Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Census Action Plan 2026

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Over the past 12 months, we have continued to embed initiatives and invest in the focus areas identified in our 2025 Census Action Plan.
The strengths below highlight our progress and the areas we will continue to build on.

Strength	Census reflection	Progress over the past 12 months
 Our people are committed to continuous improvement through innovation and a willingness to test new ideas and approaches.	• **86%** report suggesting ideas to improve our way of doing things. • Employee confidence that failure can be part of innovation increased by 4 points to **50%**. • Employee perceptions of improvements to internal IT systems rose by 11 points to **38%**.	✓ Applied employee feedback to inform process improvements that streamlined claims processing and service delivery. ✓ Expanded Curiosity Month, an employee-led initiative for exploration, connection and shared learning. ✓ Delivered 2026 Innovation Month and Out of the Box sessions to share new approaches, tools and perspectives. ✓ Introduced enterprise-wide AI capability and governance (Microsoft 365 Copilot, DVA OneChat and GovAI Chat) to ensure our people have access to technology to support them in their roles. ✓ Launched our DVA Digital Strategy 2025-2030 and upgraded laptops to Windows 11.
 Our people are motivated by a strong sense of purpose and commitment to supporting veterans and families of veterans.	• **92%** understand how their role contributes to outcomes for the Australian public. • **87%** believe strongly in DVA's purpose and objectives. • **88%** are happy to go the extra mile when required.	✓ Released the 2026 DVA Strategic Priorities. ✓ Expanded opportunities for our people to support commemorative activities and connect with the veteran community. ✓ Strengthened leadership engagement through SES Open-Door sessions, Town Halls and divisional conferences. ✓ Delivered the Connect to Purpose program and Discover DVA sessions, enhanced the Secretary's Shout Outs experience and created the Good News Corner to strengthen connection to purpose.
 Our people achieve outcomes through collaboration, teamwork and mutual support.	• **87%** feel comfortable checking with colleagues about the right way to do something. • **79%** feel the people in their workgroup value others' individual skills and talents. • **77%** feel the people in their workgroup are able to bring up problems and tough issues.	✓ Continued to deliver the DVA Mentoring Program and SES Coffee Connect to help our people build connections, networks and collaborate. ✓ Celebrated our people who demonstrated collaboration and supported their peers through Shout Outs and the DVA Rewards Program. ✓ Embedded a twice-yearly Pulse Survey, alongside the APS Employee Census, enabling teams to discuss feedback and identify workplace improvements collaboratively.
 Our leaders foster an inclusive culture where people feel supported, valued and empowered.	• **87%** agree their supervisor ensures their workgroup delivers on its responsibilities. • **84%** agree their supervisor actively supports inclusion in workplace activities. • **80%** agree their supervisor invites a range of views, including those different from their own.	✓ Continued to equip managers with psychosocial safety resources, while delivering Connection Sessions, Respect@Work workshops, the Manager Development Program and other learning opportunities to support a safe, inclusive and high-performing culture. ✓ Introduced Executive Board On-the-Road and Deputy Dialogue sessions to provide our people with opportunities to connect with leadership. ✓ Launched the DVA Diversity Communities, released the DVA 2025-2027 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan and celebrated cultural days of significance, strengthening inclusion, cultural awareness and connection across the department.

Our commitment

Our people have a strong connection to DVA's purpose and are committed to making a difference for veterans and families of veterans. Our 2026 Census results also tell us that some organisational factors can make it harder for our people to do their best work.

Our 2026 Census Action Plan focuses on removing these barriers and creating the conditions for our people to thrive. Over the next 12 months, we will focus on four areas: helping our people utilise and continue to develop their skills, improving how we lead and communicate change, making it easier to get work done, and strengthening how we prevent and manage psychosocial risks.

Together, these focus areas build on our strengths while responding to the areas where our people have told us we need to do better.

Areas of focus	Census reflection	We will...	How we will know we're making a difference
 **Prevent and manage psychosocial risks** *We will strengthen the prevention and management of psychosocial risks to support the health, safety and wellbeing of our people.*	• **27%** report working well above capacity, up 6 points from 2025 and 10 points higher than the APS overall. • **38%** report feeling burned out by their work, up 3 points from 2025 and 8 points higher than the APS overall.	• **Strengthen our approach** to preventing and responding to psychosocial risks, informed by consultation with our people and the findings of the Comcare psychosocial inspection. • **Implement enterprise-wide psychosocial risk assessments** and action plans to identify psychosocial hazards, strengthen preventative controls and monitor their effectiveness over time.	• **Our people** feel supported by strengthened approaches to identifying, managing and responding to psychosocial risks. • **Psychosocial hazards and risks** are identified, assessed and managed through effective preventative controls and action plans. • **Our 2027 APS Employee Census** results show improvement in measures relating to workload, burnout and wellbeing.
 **Grow and use our skills** *We will increase opportunities for our people to develop and apply their skills through meaningful work, supported by effective workforce planning and contemporary job design.*	• Fewer respondents report that their job provides opportunities to utilise their skills (**74%**, compared with the APS rate of **78%**). • Fewer respondents agree formal learning improved their performance, with favourable results declining by 6 points to **52%** in 2026.	• **Identify critical role and capability gaps** to inform workforce planning and capability development. • **Improve job design** and strengthen the connection between performance, capability, and health and wellbeing. • Continue to **build managers' capability** to have effective coaching, career and development conversations. • **Launch the DVA Workforce Strategy** to guide capability investment and resourcing.	• **Our people** report increased opportunities to use and develop their skills. • **Our managers** are more confident in workforce planning practices. • **Our managers** are more confident in performance and development conversations. • **Our 2027 APS Employee Census** results show improvement in job, health and wellbeing and skills alignment.

Areas of focus	Census reflection	We will...	How we will know we're making a difference
 **Navigate change together** *We will strengthen change leadership and communication to ensure our people are informed, consulted and supported through organisational change.*	• **43%** agree DVA manages change effectively. • **48%** agree internal communication is effective. • Change management and internal communication remain among DVA's lowest-rated workplace factors.	• **Embed the DVA Change Approach and Toolkit** as the consistent framework for enterprise change. • Build change capability through **practical learning and a Change Community of Practice**. • Establish and embed governance arrangements to **strengthen enterprise visibility** and coordination of change. • **Recognise effective change leadership**, innovation and adaptability through the DVA Awards.	• **Our people** report they receive timely and useful information, and feel informed, consulted and supported through change. • **Our managers and leaders** are more confident and capable in leading change. • **Our leaders** have visibility of enterprise change and consider factors and impacts on their people. • **Our 2027 APS Employee Census** results show improvement in change management and internal communication.
 **Make it easier to get work done** *We will reduce barriers to enable our people to work sustainably and effectively.*	• **35%** agree administrative processes help them get their job done effectively. • **35%** agree competing priorities are managed effectively.	• Continue to **work with our people to simplify processes**, reduce duplication and remove unnecessary administrative effort. • Increase awareness and application of DVA's risk appetite and tolerance to **support consistent, risk-informed decision-making**. • Continue to **deliver the Supporting our Service Delivery Workforce Program**, including practical support for frontline employees, structured opportunities to shape service delivery improvements and an SES immersion program to strengthen leaders' understanding of frontline work. • Continue to **progress technology uplift initiatives**.	• **Our people** experience fewer process, technology and administrative barriers, enabling them to focus on meaningful work and priority outcomes. • **Our people and managers** confidently make decisions, appropriately escalate risks and enable innovation, performance and safe outcomes within agreed risk parameters. • **Our service delivery employees** feel supported and have meaningful opportunities to shape service delivery improvements. • **Our 2027 APS Employee Census** results show improvement in measures relating to technology, empowerment and decision-making.