

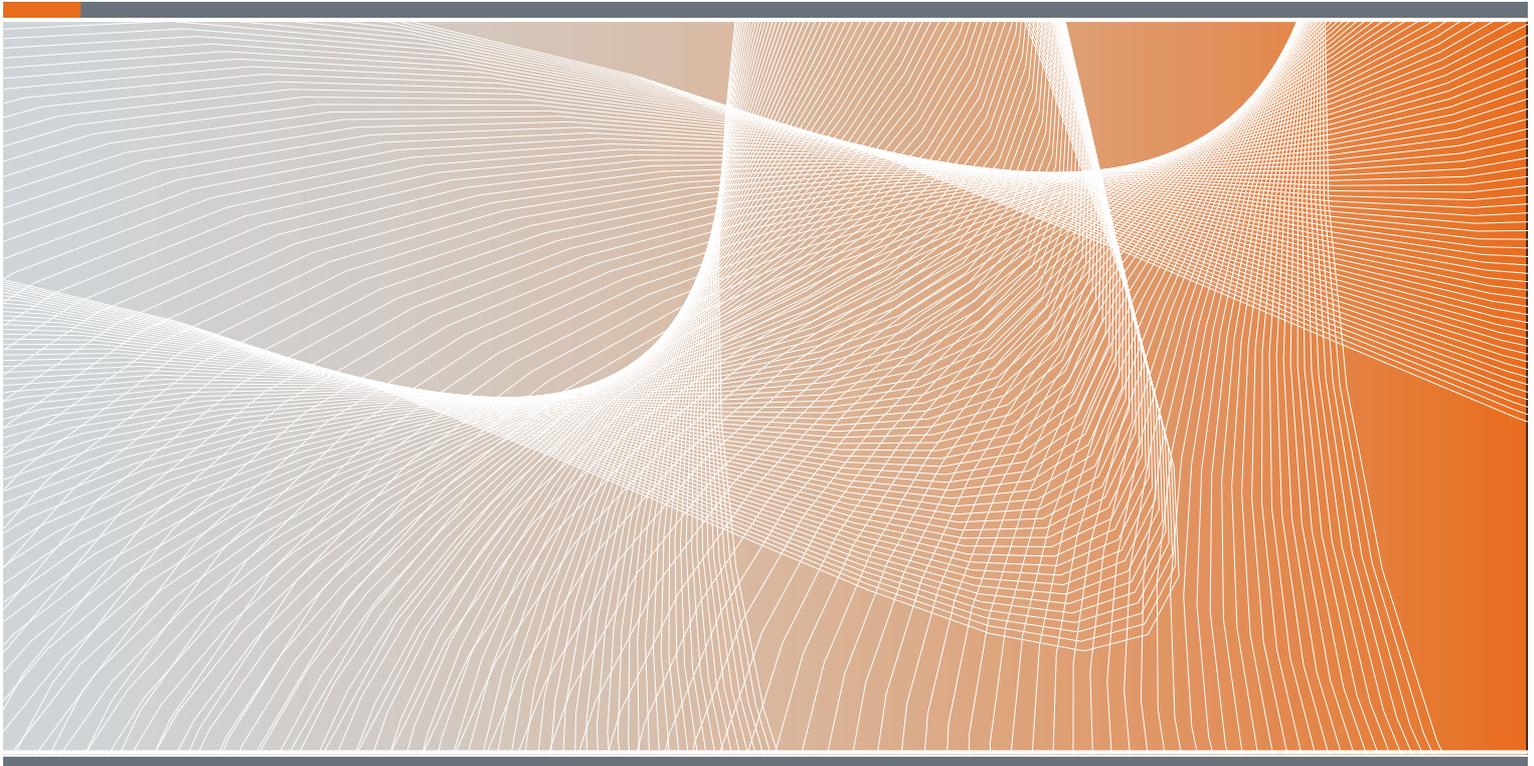


Australian Government

Department of Defence

Joint Transition Authority Annual Progress Report 2021

Joint Transition Authority



13 October 2021

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Govern	3
3	Plan	4
4	Manage.....	5
5	Delivery.....	5

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Introduction

Transition to civilian life can be a significant event and it is acknowledged that, although this is a relatively smooth process for most, for some it can be difficult and create uncertainty.

The Productivity Commission (PC) Report, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*, recommended the Joint Transition Authority (JTA) be established with the Department of Defence (Defence) to ensure serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families are better prepared and supported through transition from military to civilian life (Recommendation 7.1).

The Australian Government established JTA in October 2020. It sits within Defence and works in partnership with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC). This builds on the close working relationship the three agencies have in place with regard to improving and integrating transition services.

JTA is currently in an implementation phase, identifying how transition services can be better connected and improved, and seeking to better understand transition risk factors that would allow early identification of those members requiring additional support.

This report provides an update on the implementation of JTA under the themes of Govern, Plan, Manage and Delivery. This is in line with JTA's initial operating model. The order does not necessarily reflect their priority.

Govern

JTA has established governance arrangements to oversee its delivery against its purpose to ensure serving members and their families are better prepared and supported through transition from military to civilian life.

Through these governance arrangements, JTA works in partnership with transition stakeholders across Defence, DVA and CSC to:

- provide strategic oversight
- advise on the design and implementation plan for JTA
- review the progress of key activities and decisions
- improve the coordination and synchronisation of resources and services across Defence, CSC and DVA.

Arrangements include the establishment of the JTA Steering Group. The JTA Steering Group is chaired by Head People Capability (HPC) and comprises membership from across Defence, as well as representation by DVA and CSC. The JTA Steering Group is responsible for oversight and integration of reforms and ensuring agencies are connected.

HPC has technical authority for transition within Defence and is accountable for integrating, synchronising and assuring the Defence transition system's governance, management, planning and delivery is fit for purpose. HPC also provides regular reports to relevant committees, including external forums such the Ex-Service Organisation Roundtable.

Further, a Transition Synchronisation Forum has been established to assist JTA in recommending improvements to transition policy and processes. Data is shared in this Forum so that services and support can be better targeted to transitioning members and their families.

Plan

In the second quarter of 2021, JTA undertook a series of consultation sessions in a phased approach to understand the experience of transitioning members and their families, the services and support available to them, and to identify potential improvements.

Participants comprised current and former ADF members, families, ex-service organisations (ESOs) and state and territory government agencies, academia, industry, and organisations with related experience.

The key themes arising from these consultations included:

- system complexity
- medical transition
- leadership and culture—the role of the Commanding Officer
- family engagement
- uptake of services
- transition to employment.

The suggestions and ideas for improvement have been added to the JTA Insights Register for further analysis to inform the future direction and reform opportunities of JTA.

A JTA Consultation Forum, chaired by HPC, was held in September 2021 to finalised themes from the consultation process. The Forum comprised selected consultation participants and key stakeholders from Defence, DVA and CSC to test the ideas and suggestions arising from the consultations to inform the development of a summary of the consultation findings for publication on the JTA website.

Preparations are underway for JTA to develop a Transition Strategy for publication in the first quarter of 2022. The Transition Strategy will be a public document that will set the transition system up to operate in an integrated and synchronised way, with a shared vision for success.

The Transition Strategy will:

- align stakeholders on a shared definition of transition and what successful transition looks like
- set a shared ambition for outcomes and experiences members and families should expect when transitioning
- set the priorities for the transition system to follow for the next three years.

The Transition Strategy will be informed by the insights from the JTA consultation process undertaken and a comprehensive literature review. Key transition stakeholders will also be consulted during its development so the Strategy reflects a system-wide view.

JTA is undertaking a mapping process to document and understand the transition system. The map currently shows the processes that support transition across Defence, and their linkages to DVA and CSC. JTA is working with DVA and CSC to build their transition-related processes into the map.

Establishing this view allows JTA to identify linkages, areas for improvement, reduce duplication, and ultimately support the transition system to become further integrated, synchronised and assured. The mapping process also allows JTA to gather stakeholder feedback on the system and capture the insights in the JTA Insights Register to inform future changes and improvements to the system.

The map has allowed HPC and JTA to understand elements of the transition system, and to help guide decisions about potential changes and improvements. Further information about the improvements from the mapping process that JTA is implementing is provided under Delivery below.

Manage

JTA is working to develop a process to collect and analyse data across the transition system to identify trends, assure services are meeting the needs of the transitioning ADF members and their families, and report on performance on an ongoing basis.

Additionally, the regular sharing of transition data across Defence, DVA and CSC means the three agencies are now able to better queue their services by understanding when, where and who is transitioning at any one time. Work is also underway to capture data on risks associated with individuals who are about to transition allowing services to be targeted to these individuals.

Further, JTA will leverage emerging data collection and predictive analytics capabilities as they mature, including the Defence/DVA Data Sharing and Analytics Solution (DSAS). DSAS will link data on serving ADF members with DVA client data, producing a longitudinal view of current and former serving ADF members. This will provide valuable insights on the transition experience, and in turn support JTA in harnessing opportunities to improve the transition system.

Lastly, further to this year's Joint Transition Authority Annual Progress Report 2021 (this report), JTA will continue to report annually to the Australian Government on its operations.

Delivery

JTA has designed a repeatable method to capture and analyse insights in the JTA Insights Register, perform thematic analysis of the insights and identify, investigate, validate and implement improvements.

One improvement being implemented is the development of a single Australian Defence Force Transition Manual to unify the approach to transition across the three Services (where differences were identified through the mapping process under Plan earlier in this report), and to assist unit commanders and others involved in supporting transition navigate the system.

JTA is seeking to provide clear guidance for a single approach across the three Services on multi-mode transition (when there is a need to follow the process for more than one transition mode), which aims to enhance the support for transitioning members. For example, during voluntary and involuntary transition, if serious medical concerns are identified, the member should be referred for review of their employment classification. In addition, during involuntary (medical) transition, another form of involuntary transition may be triggered (e.g. administrative).

A review of Separation Health Examination (SHE) procedures and requirements has been undertaken in consultation with Joint Health Command to ensure all members are undertaking a SHE prior to transition.

JTA has also reviewed individual transition journeys to understand how they could be improved. Areas identified include the time required to prepare for transition, the need to better support veterans who are being transitioned for involuntary reasons, the need to review medical information to determine the most appropriate form of transition and the need for better communication with DVA. These improvements are being pursued and JTA will continue to consider systematic issues relevant to transition as they arise.

JTA has also worked with the Services to improve the transition system. For example, JTA worked with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) to improve the process for personnel transitioning while posted to operational units (sea going vessels and detachments) that may have been deployed in the lead up to their transition date. A policy has now been put into place by RAN to ensure that personnel are given appropriate time to prepare for their transition. A number of other administrative changes have streamlined processes resulting in simpler and faster decisions and delivery of services.

JTA has prioritised the requirement to develop a consistent escalation framework for vulnerable members across the transition system. Additionally, JTA is developing a process for the notification and prioritisation

of support for vulnerable transitioning members to enable them to be identified early and supported appropriately through their transition.

JTA is developing options for the final functions and capabilities (post-implementation) for Government's consideration. This includes what services JTA could deliver and how it can best interact with other organisations delivering transition services. The view and experience of the member and their family will be at the centre of any options developed in line with JTA's purpose—to better prepare support members and their families as they transition from military to civilian life.

Over the next six months, JTA will expedite its implementation with a focus on providing immediate tangible benefits to members and their families whilst also laying the foundation for longer-term reform.

An integrated program management, change management and communications function will be put in place to increase alignment and integration with related, in-flight reform projects across Defence, as well as expedite engagement with the transition system.

In addition, the mapping of the Defence Transition System will be expanded to DVA and CSC and will provide an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the services available to members and families.

JTA will build its capability to analyse data, assure services and engage with broader Defence data projects and capability. This includes putting forward solution requirements for improvements to new Defence information systems.

Further, there will be an increased focus on making improvements to transition services within Defence based on the findings of the JTA consultation process undertaken in 2021. This will build on the significant work already undertaken across Defence, CSC and DVA to improve information sharing, clarify and strengthen handover points and close identified gaps in services.

JTA is scoping for a potential mandatory transition course. This is in response to broader consultation by JTA with stakeholders and aligns with a recommendation made by the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention in their Preliminary Interim Report (recommendation 7.7).