

VESPIA



**STRATEGIC
PLAN 26-27**



Veterans, Emergency Services, and Police Industry Institute Australia

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Message from the Chair — Greg Whitehouse

The 2026–27 Strategic Plan marks another step forward for VESPIIA as we continue to strengthen the foundations of Australia's first professional body for those who support our veterans, emergency services, and police communities.

Our focus over the next 12 months is on consolidation and credibility — ensuring that the systems, spaces, and partnerships we have built translate into long-term value for members and measurable impact for the sector. The projects outlined in this plan reflect that direction: practical initiatives that connect people, elevate standards, and reinforce our collective commitment to service.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our members, partners, and volunteers who contribute to VESPIIA's work. Your support enables us to continue representing this diverse and vital community with integrity and purpose.



Greg Whitehouse

GREG WHITEHOUSE
CHAIR
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, VESPIIA

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Message from the Chief Executive Officer — Shannon Hennessy

VESPIIA's mission has always been clear: to support the people and organisations who serve those who serve.

This plan builds on that mission — focusing on the practical steps needed to strengthen our programs, expand our reach, and ensure our members have the tools, recognition, and advocacy they deserve.

The priorities set out for 2026–27 are ambitious but achievable. The Landing Zone, Research and Resource Library, and Future Frontlines initiatives will each play a central role in shaping a stronger, more connected sector. Our aim is not only to deliver these projects well, but to demonstrate the value of professional collaboration across all areas of service.

Thank you to our members, Board, and partners for your continued trust and support. Together, we are building a more capable, connected, and sustainable future for those who support Australia's frontline communities.



Shannon Hennessy

SHANNON HENNESSY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
VESPIIA



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Veterans, Emergency Services and Police Industry Institute of Australia (VESPIIA) exists to support the people and organisations who serve those who serve.

We operate as Australia's first professional body for the veteran, emergency services, and police support sector — representing the organisations, staff, and volunteers who provide programs, services, and advocacy to our service communities and their families.

This Strategic Plan for 2026–27 builds on the foundation work delivered through 2024–25 and sets the direction for VESPIIA's next phase of growth. It defines our strategic priorities, key projects, and measures of success as we continue to grow into a mature, sustainable, and nationally recognised institute.

Over the next planning period, VESPIIA will focus on five key priorities:

- Establishing The Landing Zone, a collaborative workspace and hub for members and partners
- Expanding the Research and Resource Library to improve access to tools, research, and sector insights
- Strengthening Advocacy and Representation, including the Future Frontlines Papers and specialist sub-committees
- Delivering Capability and Recognition through professional development and the Awards for Excellence
- Hosting the Future Frontlines Conference, providing a national platform for collaboration and innovation across the sector

Together, these initiatives will advance VESPIIA's mission to lead, connect, and elevate the organisations and professionals working with veterans, emergency services, and police — ensuring their impact is strong, sustained, and supported.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Australia's veteran and first responder communities are supported by thousands of organisations across the country, each contributing to the wellbeing of those who have served. Yet, despite this strong ecosystem, there remains no national body dedicated to supporting the supporters — the organisations, staff, and volunteers delivering these vital programs and services.

Across the veteran and emergency services sector, the key challenges are consistent:

- Fragmentation and duplication — over 5,000 organisations operate nationally, often in isolation, without a centralised network for collaboration or shared standards.
- Limited data and coordination — there is no unified database or mechanism to map service providers, capacity, or emerging needs across the sector.
- Systemic strain on workers and volunteers — the cumulative demand on those providing care and advocacy continues to grow, while structured professional support remains minimal.
- Gaps in recognition and representation — the sector's collective voice is often missing from policy and program development, leaving those on the frontline without consistent advocacy.

These gaps directly impact service quality, workforce wellbeing, and long-term sustainability.

VESPIIA was established to close this gap.

As a national professional body, our role is to connect, strengthen, and represent the organisations and individuals who support veterans, emergency services, and police communities. We do this through:

- Access to shared resources, professional development, and research
- Advocacy and policy engagement on behalf of the sector
- Recognition and promotion of excellence in service delivery
- A community of practice that fosters collaboration and collective growth

The challenges ahead — from workforce fatigue and funding constraints to the implementation of recommendations from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide — highlight the need for unified, professional representation.

VESPIIA's strategic focus for 2025–26 is to build the infrastructure, data, and partnerships needed to ensure those who support others are themselves supported, valued, and heard.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Veterans, Emergency Services and Police Industry Institute of Australia (VESPIIA) is a national professional body that supports the people and organisations working with veterans, emergency services, and police.

We exist to continue the chain of service — ensuring that those who support others have the recognition, resources, and representation they deserve. Through advocacy, development, research, and connection, VESPIIA strengthens the capability and sustainability of the sector that serves our service communities.

VISION

VESPIIA aims to be a leader in supporting the organisations, staff and volunteers delivering support and programs to our Veterans, Emergency Services, Police and their families.

MISSION

To lead, connect, and elevate the organisations and professionals working with veterans, emergency services, and police, so their impact is strong, sustained, and supported.

PILLARS

1. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

We continue the chain of service by ensuring those who support others have access to the resources they need to do their best work.

Key initiative: Research and Resource Library

2. CAPABILITY AND RECOGNITION

We build professional capability and acknowledge excellence across the sector through opportunities to learn, grow, and be recognised.

Key initiatives: Professional Development; Awards for Excellence; Future Frontlines Conference

3. ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

We represent and advocate for the organisations, staff, and volunteers supporting our service communities, ensuring their voices are heard at all levels.

Key initiatives: Future Frontlines Papers; Sub-committees

4. CONNECTION

We create a professional community grounded in connection and collaboration, fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose.

Key initiative: The Landing Zone

VALUES

AUTHENTICITY

We are a proudly Australian organisation, celebrating and embracing our diverse communities and cultures.

ACCESSIBILITY

Everyone should be able to access and experience our organisation and work. By creating spaces that are welcoming and responsive to the needs of our diverse community, we ensure our work reaches more people across Australia.

AGILITY

As a small organisation, we remain agile in our operations. This means we can respond to challenges, move quickly on new opportunities, and maintain steady growth.

AMBITION

Thinking strategically and from the community perspective enables us to create the high-quality work we want to be known for, striving for continual growth and excellence in every project we undertake.

ALTRUISM

Altruism sits at the heart of service. It reflects a selfless commitment to act for the benefit of others. Whether serving, supporting, or advocating, we recognise that true impact comes from placing collective wellbeing above personal gain, ensuring everyone in the chain of service is valued and supported.

COMMITMENT

VESPIIA was proudly founded in Boorloo, on Wadjuk Noongar land, and we pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of this land, recognising their enduring connection to country, culture, and community.

Our mission is to serve and support all members across Defence, fire, ambulance, and police services. We are committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity, respect, and equity, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their background or identity, has access to the support, recognition, and opportunities they deserve.



WHAT WE DO

VESPIIA delivers a structured suite of programs and services designed to strengthen the capability, sustainability, and representation of the veteran, emergency services, and police support sector.

Our work is organised under four core pillars that guide operational planning, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement.

1. Resources and Support

We provide tools, data, and shared resources to help organisations and professionals deliver effective support to their communities.

Key functions include:

- Developing and maintaining the Research and Resource Library as a central access point for templates, guides, and reference materials.
- Undertaking sector mapping and analysis to identify active organisations, their capabilities, and collaboration opportunities.
- Producing reference materials, policy papers, and reports to inform best practice and improve access to credible information.

2. Capability and Recognition

We focus on building sector-wide capability and professional standards while recognising excellence in service delivery.

Key functions include:

- Delivering professional development and training programs that address emerging needs across the sector.
- Hosting the annual Awards for Excellence and Future Frontlines Conference, recognising outstanding contributions and sharing innovation.
- Providing mentorship and career development opportunities for professionals and volunteers.

3. Advocacy and Representation

We act as a unified voice of the sector, representing the needs and perspectives of members at state and national levels.

Key functions include:

- Coordinating policy submissions and briefings to government and industry.
- Managing sub-committees and working groups that contribute to advocacy priorities.
- Leading the Future Frontlines Papers series to inform public and policy dialogue on the future of the sector.

4. Connection

We create opportunities for collaboration and community across the sector, fostering a professional network that strengthens relationships and shared purpose.

Key functions include:

- Establishing The Landing Zone, a dedicated workspace and collaboration hub for members and partners.
- Delivering networking and sector engagement events throughout the year.
- Facilitating member-to-member collaboration, shared projects, and knowledge exchange.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2026-27

VESPIIA's priorities for the 2026-27 period focus on consolidating foundation projects, establishing physical and digital infrastructure, and strengthening the visibility and credibility of the Institute nationally. These priorities align with our four pillars and represent the next stage of our organisational growth.

The Landing Zone

The Landing Zone will serve as VESPIIA's physical base and a shared professional hub for the veteran, emergency services, and police support sectors. The space will provide coworking areas, meeting rooms, and creative studios to support collaboration, research, and event delivery. It will also host VESPIIA staff and facilitate day-to-day member engagement.

2026-27 focus: Secure premises, finalise sponsorship agreements, and establish operational capacity for launch.

Research and Resource Library

The Library is a centralised digital repository offering access to research, templates, guides, and sector-specific resources. It enables members to strengthen their practice, reduce duplication, and build evidence-based programs.

2026-27 focus: Complete Stage 2 (interactive tools and searchable research database), expand partnerships with academia and allied organisations.

Future Frontlines Papers and Conference

The Future Frontlines initiative brings together research, policy discussion, and sector insight to shape the future of service delivery. Through published papers and the annual conference, the initiative provides a platform for thought leadership and collaboration across government, industry, academia, and community organisations.

2026-27 focus: Publish Issue 3 of the Papers series, deliver the national Future Frontlines Conference in partnership with UWA Defence & Security Institute, and establish a formal program advisory group.

Awards for Excellence

The Awards recognise outstanding individuals and organisations across the veteran, emergency services, and police support sectors. The program promotes excellence, morale, and visibility for those whose work strengthens the chain of service.

2026-27 focus: Deliver the 2026 national ceremony, expand sponsorship partnerships, and introduce additional categories aligned to VESPIIA's four pillars.

Sub-committees

VESPIIA's sub-committees provide expert advice and member representation on key issues affecting the sector, including veteran transition, wellbeing, and workforce capability. Each sub-committee feeds directly into advocacy priorities, supporting evidence-based submissions and collaboration between organisations.

2026-27 focus: Establish and formalise sub-committee governance; publish position statements and sector briefings.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND MEASURES

VESPIIA's goals for 2026–27 are structured around our four pillars. Each goal outlines the intent, focus areas, and the measures that will track progress across the planning period. Progress against these goals will be reviewed quarterly by the Board and reported annually to members.

1. Resources and Support

Goal: Strengthen the sector's capacity through accessible resources, data, and research.

Objectives:

- Expand the Research and Resource Library to include interactive tools, templates, and peer-reviewed research.
- Improve sector data collection and mapping to identify collaboration opportunities and service gaps.

Measures:

- Minimum 100 new resources added to the Library by June 2027.
- Active partnerships with at least three universities or research organisations.

2. Capability and Recognition

Goal: Build professional capability and celebrate excellence across the veteran, emergency services, and police support sector.

Objectives:

- Deliver professional development events, masterclasses, and knowledge-sharing activities aligned with member needs.
- Deliver the 2026 Future Frontlines Conference and Awards for Excellence.

Measures:

- Minimum of 12 professional development and networking events delivered nationally.
- 25% year-on-year increase in attendance at the Future Frontlines Conference.
- Sponsorship and partnership revenue covering 50% of event delivery costs.

3. Advocacy and Representation

Goal: Represent and amplify the collective voice of the sector through informed advocacy and collaboration.

Objectives:

- Establish formal sub-committees to lead work on policy, wellbeing, and workforce issues.
- Publish submissions, briefings, and position papers that influence public policy and community understanding.

Measures:

- At least two formal submissions or policy papers published annually.
- Three operational sub-committees established and meeting quarterly.
- Representation achieved on one national or state-level advisory forum.

4. Connection

Goal: Strengthen the professional community through connection, collaboration, and shared purpose.

Objectives:

- Launch The Landing Zone as a functional collaboration hub and base of operations.
- Deliver ongoing opportunities for networking, partnership, and engagement.

Measures:

- The Landing Zone operational by mid-2026 with minimum 20 regular users in first year.
- 15% increase in organisational membership year-on-year.
- 80% member satisfaction rating in annual engagement survey.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2026–29

To ensure steady and sustainable growth, VESPIIA has set performance targets that reflect both current capacity and the organisation's projected expansion over the next three years. These targets focus on membership, events, and sector engagement outcomes that can be realistically achieved through existing resources, partnerships, and planned funding growth.

Progress against these targets will be reviewed quarterly by the Board and reported annually to members through the Annual Report.

MEMBERSHIP & EVENT GOALS

Area	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Organisational Members	60	90	120
Professional Members	120	180	220
Special Interest Groups	3	4	5
Professional Development Events	5	8	12
Social or Special Interest Events	3	6	12
Roundtables and Briefings	3	5	8
Conference and Awards	1 nat. conference and 1 awards program /year	1 nat. conference and 1 awards program /year	1 nat. conference and 1 awards program /year

ORGANISATIONAL GOALS

Area	2026–27 Target	2027–28 Target	2028–29 Target
Stakeholder Engagement	3 new strategic partnerships established	5 active cross-sector collaborations	Maintain or expand all active partnerships
Research & Innovation	1 joint research project initiated	2 collaborative publications	Integration of research outputs into member resources
Diversity & Inclusion	Diversity and inclusion framework adopted	40% diverse representation across committees	Maintain DEI reporting annually
Organisational Capability	Annual governance and operational review completed	Implement one major improvement from review	Ongoing refinement of structure and reporting
Technology & Systems	CRM and member portal fully operational	Data integration with Library and events systems	Annual system review and upgrade plan
Membership Retention	80% retention across all categories	85% retention	90% retention

ADVOCACY AND SECTOR IMPACT

Area	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Policy Submissions	Minimum 2 submissions or position papers	3 submissions	3+ per year
Media Mentions / Coverage	4 national or state features	6	8+
Roundtables / Consultations	6 national or state roundtables	8	10+
Advocacy Outcomes	Representation on one state/national advisory forum	Maintain representation; expand working groups	Representation in 2+ forums nationally

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Area	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Revenue Growth	+15% total revenue year-on-year	15%	15%
Funding Mix	40% non-membership revenue (sponsorships, partnerships, grants)	45%	50%
Fundraising Events	2 fundraising initiatives delivered	3	3+
Transparency	Annual audit and financial summary published	Maintain annual publication	Maintain annual publication

REVIEW AND REPORTING

VESPIIA will review progress against these goals quarterly through the CEO's report to the Board and will publish a public summary of outcomes in the Annual Report. Metrics will be adjusted annually to reflect organisational growth, funding cycles, and member priorities.

Progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion will be monitored through annual reporting to the Board and published each year in the Member Impact Report to ensure transparent measurement and continuous improvement.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

VESPIIA operates as a Company Limited by Guarantee under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and complies with the governance standards of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Our governance framework ensures decisions are made transparently, ethically, and in the best interests of our members and the broader community we serve. Accountability is maintained through structured oversight, clear delegation, and regular reporting.

Board of Directors

The Board provides strategic direction, governance oversight, and fiduciary accountability for the organisation. It is responsible for ensuring that VESPIIA remains aligned to its mission, complies with all legislative and regulatory obligations, and maintains high standards of ethical conduct and performance.

Core responsibilities include:

- Setting strategic direction and approving major initiatives
- Monitoring financial performance and organisational risk
- Overseeing compliance, policies, and reporting
- Supporting stakeholder engagement and advocacy on behalf of the Institute

The Board delegates operational management to the Chief Executive Officer, who leads the delivery of the Strategic Plan and oversees staff, contractors, and project delivery.

Leadership and Management

Day-to-day operations are managed by the CEO, supported by contracted staff, volunteers, and specialist partners as funding allows. The CEO reports directly to the Board and provides quarterly performance, risk, and financial reports.

Operational delivery aligns to the Strategic Plan through an annual Operational Plan, which defines projects, responsibilities, and performance measures under each pillar.

Advisory Groups and Sub-committees

VESPIIA engage advisory and specialist groups to ensure the voice of members informs decision-making. These groups contribute expertise, review policy positions, and support sector-wide initiatives.

Current and emerging groups include:

- Policy and Advocacy Sub-committee
- Professional Standards and Capability Sub-committee
- Cadre of Padres (Chaplains and Faith Networks)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group

Each operates under Terms of Reference approved by the Board and reports annually through the CEO.

Governance Principles

VESPIIA's governance framework is guided by six core principles:

- Accountability – Clear responsibility for decisions and transparent reporting to members and regulators.
- Integrity – Ethical and lawful conduct in all organisational and professional activities.
- Transparency – Open sharing of information, performance, and outcomes.
- Effectiveness – Strategic focus, efficiency, and measurable results.
- Diversity – Representation across sectors, disciplines, and lived experiences.
- Continuous Improvement – Regular review and evaluation to strengthen governance and operations.

Review and Reporting

VESPIIA reviews its governance framework annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose and compliant with regulatory requirements. Progress against this Strategic Plan will be monitored quarterly by the Board, with a summary of outcomes and financial performance reported in the Annual Report to members and stakeholders.

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Engagement and communication are central to VESPIIA's purpose as a professional body. Our ability to connect with members, partners, and the wider community determines the reach and impact of our work. In 2026–27, we will strengthen engagement through consistent communication, meaningful partnerships, and visible leadership within the sector.

Partnerships and Collaboration

VESPIIA's partnership model is designed to build long-term relationships that support shared outcomes. We work with government, academia, industry, and community organisations to advance projects, research, and advocacy that benefit the veteran, emergency services, and police support sectors.

Focus areas for 2026–27:

- Maintain formal partnerships with organisations such as the University of Western Australia Defence and Security Institute, Curtin University, and Henderson Alliance.
- Develop new partnerships across the corporate, philanthropic, and government sectors to support the Landing Zone, Research and Resource Library, and Awards for Excellence.
- Engage allied organisations — including health, education, and workforce development bodies — to strengthen cross-sector collaboration.

Partnerships are reviewed annually for alignment to VESPIIA's mission, mutual benefit, and measurable impact.

Sponsorship and Funding Engagement

Sponsorship and funding relationships are managed through a clear framework of stewardship and accountability. Each partnership is structured to ensure visibility for sponsors, value for members, and sustainability for the Institute.

2026–27 focus:

- Secure multi-year sponsorship agreements to support VESPIIA's core projects and event calendar.
- Deliver consistent recognition for sponsors through events, publications, and digital platforms.
- Maintain a balanced funding mix across membership, sponsorship, philanthropy, and grants to safeguard organisational independence.

Member and Stakeholder Engagement

VESPIIA's members are the foundation of its success. Engagement will focus on maintaining open channels of communication, ensuring feedback informs priorities, and building a strong national community of practice.

Key initiatives:

- Quarterly Member Briefings providing updates on advocacy, research, and events.
- Regular surveys and consultation rounds to capture member input and inform policy positions.
- An annual Member Impact Report summarising achievements, engagement data, and organisational progress.
- Expansion of state-based events and networks to strengthen participation outside Western Australia.

Media, Events, and Public Communication

VESPIIA will continue to build its public profile as the national voice for those supporting veterans, emergency services, and police. Communications will focus on visibility, credibility, and sector leadership.

Priority activities:

- Leverage the Future Frontlines Conference and Awards for Excellence to showcase innovation and best practice.
- Publish commentary, submissions, and research outcomes that demonstrate thought leadership.
- Continue to grow VESPIIA's digital presence across LinkedIn, email, and media outlets.
- Develop consistent messaging and collateral that reinforce VESPIIA's values and purpose.

Evaluation

All engagement activities will be monitored through measurable indicators, including member satisfaction, event attendance, media reach, and partnership retention. An annual communications review will be completed to assess effectiveness, alignment with strategy, and return on investment.

NEXT STEPS

This Strategic Plan provides the direction for VESPIIA's next stage of growth and maturity. Implementation will occur through the annual Operational Plan, which sets specific actions, timeframes, and responsibilities aligned to each pillar.

Progress will be monitored throughout the year, with regular reporting to the Board and an annual summary provided to members.

Implementation Framework

- Quarterly Board Reporting:
 - The CEO will report quarterly on progress against each strategic goal, including outcomes, risks, and resource needs.
- Operational Plan Alignment:
 - The Operational Plan will define project timelines, staff responsibilities, and performance indicators to deliver on the priorities outlined in this plan.
- Financial Oversight:
 - The Finance Committee and CEO will review financial performance against budget and funding objectives quarterly.
- Governance Review:
 - The Board will conduct an annual review of governance and policy settings to ensure the organisation remains compliant and effective.

Annual Review and Renewal

VESPIIA will review this Strategic Plan at the end of each financial year to assess progress and relevance. Findings from the annual review will inform adjustments to goals, priorities, and resource allocations for the following year.

The next full strategic review and rewrite is scheduled for mid-2027, with the updated plan to cover the 2027–29 period.

Summary

The 2026–27 Strategic Plan positions VESPIIA to strengthen its foundation and expand its national reach. Through collaboration, clear governance, and sustained advocacy, VESPIIA will continue to deliver value to its members and ensure that those who support others are recognised, connected, and equipped to succeed.

VESPIA