initial assistance, this service will contact members at regular intervals during the first twelve months of transition to ensure that those who

require a little extra support down the track are identified early and appropriate support provided. Following this initial twelve months, the service will be available for veterans to return to over a period of five years, ensuring the gate doesn't close behind those leaving the ADF.

Transition Advisers will be required to meet industry standards and will be provided with additional funding for annual professional development, this will guarantee current and relevant advice is provided.

This will ensure our service personnel have access to tailored assistance, effective support and greater opportunities for longer.

At the time of implementation an assessment will be conducted to determine who is best placed to deliver this service, whether that is Defence or a third party organisation.

#### Expanded access to additional education and civilian training

A future Shorten Labor Government will expand the eligibility and increase the funding available to veterans to help develop a new career after their time in the ADF.

The nature and length of service in the ADF is changing. Currently, the average length of service in the ADF is approximately 7.5 years. However, access to greater support hasn't been adjusted to reflect the real life experience of our current serving members.

Labor will expand eligibility to the Career Training Assistance Scheme and increase the funding available for veterans.

Under a Shorten Labor Government, eligibility to the tiers of assistance will be expanded and funding amounts increased. The necessary length of service for the second tier of assistance will be reduced from 12 years down to 5 years, reflecting our understanding of the average length of service in the ADF. The funding available will also be increased from \$1,100 to up to \$5,000 to ensure veterans receive the training they need to best prepare them for future employment.

The top tier of assistance will also benefit from changes which will see the qualifying length of service reduced down from 18 years to 15 years. Additional funding will also be made available, increasing from up to \$5,320 to \$7,500. Those medically discharged will continue to be able to access this top tier, regardless of their length of service.

This funding will be available to use for a number of activities including gaining appropriate recognition and additional education and civilian training as necessary.

Labor is committed to ensuring each member is able to access flexible training arrangements which tailor their experience and skills to future employment opportunities.

In addition, Labor will look to provide further support for those with other risk factors, such as younger members who enlisted immediately out of school and have undertaken operational service, to ensure that they are fully supported regardless of when they leave the ADF.

### Translating the experience of veterans

A future Shorten Labor Government will work to ensure that veterans receive recognition of prior skills within civilian professional organisations and institutions.

Veterans leave the ADF with a wealth of practical and desirable experience but translating this experience to civilian workplaces can be challenging.

A future Shorten Labor Government will work with States, Territories and peak industry bodies to identify opportunities for automatic recognition of skills.

Labor will work with States and Territories to recognise ADF experience and translate this to an automatic university rank. This is based on a program run by the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre which recognises rank and length of service and translates this to a tertiary entrance rank, enabling smoother access to University for those leaving the ADF.

This process enables those, who perhaps hadn't considered further study before joining the forces or entered straight from school, an opportunity to engage in further study.

Labor will work with peak civil professional bodies to identify opportunities where current ADF training automatically meets professional civilian standards and work to ensure these are recognised outside of defence by civilian employers.

Due to the nature of work which is required of our defence personnel, often security clearances are necessary. Labor will work with Defence to establish a temporary security clearance for veterans to utilise as they apply for civilian work, providing a greater incentive for prospective employers and making the process easier for those transitioning out of the ADF.

Labor is committed to ensuring the wealth of practical and workplace experience of our veterans is recognised across all sectors of the community.

### Summary

When our men and women undertake to service their country, we make a commitment to them and their family to support them after their time in the ADF. This suite of policies is designed to assist those transitioning out of the ADF into meaningful employment and has been costed at \$121.3M to 2021/2022.