

Media Release



Geoff Brock MP
Minister for Veterans Affairs

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Census shines light on South Australian veterans

New data collected in the 2021 Census has revealed South Australia's veteran population is more than double the figure previously on record.

The census data released on 28 June 2022, has identified that at least 3.2 per cent (47,852) of the state's population are currently or have previously served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

While records exist for current serving ADF members, historically the only estimate of former serving personnel related to card-holder data from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). There are approximately 18,000 South Australian veterans registered with DVA.

This is the first time a comprehensive snapshot of the current and former serving population in South Australia has been developed, following the addition of a targeted question about military service history in the 2021 Census.

The largest group of people in South Australia who have ever served are aged 65 to 74 years, which is reflective of those who served in the Vietnam war.

The data shows that approximately one-third (32 per cent) of the South Australian veteran community – which includes current serving ADF members – are aged 15 to 54 years, highlighting the need for future efforts to focus on contemporary veterans and their families in policy and program planning and delivery.

Most of the former serving ADF members are in metropolitan Adelaide (particularly in the Northern and Southern suburbs), with the Onkaparinga local government area home to the fourth largest population of former serving members nationally.

Approximately one-quarter of the former serving community is in regional South Australia, mainly in the South-East of the state encompassing the Limestone Coast, Fleurieu Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and the Murray and Mallee regions.

There are approximately 6,000 South Australians currently serving in the Regular or Reserve service, the vast majority of whom are aged 15 to 25 years demonstrating a very young generation serving our country.

Approximately 2.5 per cent of all currently serving ADF members in South Australia identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Females represent 20 per cent of all South Australians who are currently in active service.

Quotes attributable to Geoff Brock

This 2021 Census data provides the most comprehensive detail on South Australia's veteran population that we have ever had access to.

The information will be invaluable in enabling the government to better target policies and programs to support the veteran community.

It is telling that ADF veterans were more likely to have volunteered in the previous 12 months (21%) than those who had never served in the ADF (15%).

Together with Veterans SA, I will continue to ensure that the best outcomes are delivered for current and former serving members of all generations and to where it's needed most.