

Women Veterans 2025 Baseline Data Report



Health

- Women veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide compared to civilian women.¹
- Women who served in the permanent forces and separated involuntarily for medical reasons are nearly 5 times more likely to die by suicide than women who have not served.²
- 52.1% of women veterans reported at least one long-term health condition. This compares to 35.9% for women who never served.³
- Women veterans aged over 65 years reported arthritis and heart disease at rates higher than women who had never served (5.6% and 3.4% percentage points higher respectively).⁵

Top 3 health conditions claimed by veterans through DVA

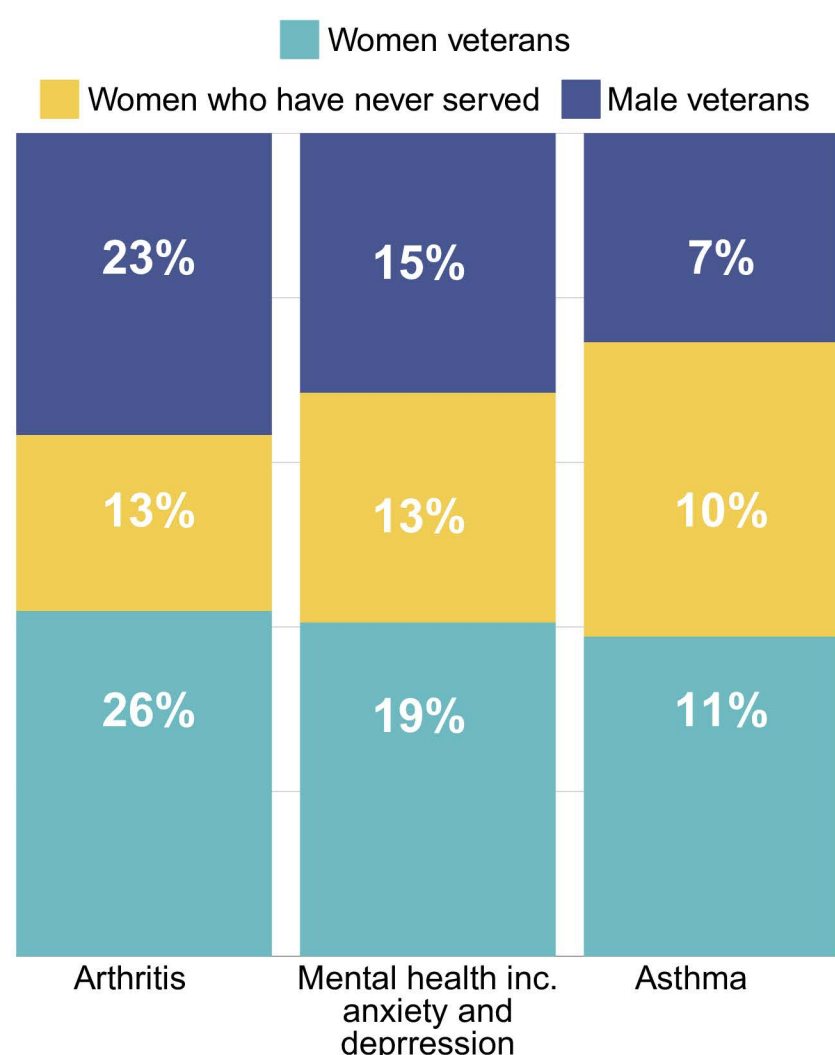
Women

1. Tinnitus
2. Sprain and strain
3. Osteoarthritis

Men

1. Tinnitus
2. Sensorineural hearing loss
3. Osteoarthritis

Most common long-term health conditions⁴



Leadership, identity and decision making

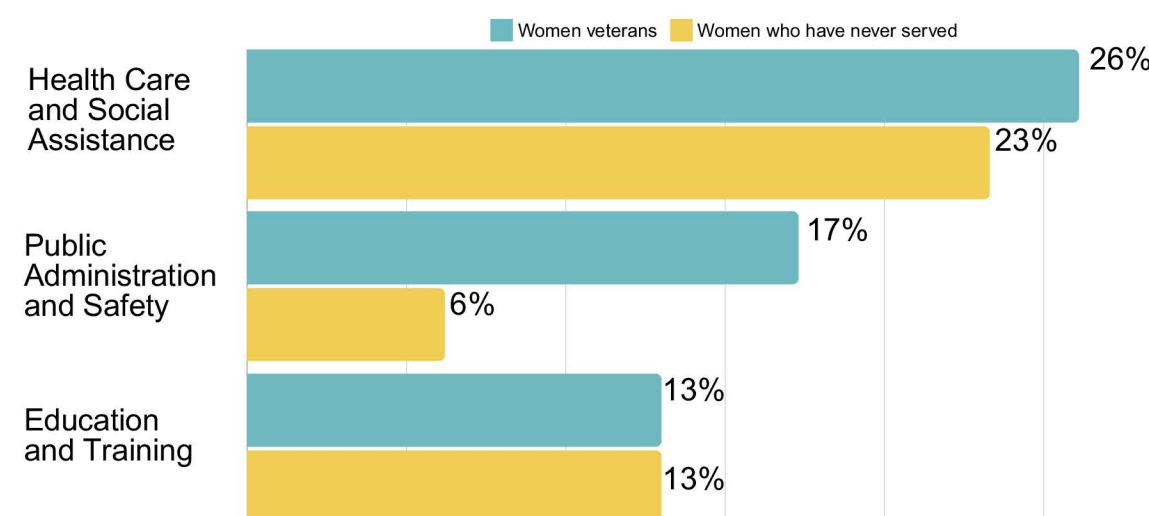
- 17% of Senior Officer positions are held by women, up from 12.7% in 2017.¹⁰ In comparison, 9% of CEOs in the ASX300 are women.¹¹
- The proportion of women Officers and women in the pipeline for leadership positions is still proportionately lower than men.¹²
- Women in the defence forces often report feeling compelled to “play a character” or changing their behaviour, appearance and communication style to suit the hypermasculine military culture.¹³



Education, employment, and economic equality and security

- 46.5% of women veterans are not in the labour force, despite more than a third of these veterans being of working age (under 64 years old). In comparison, 57.4% of male veterans are not in the labour force but only 15.9% were of working age.¹⁴
- 29.2% of women who have ever served have a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares to 20.4% of men who have ever served.¹⁶
- 80% of victims of military sexual misconduct are women while men in defence represent 90% of alleged perpetrators.⁹
- In the last five years 25.9% of women and 10.5% of men in the ADF experienced sexual harassment in an ADF workplace. This compares to national prevalence rates of 25.3% for women and 16.2% for men.¹⁸
- 43.4% of ADF members were aware of sexual harassment currently happening to someone else in the ADF workplace.¹⁹
- 80% of people who experience sexual misconduct in the military do not report it.²⁰ Defence estimates an under-reporting rate of 60% for sexual assaults.²¹

Most common industries of paid employment¹⁵



Diversity, age and service

- Of the 3.5% of First Nations people serving in the military, 24% are women.²³
- Two thirds of women serving in the regular service are under of 34 years old.²²
- The median age at transition from the regular service is 27 years for women, compared to 30 years for men.²⁴
- 59.3% of women veterans are aged over 50 years, compared to 44.1% for women who never served.²⁵
- By 2035, it is estimated that women's participation rates in the Australian Defence Force will increase from 20.1% to 35%.²⁶



Gender-based violence

- In 2015, 29% of recently transitioned defence members and 22% of current members reported any intimate partner violence exposure in their current relationship.⁶
- In comparison, 27% of Australian women have experienced violence by an intimate or cohabitating partner since the age of 15.⁷
- In 2022-23, 23% of specialist homelessness service clients who were current/former ADF members had experienced family and domestic violence.⁸



Delivery of unpaid care

- Serving women access flexible working arrangements (via SERCAT6) at ten times the rate of serving men.²⁷
- Women veterans with children are 16 percentage points more likely to live with children than male veterans.²⁸
- There is a deviation in the income of women veterans (from the ages of 30-39 years to 80-89 years)²⁹ compared to male counterparts, due to providing unpaid care. This deviation equates to a total difference of ~\$80,000 in lifetime income earnings.
- Women veterans are almost twice as likely to deliver 30 hours or more of unpaid domestic work per week than male veterans. Women who had never served had similar rates of unpaid domestic work.³⁰
- Women who have ever served are more than twice as likely to be employed part time as male counterparts. This rate was consistent with women who had never served.³¹

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