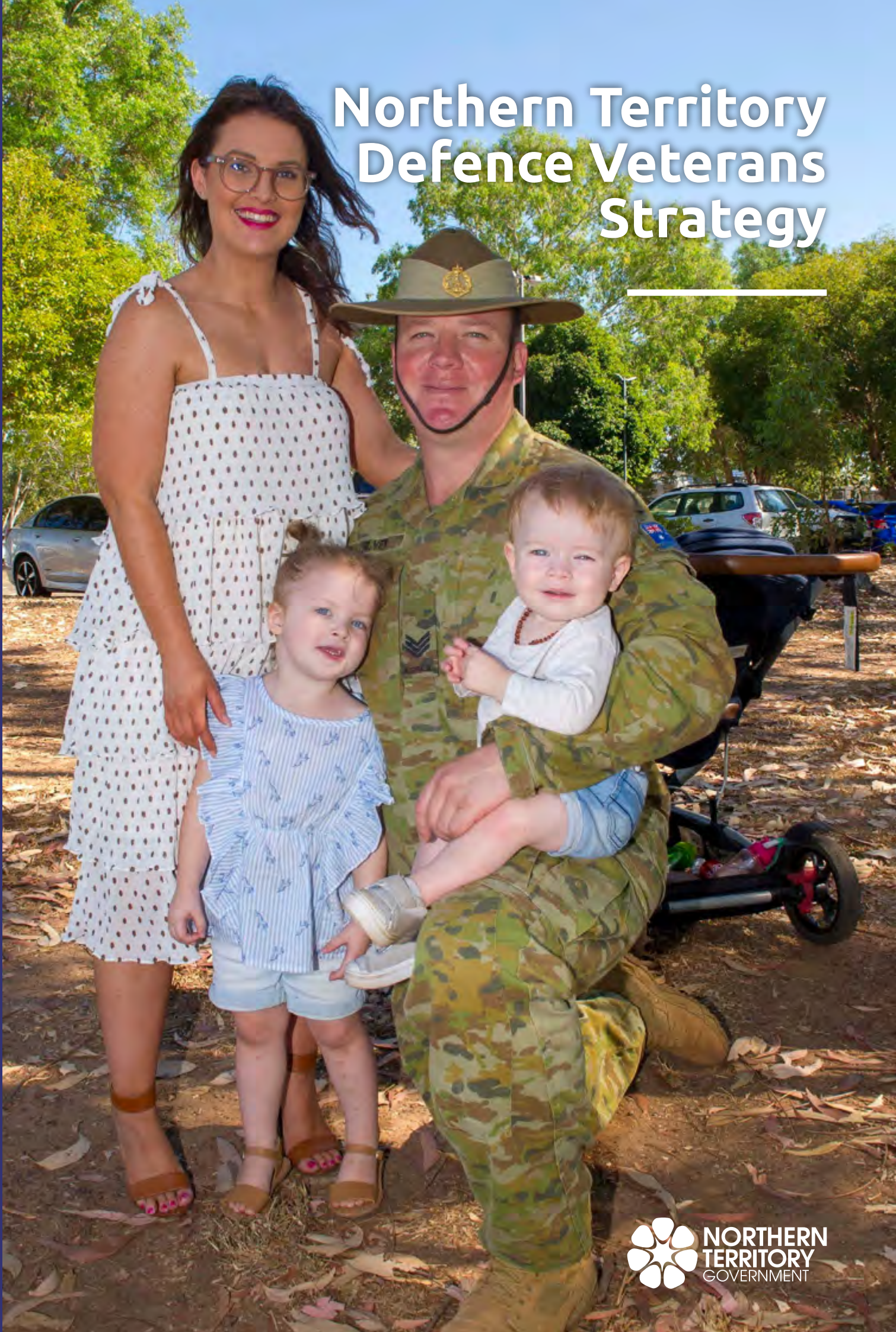
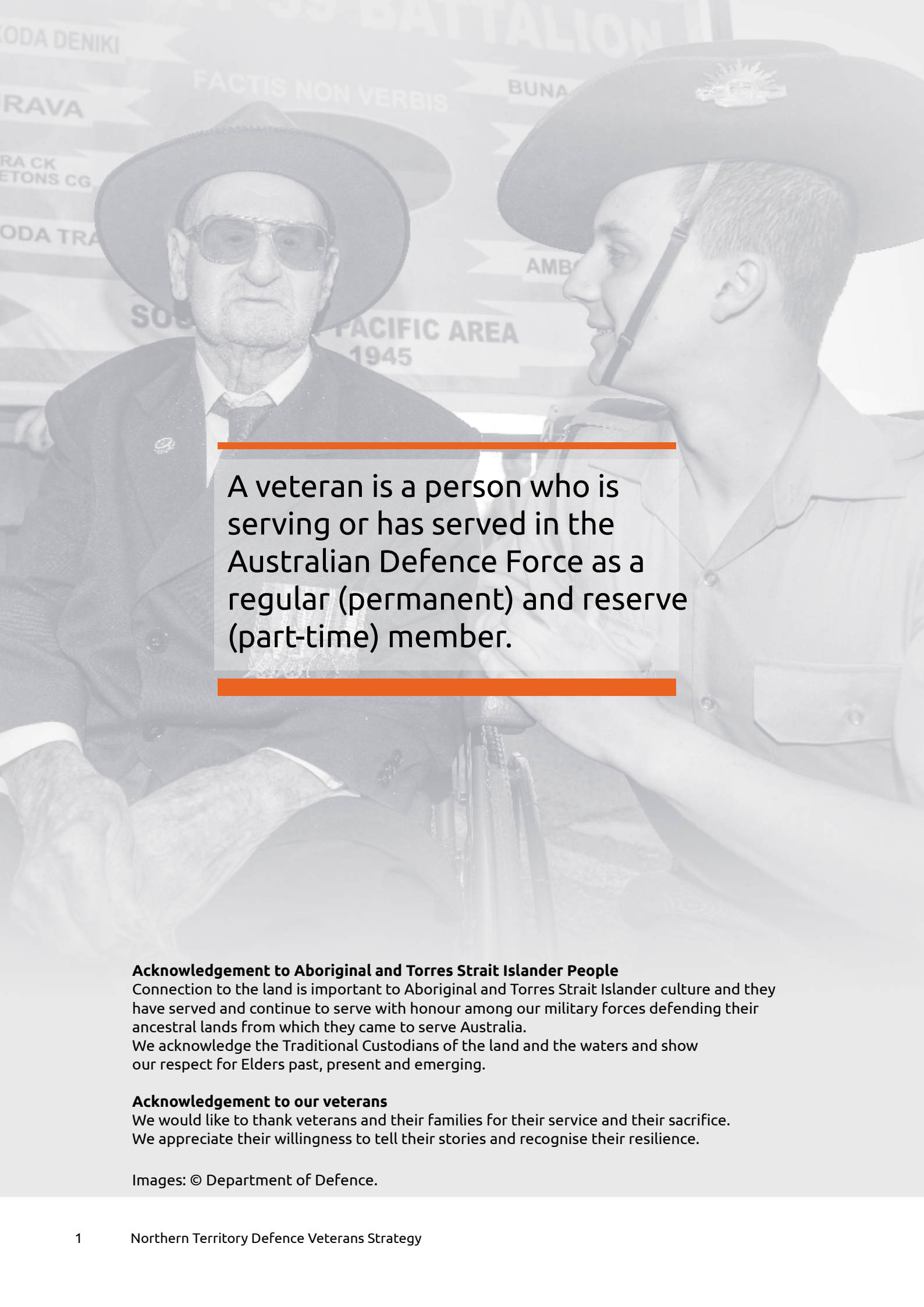


Northern Territory Defence Veterans Strategy





A veteran is a person who is serving or has served in the Australian Defence Force as a regular (permanent) and reserve (part-time) member.

Acknowledgement to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Connection to the land is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and they have served and continue to serve with honour among our military forces defending their ancestral lands from which they came to serve Australia.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and the waters and show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging.

Acknowledgement to our veterans

We would like to thank veterans and their families for their service and their sacrifice. We appreciate their willingness to tell their stories and recognise their resilience.

Images: © Department of Defence.



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Ministers' message

The NT Government is committed to supporting and honouring our Defence veterans both current and ex-serving, and their families.

Strategically located, the Northern Territory is a significant training, sustainment and maintenance hub for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and allied partners, with a diverse serving and ex-serving veterans' community. Thousands of former ADF personnel and their families live and work in urban, rural, and regional areas of the Territory.

The *Northern Territory Defence Veterans' Strategy* (the Strategy) outlines the ways in which the NT Government will work to provide an attractive and supportive environment for Defence veterans and their families, while strengthening the economy through increased employment opportunities.

The Strategy will guide future NT Government policies, programs and initiatives to ensure delivery of positive outcomes for our local Defence veterans' community.

For many Defence veterans, employment opportunities, support for health and wellbeing and respect and recognition are the foundations of a successful transition from military service to civilian life.

The NT Government has consulted widely to develop the Strategy, and acknowledges the contribution of Defence veterans and their families, members of the Northern Territory Veterans' Affairs Ministerial Advisory Council, Ex-Serving Organisations and members of the general public for their input.

We commit to listening, engaging and building on services to support serving and ex-serving Defence veterans who seek to realise their aspirations in the Northern Territory.



Hon Natasha Fyles MLA
Chief Minister and Minister for Defence



Hon Paul Kirby MLA
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Vision

The NT Government's vision is to make the Territory an attractive and supportive environment for Australian Defence Force (ADF) veterans and their families to live and work.

DefenceNT, within the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, collaborates with the Department of Defence, to facilitate its requirements across the Territory; build our defence industry capability and capacity; and develop and implement policy, programs and initiatives to benefit the Northern Territory veterans' community.

DefenceNT engages with Defence personnel and their families, Ex-Serving Organisations (ESOs), not-for-profit organisations, all tiers of government, the private sector; allied forces; and the general public to ensure that the needs and goals of the Defence veterans' community are taken into account in developing government policies and programs.



Strategy focus areas

1. Improved access to **employment opportunities** in the Northern Territory, to assist and support veterans' successful transition to civilian life.
2. Promote and support **health and wellbeing services** that meet the needs of veterans and their families.
3. Engage with the broader Territory community to promote **respect and recognition for the military service** of veterans, through education, commemoration and recognition programs.

Defence Veterans in the Northern Territory

The Defence veterans' community is inclusive of veterans and their families. This includes spouses, widows, widowers, partners, former partners, carers, children, parents, siblings and relatives of serving or ex-serving members, and should include anyone with an evident link to, or interest in, matters associated with veterans' welfare or wellbeing.

The latest statistics available from the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) indicates that as at December 2021, there were approximately 5400 serving ADF personnel posted in the Northern Territory, and around 5960 Northern Territory residents who are clients of DVA.

Each year, an average of 250 ADF personnel transition out of military service while posted in the Territory, giving the Northern Territory access to a high number of newly discharged veterans.

The Northern Territory continues to play a pivotal role in the defence of our nation. Our military community has now grown to include our allies - the United States Marine Corps - as well as new allies and training partnerships with the United Kingdom, Japan and some European nations; and the Territory's defence and national security significance has been reinforced through the outcomes of the Commonwealth Government's "Defence Strategic Review".

Employment





Outcome

Veterans and their families have access to employment opportunities in the Northern Territory to assist a successful transition to civilian life.

1 Employment

Employment is a significant factor for veterans to achieve and maintain positive long-term wellbeing and a sense of purpose. Veterans, transitioning veterans and their families have skills and experience that can add value to our economy and community.

The skills and experience of veterans are equally valuable to public and private sectors. This is particularly true for the defence industry, one of the key economic drivers of the Territory economy, where an understanding of the requirements and operations of the ADF can provide local businesses with insights into how to effectively deliver work for Defence contracts.

Veterans bring a commitment to leadership, respect and discipline that is invaluable in the workforce. Veterans can empower organisations to understand new ways to view strategies and decision making. Employment of veterans' spouses and family members brings multiple opportunities for industry growth.

Generating quality employment opportunities for ex-serving personnel across the Territory directly supports the NT Government's strategy to increase the Territory's skilled population to support industry growth. This also aligns to the recommendations of the interim report into the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (the Royal Commission).

Veterans and their families will play a significant role in implementation of the Defence Strategic review, in particular workforce solutions. The Northern Territory Government stands with the Australian Defence Force and supports any workforce initiatives that utilise NT veterans and their families.

Case study

Soldier On:

In 2020, the Commissioner for Public Employment signed the Soldier On Pledge, marking the NT Government's commitment to increase employment opportunities for veterans and their families.

Soldier On is a national, fully integrated support services provider for members of the ADF and their families. Soldier On is a non-profit organisation that provides support to veterans and their families in the Northern Territory. The organisation offers a range of programs and services, including employment support, connection to mental health services and social activities. Through its employment program, Soldier On has helped hundreds of veterans find meaningful work in a range of industries, including construction, hospitality and logistics.

Case study

Northern Territory Veterans Directory and Jobs Board:

Local business Actio Group, working closely with the Industry Skills Advisory Council Northern Territory, are developing a portal that will provide a conduit for industry and veterans to engage with one another regarding employment opportunities; and enable the veterans' community to better connect with relevant service providers.

The Northern Territory Veterans Directory and Jobs Board is under development, visit the website at: www.veteransnt.com.au









DefenceNT's role in support of veterans' employment includes:

1. **Coordinator:** Linking veterans with Northern Territory ESO networks, Commonwealth and NT Government services to maximise employment opportunities.
2. **Communicator:** Reach out to veterans regarding job and training opportunities through communications programs. Promote vacancies in the Northern Territory Public Service (NTPS) and industry at events for transitioning personnel.
3. **Collaborator:** Engage with Joint Transitions Authority and ADF to offer opportunities for and with transitioning veterans on employment opportunities in public and private sectors. Collaborate with industry peak organisations to incorporate new opportunities and combine information for future outcomes.
4. **Employer:** Promote the value of employing veterans in the public service and ensuring that its human resources practices are sensitive to the challenges facing transitioning veterans.
5. **Contributor:** Participate in national forums regarding veterans' employment including: Defence Member and Family Support; ADF Transition Seminars; the DVA Employment Working Group; Defence Career Manager Advisers' briefings; and engage with the Joint Transitions Authority.

Actions:

- **Veterans' Employment Working Group** – DefenceNT coordinates Working Group meetings, with representation from the Joint Transitions Authority, ESOs, industry associations and skills advisory and educational organisations to promote employment opportunities to transitioning veterans and their spouse/partners. This ongoing and expanding network provides feedback to the NT Government and collectively develops and implements new initiatives to support veterans' employment.
- **Increasing veterans' employment in the NT Public Sector** – In 2021, the NT Government adopted the [Rank to Grade Guide](#), designed to help veterans and recruitment panels in the NTPS to understand and appreciate the expertise and skills acquired during military service. DefenceNT collaborates with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment to consider options aimed at increasing the number of veterans employed in the NTPS.
- **Participation in national forums** – DefenceNT participates in a range of national forums, including: Defence Member and Family Support; ADF Transition Seminars; the DVA Employment Working Group; Defence Career Manager Adviser's briefings; and engagement with the Joint Transitions Authority, to provide a Territory perspective on veterans' employment.

Health and Wellbeing





Outcome

Veterans and their families have access to health and wellbeing services in the Northern Territory.

2 Health and Wellbeing

The immediate post-service period is identified as the most crucial time for personalised health and wellbeing assistance for veterans navigating the transition from service. It can be difficult to find appropriate information about the civilian support services and how to access them. Providing better access to information will help veterans and their families find the resources they need to assist their transition to civilian life.

The [Suicide Prevention Strategic Framework 2018-2023](#) represents a whole-of-government and whole of community initiative to reduce suicides in the Northern Territory. In conjunction, the Royal Commission, through interim reports, highlighted there is more work to be done in transitions of veterans into the community and strengthening of support services.

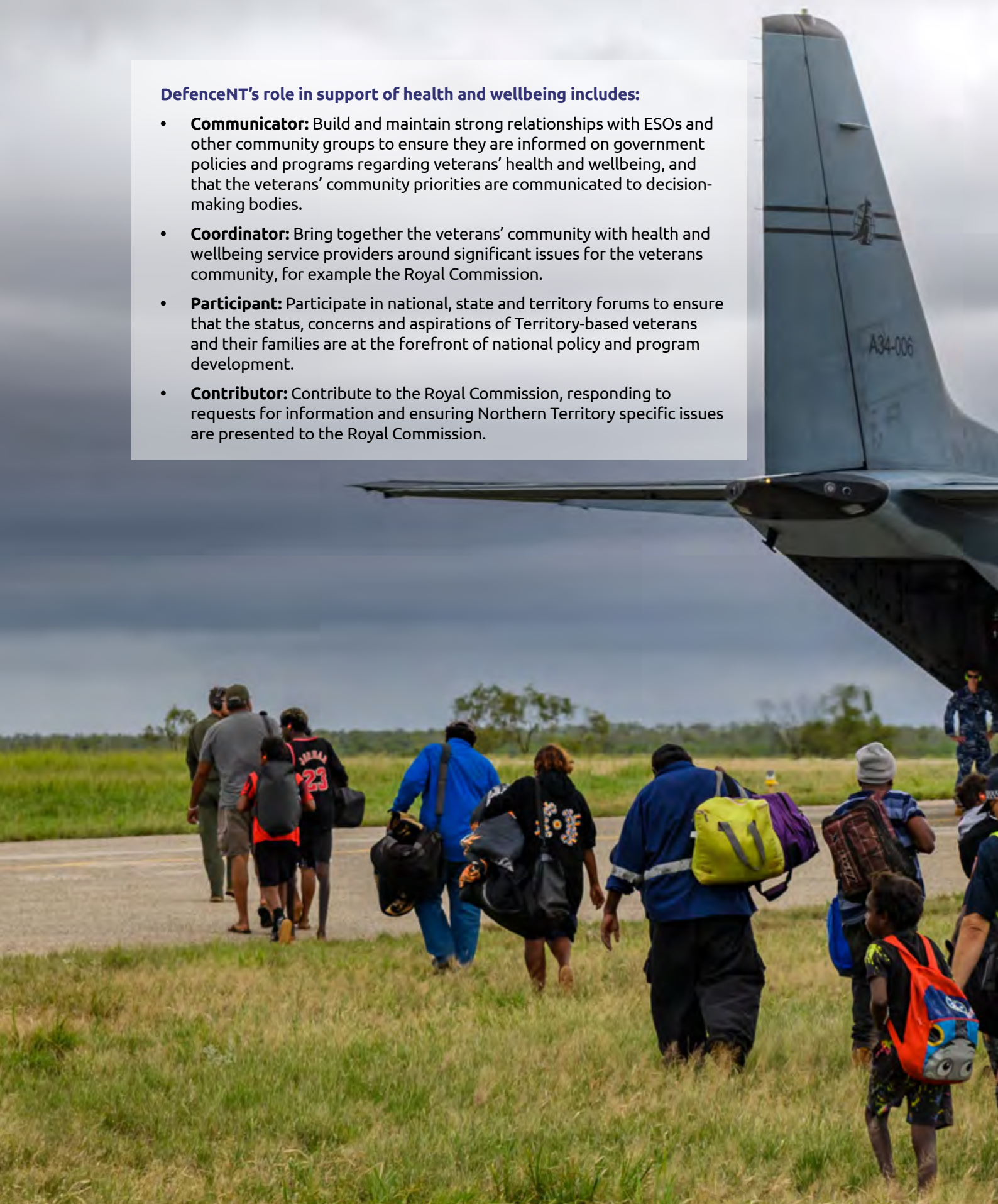
There are a number of mental health support services in the Northern Territory that cater to the needs of the veterans' community, including Open Arms who has a regional engagement team and provide a 24 hour support line on 1800 011 046. The Open Arms' local team is managed by DVA and provides crisis accommodation support, suicide prevention training, peer support, counselling and group treatment.

The NT Government, in partnership with the NT Primary Health Network, has opened the Head to Health Facility in Darwin. This is a walk-in mental health support facility open to the general public, veterans and their families. Along with the physical premises, there are online resources available. Head to Health aim to open satellite facilities throughout the Northern Territory in the near future.



DefenceNT's role in support of health and wellbeing includes:

- **Communicator:** Build and maintain strong relationships with ESOs and other community groups to ensure they are informed on government policies and programs regarding veterans' health and wellbeing, and that the veterans' community priorities are communicated to decision-making bodies.
- **Coordinator:** Bring together the veterans' community with health and wellbeing service providers around significant issues for the veterans community, for example the Royal Commission.
- **Participant:** Participate in national, state and territory forums to ensure that the status, concerns and aspirations of Territory-based veterans and their families are at the forefront of national policy and program development.
- **Contributor:** Contribute to the Royal Commission, responding to requests for information and ensuring Northern Territory specific issues are presented to the Royal Commission.



Department of Veterans' Affairs is responsible for assessing veteran clients and determining the level of support and services appropriate to an individual veteran client's needs.







NT Concessions Scheme:

The NT Concessions Scheme (NTCS), administered by the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC), offers cost of living assistance to eligible Territorians. Concessions available through the NTCS include renewal of drivers licence and concessions on electricity, water, and sewerage and vehicle registration.

DefenceNT works closely with TFHC to promote the NTCS to the veterans' community; and to consider options for the future of the scheme. For more information on the NTCS, please visit: nt.gov.au/community/concessions-and-payments/nt-concession-scheme

Actions:

Participation in national and local forums – DefenceNT is active in its role regarding veterans' health and wellbeing, contributing to a range of forums, including:

- the Commonwealth Government Veterans' Affairs Ministerial Council
- Commonwealth State and Territory Committee on Veterans' Affairs
- DVA Mental Health Summit
- DVA working groups on veterans' incarceration; and veterans' homelessness
- Department of Defence Community Centre briefings
- the NT Government's Suicide Prevention Coordination Committee
- Darwin Military and Civilian History Advisory Committee.

Case study

Mates4Mates:

Mates4Mates is a national organisation that provides support to veterans dealing with physical and mental health issues. The organisation offers a range of services, including peer support, rehabilitation and education programs, and social activities.

Through its Northern Territory branch, Mates4Mates has helped connect veterans and their families to access the support they need to manage their health and wellbeing, as well as encourage social connection in the Northern Territory community.

Case study

Billeroy House:

A program of the RSL Darwin sub-branch, Billeroy House provides a meeting place for veterans, their families and friends to meet and to participate in social events. Billeroy House also provides access to information, advice and advocacy on DVA claims, as well as assistance in health and community services. It is open Monday to Friday and welcomes NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services personnel.



Royal Commission Information Sessions

– Ahead of the Darwin hearings for the Royal Commission held in October 2022, DefenceNT facilitated an information session to provide the Northern Territory veterans' community with information on how submissions could be made to the Royal Commission and access wrap-around and support services. The session brought together Northern Territory and Commonwealth government's service providers as well as the private sector. The roundtable forums will be held on an as needs basis throughout the term of the Royal Commission.

Respect and
recognition



Outcome

The Northern Territory community respects and recognises the contribution of veterans and their families, including through participation at commemorative services and events.

3 Respect and recognition

The Northern Territory holds an important place in Australia's military history and its future. As one of the few locations in Australia that has been subject to direct military conflict and the site of an extensive and growing Defence presence, the Territory welcomes the responsibility to commemorate the service and sacrifice of former and current ADF personnel and their families.

While the most high-profile elements of the Territory's commemorative services are focused on past conflicts and the Australians who served in them, it is also important for the Territory to recognise the diversity and experience of current and emerging generations of ADF personnel and their families.





DefenceNT's role in supporting respect and recognition includes:

- **Communicator:** Promote commemorative services and the role played by veterans through, media and NT Government digital channels.
- **Coordinator:** Facilitate communication between ESOs and the three tiers of government to ensure the efficient and safe delivery of commemorative events.
- **Collaborator:** Engage in the DVA Commemorative Services Working Groups and collaborate with Northern Territory ESOs to secure support and funding for commemorative activities.
- DefenceNT promotes and participates in a number of significant commemorative services that take place in the Territory, including:

19 February	Bombing of Darwin
19 February	USS Peary
22 February	Bombing of Katherine
25 April	Anzac Day
8 May	Battle of the Coral Sea
15 August	Victory in the Pacific
18 August	Vietnam Veterans Day
11 November	Remembrance Day

Actions:

Assistance for commemorative events –

DefenceNT provides support to organisations that host commemorative services. Funding is limited to activities that directly impact on public participation e.g. digital screens to enable a comfortable view of proceedings. Please contact DefenceNT for further information.

Case study

Bombing of Darwin 80th Anniversary:

Each year on 19 February, Australia marks the Bombing of Darwin to commemorate the first time that the Australian mainland came under direct attack during the Second World War.

Darwin came under attack by Japanese fighters and bombers on 19 February 1942, the first of at least 64 air raids that were carried out across northern Australia. During the two raids on this day, separated by about 80 minutes, more than 250 Australian and Allied service personnel and civilians lost their lives. The air raids on Darwin involved more than 240 enemy aircraft and attacks continued until 12 November 1943. The devastation suffered was profound.

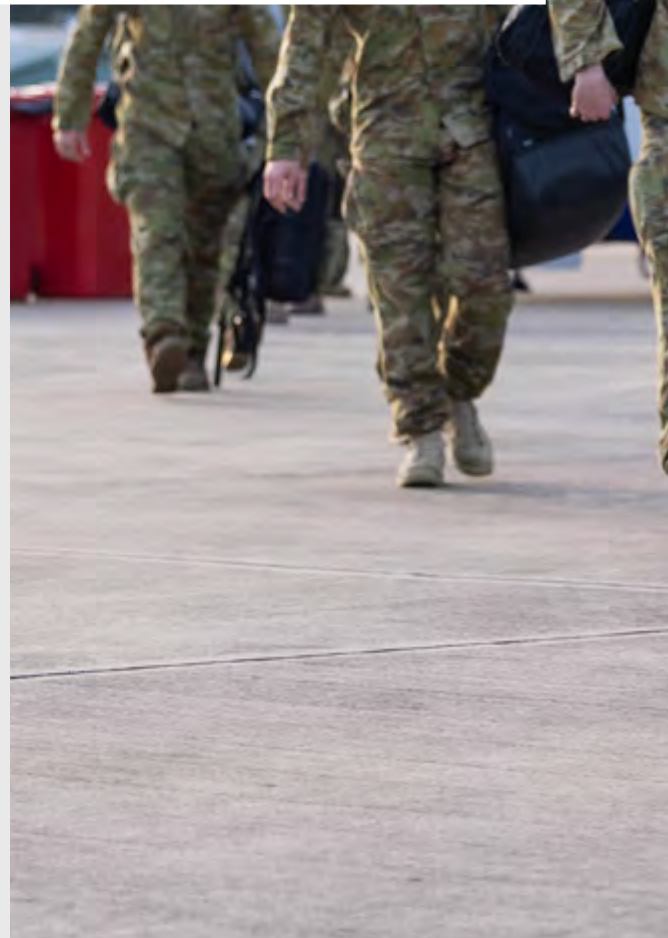
February 2022 marked the 80th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin. A highlight of the 80th anniversary commemorations was the attendance of Mr Brian Winspear, facilitated by DefenceNT. At the age of 101 years, Mr Winspear is a WWII veteran who was serving for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in Darwin at the time of the attack. Mr Winspear's reflections on the day of the bombing included:

'I was wandering around the destruction after the first raid, when half an hour later, fifty four bombers arrived from the south in beautiful formation. At first they were thought to be US planes from Brisbane, but as I watched them I saw what looked like confetti coming down as the sun reflected off the bombs. I lost no time in jumping into the nearest trench... All hell broke loose as bombs burst all over the RAAF station and to within meters of my trench. My tin hat blew off and I got a hot metal splinter in a finger...'

The 80th anniversary commemorations were made all the more significant and memorable for Mr Winspear's participation.

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with and directly informed by the views of the veterans' community and the public. Ongoing conversations with the veterans' community will ensure policy development in coming years is grounded in local needs and perspectives.

It is intended that the Strategy will maintain the ongoing connection with and for the veterans' community of the Northern Territory.





Northern Territory Veterans' Affairs Ministerial Advisory Council

The Northern Territory Veteran's Affairs Ministerial Advisory Council (the Council) was established in 2015 as a non-statutory advisory body, to provide advice to the NT Minister responsible for Veterans' Affairs on issues relating to the Northern Territory veterans' community.

Council membership is drawn from the Northern Territory veterans' community, with ex-officio support provided by representatives of the ADF, DVA, Defence Members and Family Support and Defence Families Australia. DefenceNT provides secretariat support to the Council.







Contact Information

NT Government

DefenceNT

www.defence.nt.gov.au

Commonwealth Government

Australian Defence Force

www.defence.gov.au

Department of Veterans' Affairs

www.dva.gov.au

Defence Members and Family Support

www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families

Defence Families Australia

www.dfa.org.au

ADF Reserve and Employer Support

www.reserveemployersupport.gov.au

Ex-Service Organisations

RSL Darwin sub-branch

sec@rsldarwin.org.au

RSL Palmerston sub-branch

palmerston@rslsa.org.au

RSL Katherine sub-branch

katherine@rslsa.org.au

RSL Alice Springs sub-branch

rlswellness@outlook.com

RSL Tenant Creek sub-branch

tenantcreek@RSLSA.org.au

RSL Gove sub-branch

(Refer RSL Darwin sub-branch for contact details)

Council of Australian Veterans (NT)

councilaustralianvets.president@gmail.com

Legacy NT

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Mates4Mates

nt@mates4mates.org

Reeling Veterans

info@reelingveterans.com.au

Soldier On

nt@soldieron.org.au

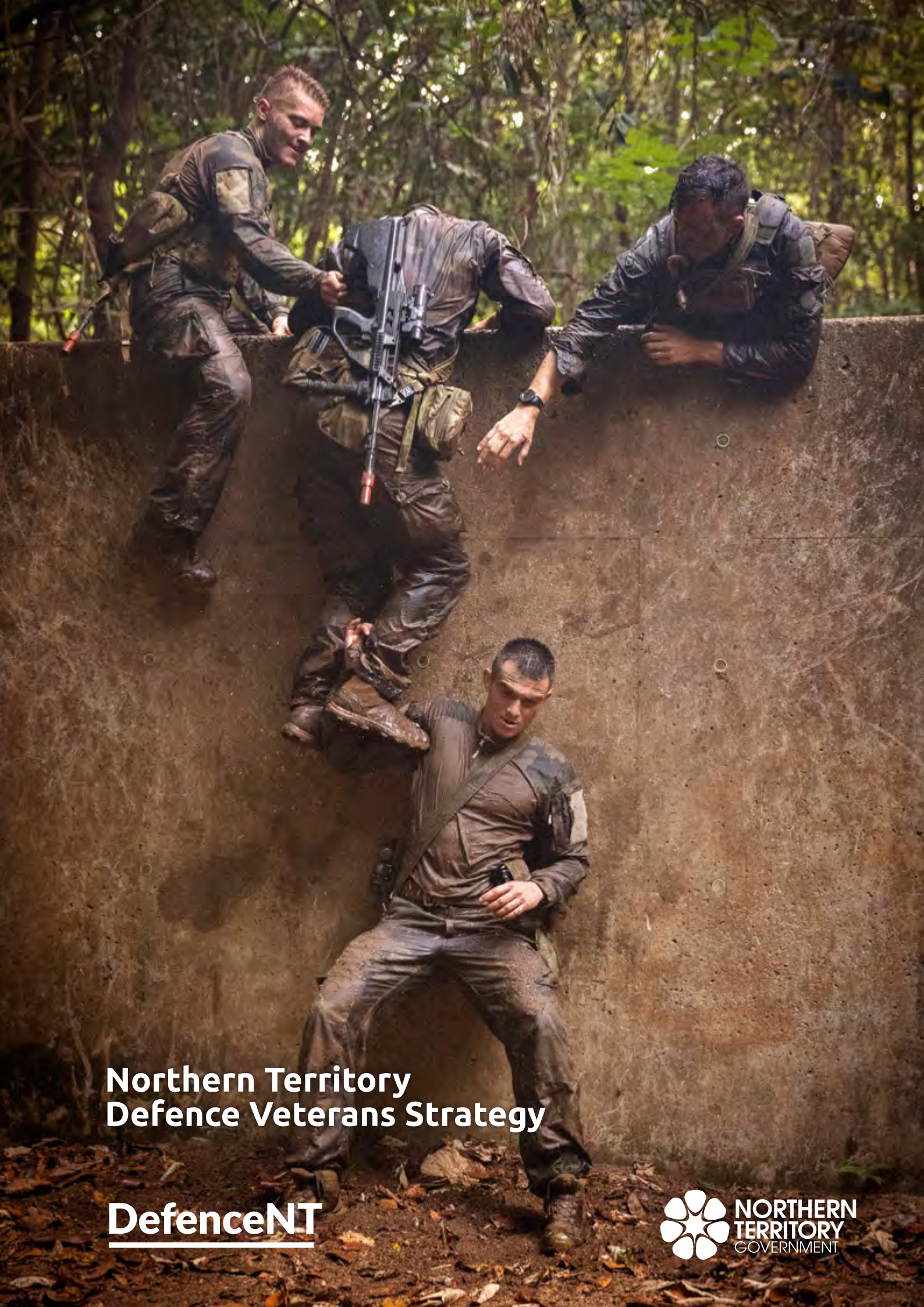
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Veterans Motorcycle Club NT

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Northern Territory Defence Veterans Strategy

DefenceNT

