



Australian Government

# Australian Government Security Vetting Agency

## ANNUAL UPDATE 2022–23

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AGSVA's mission is to deliver responsive and assured  
vetting services to enable security capability.

[WWW.AGSVA.GOV.AU](http://WWW.AGSVA.GOV.AU)



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

*AGSVA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. AGSVA recognises their continuing connection to traditional lands and waters and would like to pay respect to their Elders past and present. AGSVA would also like to pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have contributed to the Defence of Australia in times of peace and war.*

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# MESSAGE FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY VETTING

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## **The 2022–23 reporting year represented a year of significant change, challenge and achievement for AGSVA.**

A new vetting system, myClearance, went live in late November 2022. Despite significant challenges experienced with the implementation of myClearance AGSVA completed 63,672 clearances, which was just short of our record in 2021–22.

I would like to thank you, our customers, key stakeholders and sponsors for your support and patience during this period and I would also like to thank the AGSVA team for their hard work, flexibility and dedication.

I commenced in the role of Assistant Secretary Vetting (ASV) in May of this year and would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Kim Arthur, for her dedicated leadership and commitment to continuous improvement during her three years as ASV.

Before the launch of myClearance it was increasingly obvious that our processes and systems were no longer fit for purpose and could not meet the ever increasing year on year demand growth from government and industry. The post-remediation performance of myClearance is providing us with confidence that we now have the right capability to meet demand and provide the agility to better manage personnel security risks in an increasingly complex security environment.

We have celebrated the fact that we are now completely digital having finalised our last ever hard copy file earlier this year and no longer rely on logistics companies to transport physical files around Australia.

The immediate priority for 2023–24 is returning AGSVA back to benchmark performance. Once that has been achieved our focus will be on optimising the capabilities of myClearance to improve vetting efficiency and timeliness.

I and the entire AGSVA team are aligned on achieving this outcome through a culture of continuous improvement in our service delivery, customer service and responsiveness.

**Mardi Jarvis**

**Assistant Secretary Vetting  
AGSVA**



# AGSVA FY 2022-23 AT A GLANCE

At 30 June 2023, **AGSVA** was managing

**407,531** clearances for over

**780** Australian Government and

Industry partner clients.



**63,672**

security clearance  
completions\*



**31,691**

applications requested  
by and issued to  
Defence Industry\*\*



**26,499**

applications requested  
by and issued to other  
Government agencies\*\*

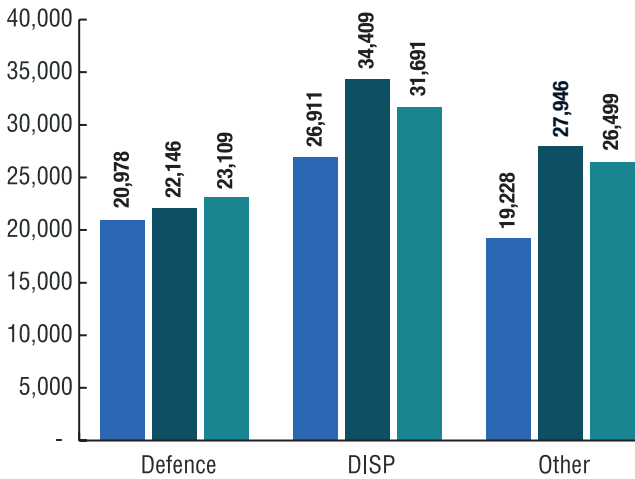
\*Excluding cancellations.

\*\*Initial and Upgrade.

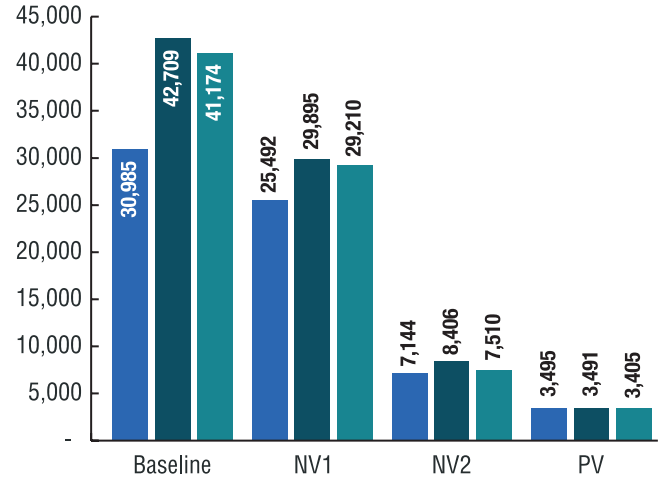
## DEMAND FOR CLEARANCES

In 2022–23 there was a minor reduction of 3.9 per cent in clearance demand from record 2021–22 levels. This is believed to be the result of issues following the launch of myClearance and associated demand reduction efforts by AGSVA, rather than actual reduced demand. Indications are demand has recovered very strongly and will likely reach new record levels in 2023–24.

Initial and upgrade demand by sponsor type



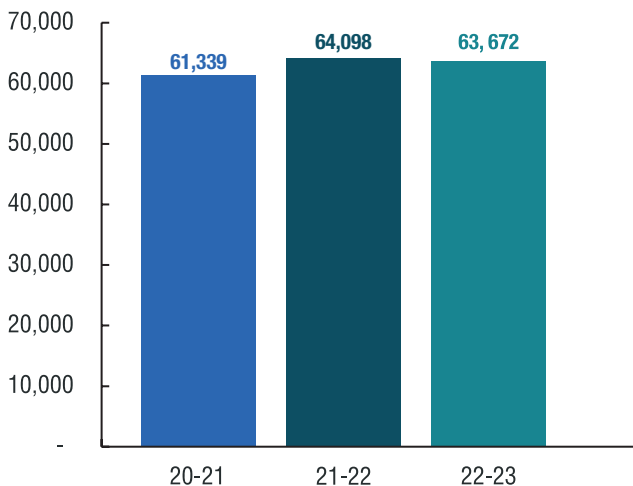
Initial and upgrade demand by clearance level



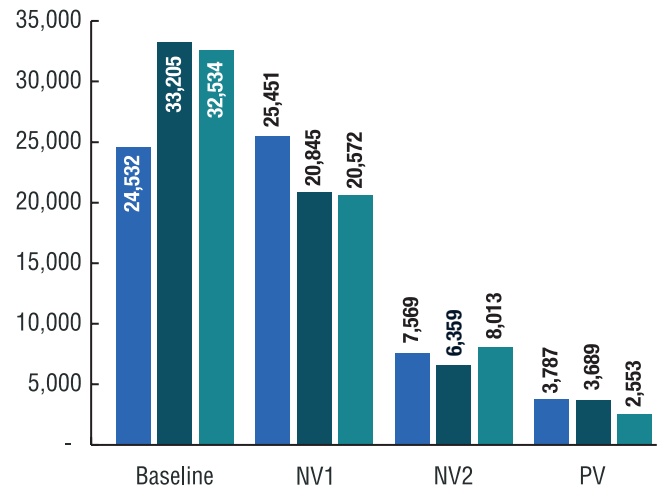
## SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPLETIONS

AGSVA completed 63,672 security clearance cases in 2022–23 — a 0.95 per cent decrease from 2021–22. Security clearance completions are initial, upgrade and revalidation vetting cases that reach a conclusion, including grant and deny, in the financial year. Clearance completions exclude cancellations.

Case completions by financial year



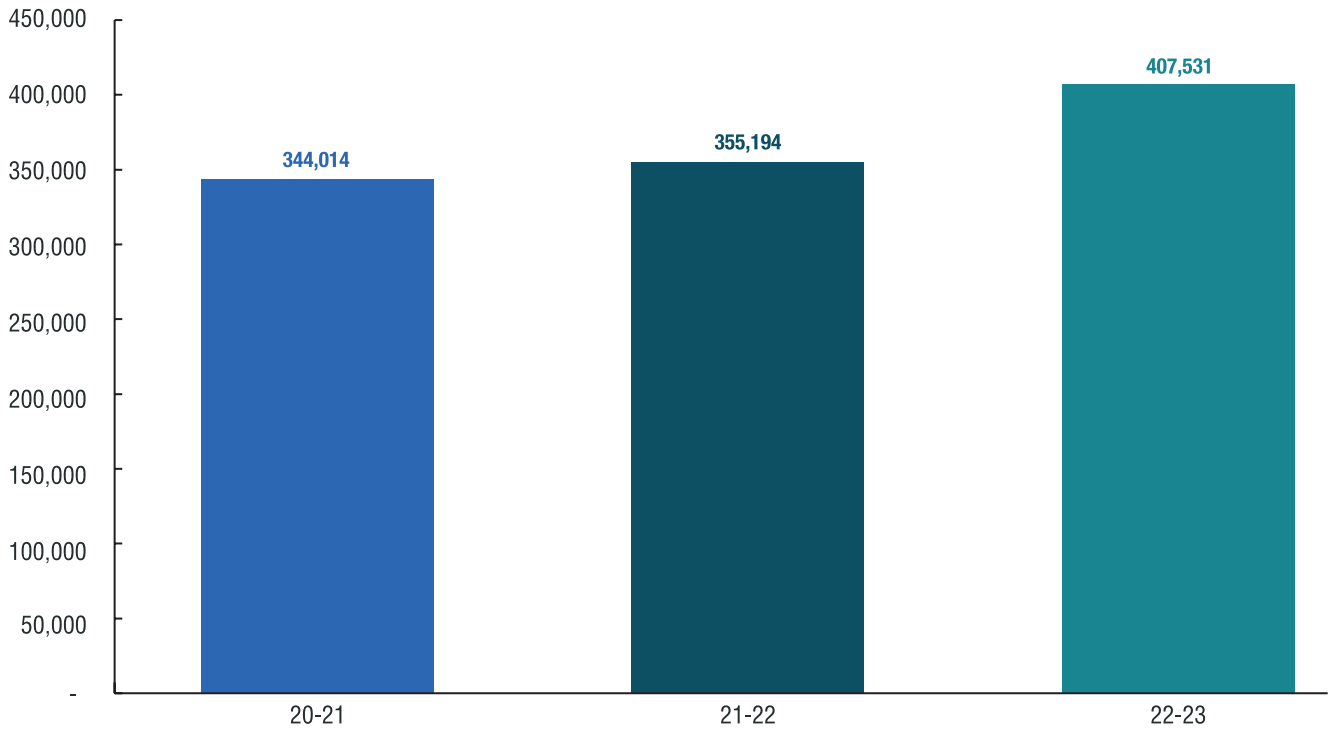
Annual case completions by clearance level at 30 June



Key: ■ FY 20–21 ■ FY 21–22 ■ FY 22–23

# ACTIVE SECURITY CLEARANCES

As at 30 June 2023, AGSVA maintained 407,531 active security clearances. The number of active clearances increased from 355,194 in 2021–22 to 407,531 in 2022–23.

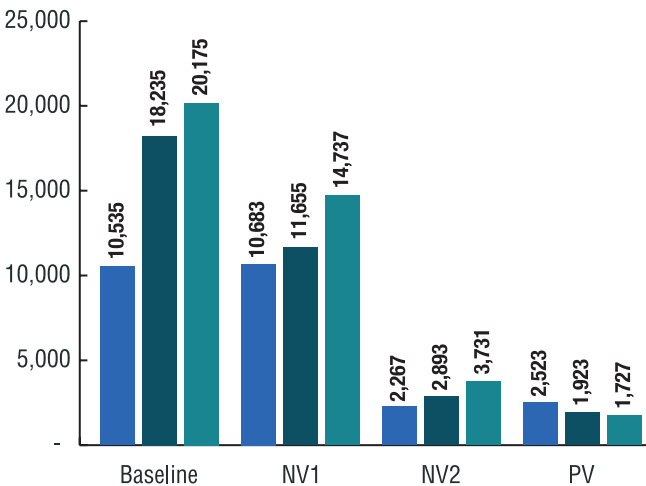


# REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

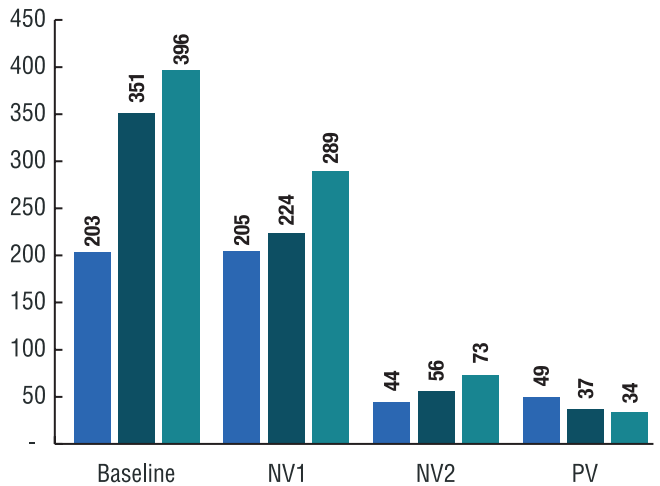
As part of the security clearance process, AGSVA staff may need to make requests for information (RFIs) from clearance subjects and other parties for further information.

## Total RFIs sent over the past three financial years

AGSVA sent out over 14 per cent more RFIs in 2022–23 than in 2021–22.



## Average volumes of RFIs sent out each week



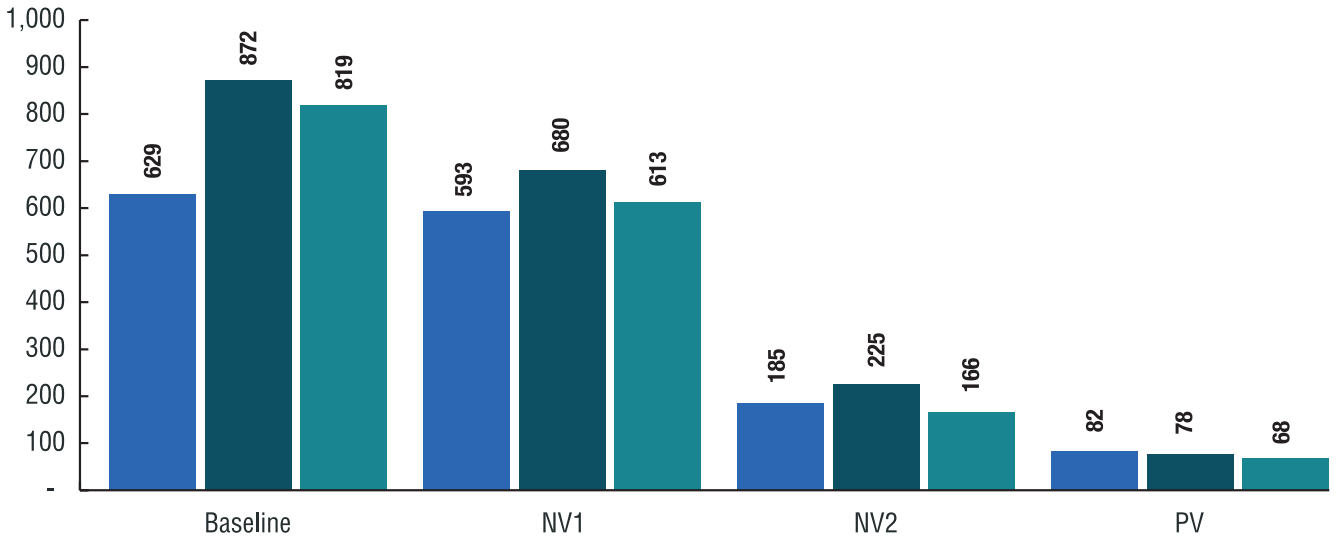
Key: ■ FY 20–21 ■ FY 21–22 ■ FY 22–23

## WEEKLY APPLICATION AVERAGE

Demand is measured by the number of application requests submitted by sponsors.

### Clearance application requests

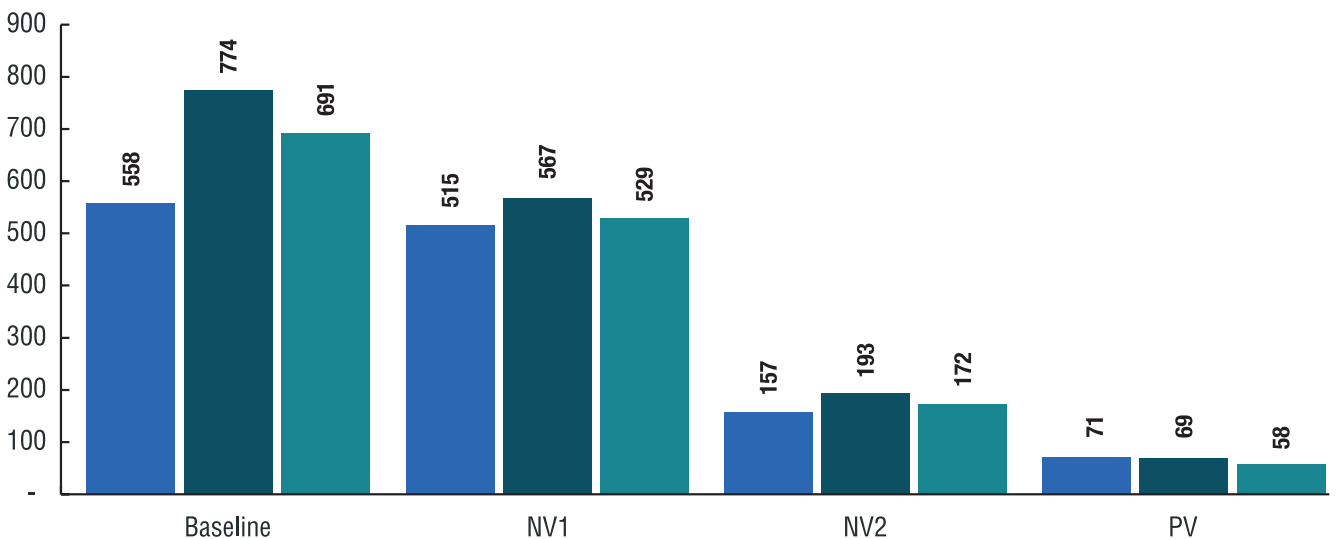
This data set includes initial, upgrade and revalidation clearance requests. These figures may be more appropriate to understanding demand through the number of individual clearance requests raised by sponsors.



## WEEKLY APPLICATION SUBMISSION AVERAGE

### Weekly application average by applications first submitted

This uses the first submission date for a case only: each case is only counted once in the table. This data set may be more appropriate to understanding demand.

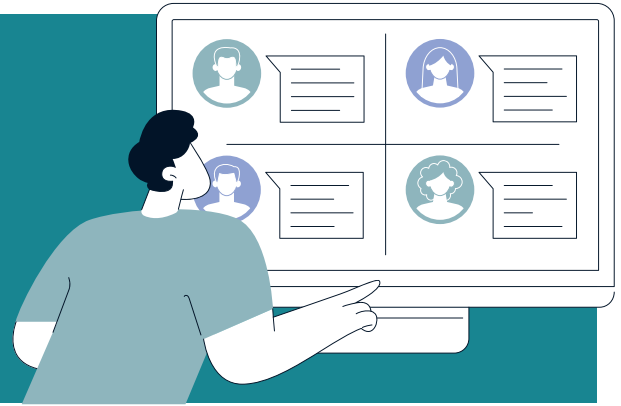


Key: ■ FY 20-21 ■ FY 21-22 ■ FY 22-23



## OUR CUSTOMERS

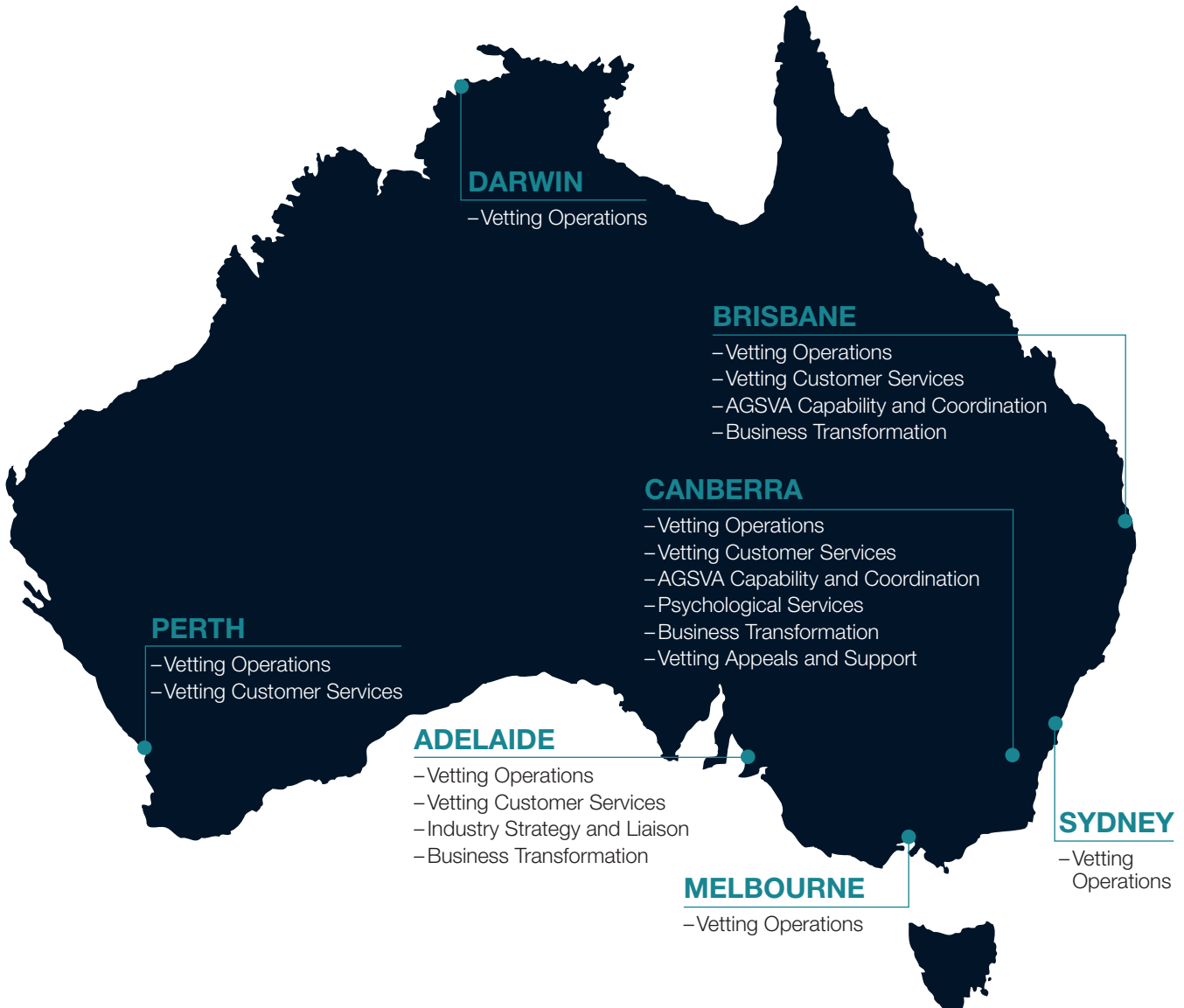
The largest sponsors of active security clearances include the Department of Defence, Defence Industry, (including Shipbuilding), Services Australia, the Australian Taxation Office and the Department of Home Affairs. AGSVA's customers also include more than 180 agencies and entities that sponsor fewer than five security clearances.



## WHERE WE WORK

AGSVA operates at seven sites across Australia and our contracted security vetting workforce is also represented nationally, ensuring AGSVA services are available to sponsors and clearance subjects across Australia.

**AGSVA offices as at 30 June 2023**





## Introduction of myClearance

The Australian Government’s new security vetting system, myClearance, is a single, streamlined, and secure, end-to-end digital vetting system.

myClearance delivers six key system improvements:

1

An integrated system for all users, with increased self-service options.

2

An improved application experience, enhanced by digital identity integration.

3

Automated application validation, removing manual processes.

4

Visibility and tracking of progress status.

5

Automated workflows for staff to manage workloads.

6

On-system request management, eliminating reliance on spreadsheets and reminders.

During the initial roll out of myClearance, issues were identified with the system. Defence undertook a significant remediation project between November 2022 and 30 June 2023. Defence redeployed staff to support applicants and process urgent clearances, and developed five major system releases, with over 190 fixes and enhancements to myClearance.

These releases fixed system issues and addressed problems experienced by clearance subjects, security officers and vetting staff with myClearance, as well as delivering additional system improvements. While this remediation work was underway, AGSVA temporarily suspended invoicing for clearances.

Despite the roll out issues, myClearance has significantly uplifted AGSVA vetting capability.

**System improvements will continue in 2023–24 and it is anticipated that all cases not achieving KPIs will be cleared, and AGSVA will meet, if not exceed KPIs, in the first half of 2024.**



# PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

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LWVVSFLDOLVWEHKDYLRXUDOHS  
KLJKOHYHORITXDOLWDDQGRQILGHQFHLC\$\*69\$  
DGMXGLFDWLRQRIVHFXULWFOHDUDQFHVXLWDEL

This expertise delivers assurance to the Commonwealth that emotional, mental health, and personality security risks are effectively assessed, addressed and managed. The directorate engages with the broader National Intelligence Community to further develop and refine our evidence-based methods for identifying and managing emotional, mental health, and personality-related risks within a national security context.

Under Panel arrangements, the Directorate of Psychological Services moved to an allocation model that allowed contracted security psychologists to manage and schedule their own appointments. This streamlined processes and freed internal staffing resources, by allowing psychologists the freedom and flexibility to schedule appointments on a day and time that suits both their schedule and that of the clearance subject.

Finally, the directorate has completed business arrangements that have enhanced the way the team engages with its psychological workforce and clearance subjects. One of the most important changes was the digitisation of all physical material.

The directorate achieved complete digitisation of its files during the first half of 2023.

In conjunction with psychological files being fully digitised, the team have also transitioned to online psychometric testing facilitated through the myClearance platform. The move to online testing, along with the digitation of all hardcopy material, has seen geographical restrictions lifted and has enhanced and streamlined the customer experience. Clearance subjects are now able to complete the psychological component of their security clearance over a new secure and user-friendly online platform.

Due to the flexibility introduced by these measures, along with the move to myClearance, Psychological Services can now be delivered more efficiently to better support current and future clearance requirements.

# EXTERNAL SECURITY VETTING SERVICES

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FRPSDQLHVWRSURYLGHVHFXULWFOHDUDQFH  
DVVHVPHQWVRQEHKDOIRIWKH\$XVWUDOLDQ  
\*RYHUQPHQW7KHVHFRPSDQLHVDUULQJWRQRUSRUDWH  
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FOHDUDQFH SURFHVWLQFUHDVLRQJWKHVHFXULWVSURWHFWLRQ  
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WKHPDHDUDQFHSDWIRUPKDEHHQDPDMRUIRFXVIRU  
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DQFRMLHUFRRVV  
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BUNLWKLWKHVDPHYHWWLQVWHPDV\$\*69\$

# AGSVA RESULTS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) 2022–23

KPI TARGET	OUTCOME
<b>Timeliness Category</b>	
<b>1.1 Shared KPI with clearance sponsors:</b> 85 per cent of ePacks issued will be returned by the clearance subject and verified by AGSVA to achieve full compliance within 30 business days. (Shared KPI)	<b>Not Met</b> <i>Median timeframe for cases was 39 days</i>
<b>1.2 Baseline clearances:</b> Achieve median processing time of 20 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Baseline cases (excluding cancellations).	<b>Not Met</b> <i>Median timeframe for cases was 36 days</i>
<b>1.3 Negative Vetting Level 1 clearances:</b> Achieve median processing time of 70 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Negative Vetting Level 1 cases (excluding cancellations).	<b>Not Met</b> <i>Median timeframe for cases was 109 days</i>
<b>1.4 Negative Vetting Level 2 clearances:</b> Achieve median processing time of 100 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Negative Vetting Level 2 cases (excluding cancellations).	<b>Not Met</b> <i>Median timeframe for cases was 151 days</i>
<b>1.5 Positive Vetting clearances:</b> Achieve median processing time of 180 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Positive Vetting cases (excluding cancellations).	<b>Not Met</b> <i>Median timeframe for cases was 182 days</i>
<b>1.6 Priority Positive Vetting clearances:</b> Achieve median processing time of 90 business days or less for routine, non-complex* priority Positive Vetting cases.	<b>Not Met</b> <i>Median timeframe for cases was 114 days</i>
<b>1.7 Reactivation of routine, non-complex* inactive clearances:</b> (as per the definition in <a href="#">Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF)</a> core requirement 12) within 30 business days.	<b>Data unavailable<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>1.8 Phone and Email:</b> 85 per cent of all enquiries will be resolved within five business days <sup>2</sup> .	<b>Not Met</b> <i>55% of phone and email enquiries were resolved within five days</i>
<b>Customer Experience Category</b>	
<b>2.1 75 per cent of routine, non-complex* cases will be processed within KPI times for Baseline, Negative Vetting Level 1, Negative Vetting Level 2, Positive Vetting and priority Positive Vetting cases.</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
<b>2.2 80 per cent of clearance subjects surveyed are satisfied with:</b> using the security vetting ePack and AGSVA website their overall experience of the clearance process.	<b>Not Met</b> <i>72% satisfied</i>
<b>2.3 80 per cent of security officers surveyed are satisfied with:</b> using the security vetting ePack, dashboard and AGSVA website - their overall experience with AGSVA.	<b>Not Met</b> <i>72% satisfied</i>
<b>Quality Category</b>	
<b>3.1 AGSVA will undertake quality assessment of between 2–10 per cent of vetting outcomes each year.</b>	<b>Met</b> <i>4.88% undertaken</i>
<b>3.2 AGSVA will maintain quality management accreditation through ISO 9001 certification.</b>	<b>Met</b>

\* Routine cases are those that are processed according to KPI timeframes. AGSVA may approve a routine case for urgent or priority processing where the sponsor has raised a formal request, or at AGSVA's discretion. Complex cases are those cases that have:

- a) had concerns identified through the vetting assessment, and may be undergoing a procedural fairness process and/or additional investigations;
- b) been referred for an additional external check, or one which may require a more detailed assessment and therefore may take longer to complete; or
- c) been delayed for reasons out of AGSVA's control (such as the clearance subject being unavailable due to an absence from the workplace, or where AGSVA is awaiting an eligibility waiver from the sponsoring agency).

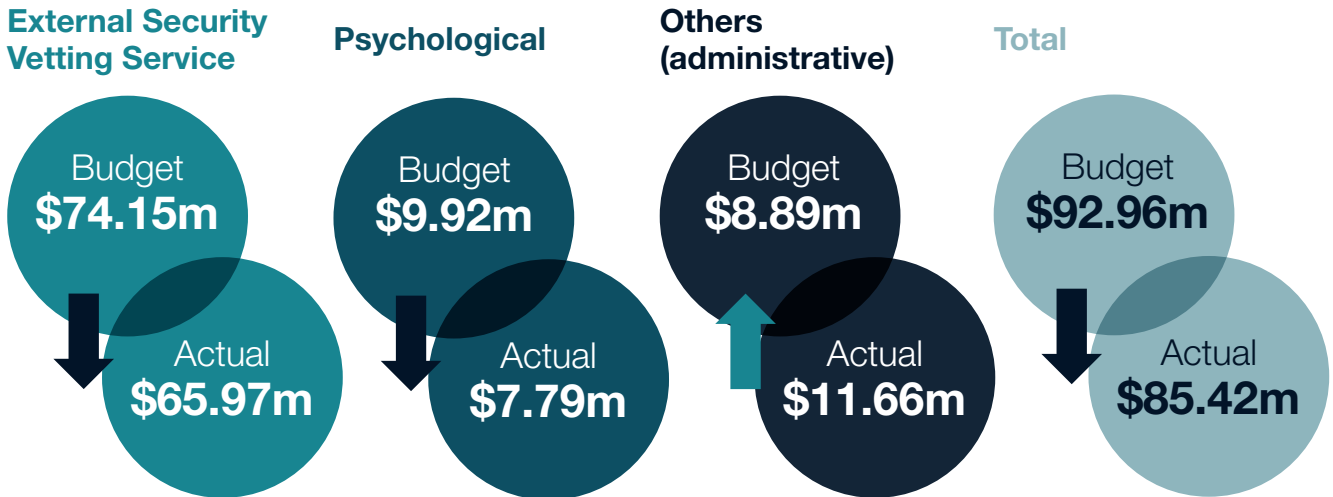
<sup>1</sup> Reactivation of clearances was not available in myClearance until July 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Data only available and for the period 1 July to 28 November 2022, however there were extensive delays post this period and the KPIs would not have been met.

# FINANCIAL RESULTS

**AGSVA recorded a total operating expenditure of \$90.95 million against a total operating budget of \$107.49 million (not including salary costs for Australian Public Services personnel) in financial year 2022–23.**

AGSVA's contracted partners provide vetting, psychological and administrative services. The budget allocation for contracted services included within the AGSVA operating budget was \$92.96 million.



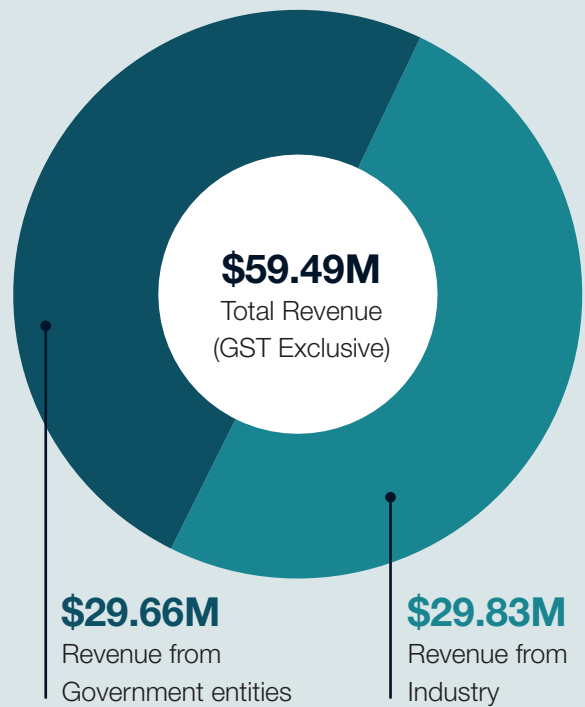
The total number of security clearances processed in 2022–23 was less than projected due to the pausing of new clearances during the introduction of myClearance. This resulted in an underspend for ESVS and psychological services and an increase in *Other (administrative)* costs to support myClearance remediation.

## AGSVA Revenue

AGSVA charges fees to Government agencies and Defence Industry sponsors for security clearance assessments. AGSVA applies a partial cost recovery model and charges only for the initial clearance, upgrade or revalidation process. AGSVA does not charge fees to maintain a clearance between revalidation. AGSVA's vetting fees do not include costs relating to the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's personnel security assessments.

Charging fees helps to ensure adequate resourcing is provided to keep clearance processing times within benchmark timeframes and to efficiently recover the cost of providing security vetting services within a growing demand for security clearances.

**AGSVA's total revenue from fees in 2022–23 was \$59.49 million.**



## Clearance fees FY 2022–23 and FY 2023–24

In May 2023, the AGSVA Governance Board endorsed AGSVA to retain the FY 2022–23 vetting fees for FY 2023–24. Although AGSVA transitioned to myClearance on 28 November 2022, the implications for clearance costs needs to be understood, prior to finalising a revised cost model.

Fees are inclusive of Goods and Services Tax.

<b>Initial / Upgrade / Revalidation</b>			
<b>Clearance Level</b>	<b>FY 22–23 fee</b>	<b>FY 23–24 fee</b>	<b>Fee Variation (%)</b>
Baseline	\$884.00	\$884.00	—
Negative Vetting 1 (NV1)	\$1,355.00	\$1,355.00	—
Negative Vetting 2 (NV2)	\$2,486.00	\$2,486.00	—
Positive Vetting (PV)	\$15,280.00	\$15,280.00	—

<b>Cancellation</b>			
<b>Clearance Level</b>	<b>FY 22–23 fee</b>	<b>FY 23–24 fee</b>	<b>Fee Variation (%)</b>
Baseline	\$442.00	\$442.00	—
NV1	\$678.00	\$678.00	—
NV2	\$1,243.00	\$1,243.00	—

<b>PV Cancellation</b>			
<b>Clearance Level</b>	<b>FY 22–23 fee</b>	<b>FY 23–24 fee</b>	<b>Fee Variation (%)</b>
Coordination	\$1,560.00	\$1,560.00	—
Psychological Assessment	\$5,346.00	\$5,346.00	—
Vetting Assessment	\$14,729.00	\$14,729.00	—
Delegation	\$15,280.00	\$15,280.00	—



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