



Australian Government
Defence

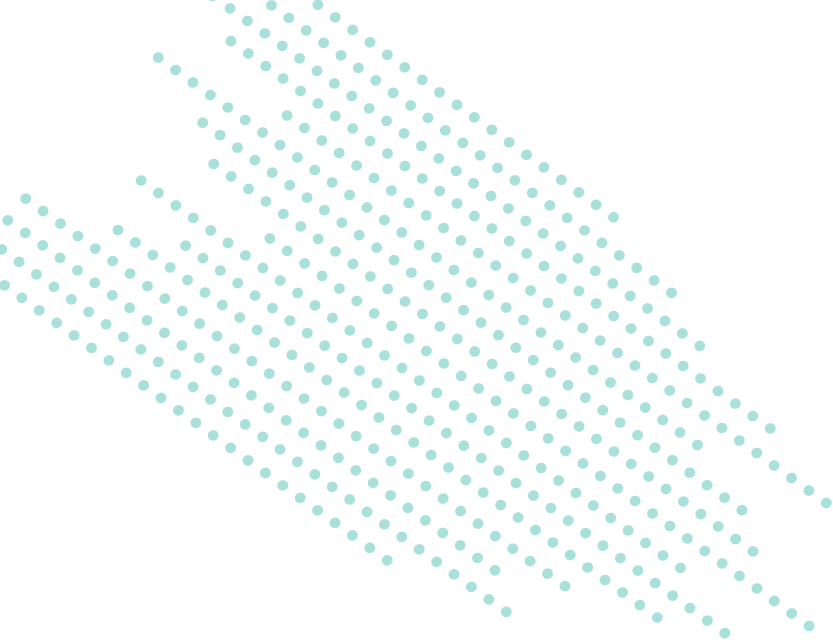
Australian Government Security Vetting Agency

ANNUAL UPDATE 2023–24

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

WWW.AGSVA.GOV.AU

AGSVA



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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CONTENTS

Message from ASSISTANT SECRETARY VETTING2

AGSVA AT A GLANCE.....3

HIGHLIGHTS.....4

 myClearance.....4

 Supporting the Regional Force Surveillance Group.....4

SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPLETIONS5

DEMAND FOR CLEARANCES5

ACTIVE SECURITY CLEARANCES.....6

OUR CUSTOMERS.....6

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.....7

EXTERNAL SECURITY VETTING SERVICES.....7

WHERE WE WORK8

 AGSVA offices as at 30 June 20248

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT8

 Risk sharing9

 Feedback data9

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES10

AGSVA RESULTS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023–2411

FINANCIAL RESULTS12

 AGSVA revenue.....12

 Clearance fees 2023–24 and 2024–25.....13



Message from **ASSISTANT SECRETARY VETTING**

The 2023–24 financial year was a record-breaking year for AGSVA with the completion of 82,331 security clearances. An increase of over 29%, or 18,600 more clearances, compared to financial year 2022–23; and the largest number of clearances completed in a financial year since AGSVA was established in 2010. This is a testament to how well myClearance is now operating, and the enormous efforts put in by the whole AGSVA team.

In 2024, the Government released the *National Defence Strategy (NDS)* in response to a strategic environment with reduced warning time and a growing threat to Australia. In this context, the need for assuring the suitability of individuals trusted to safeguard our information and assets is more critical than ever.

AGSVA's priorities into 2024–25 include continuing to meet and exceed our key performance indicators and optimising the vetting process to ensure we continue to effectively manage personnel security risks in this increasingly complex security environment.

I, and the entire AGSVA team are focussed on achieving these outcomes through a culture of continuous improvement in our service delivery, customer experience and responsiveness.



Mardi Jarvis

Assistant Secretary Vetting
AGSVA

ASV

AGSVA

2023–24

At A Glance

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

409,091 clearances for over
1,100 Australian Government and
Industry partner clients.



135,620
emails received



82,331

security clearance
completions*



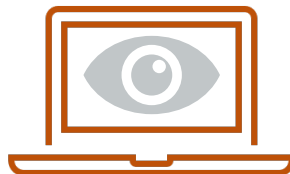
103,924
calls answered



27,673
applications
issued to
Defence Industry**



27,975
applications
issued to
other Government
agencies**



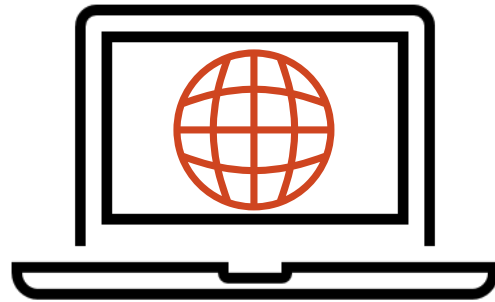
2,931,926
views of the
AGSVA website

* Excluding cancellations
** Initial and upgrade

HIGHLIGHTS

myClearance

myClearance achieved full operating capability in December 2023 and in the 2023–24 financial year completed a record 82,331 clearances; the largest number of clearances in AGSVA's history.



Supporting the Regional Force Surveillance Group

The Regional Force Surveillance Group (RFSG) plays a critical role in protecting Australia's sovereignty in the regional and remote regions of Australia's north and west, while providing development and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on-country. Through RFSG, Defence is investing in resilient communities in a strategically important area of Australia, building our national resilience from the ground up.

A significant number of Indigenous RFSG members are from remote and isolated communities, and there have been long standing challenges in RFSG members obtaining a security clearance. RFSG members often lack of formal documentation to prove identity and checkable background, to allow access to the myGovID platform. Cultural sensitivities can also affect the sharing of personal and security information with AGSVA.

AGSVA has been working closely with the RFSG to streamline the vetting process for its Indigenous members from remote and isolated communities. These improvements have had a positive impact on the ability of the Army to quickly recruit and deploy members; making a difference in the lives of our indigenous soldiers.



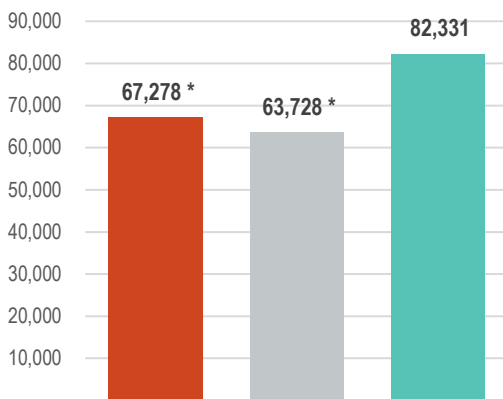
Australian Army soldiers from Regional Force Surveillance Group, Wujal Wujal elders and local residents gather for 'Welcome to Country' and smoking ceremony, during the promotion of Lieutenant Colonel Eileen-Joan Hall at Wujal Wujal Falls, Queensland. CREDIT: Lance Corporal Steven Brockway

SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPLETIONS

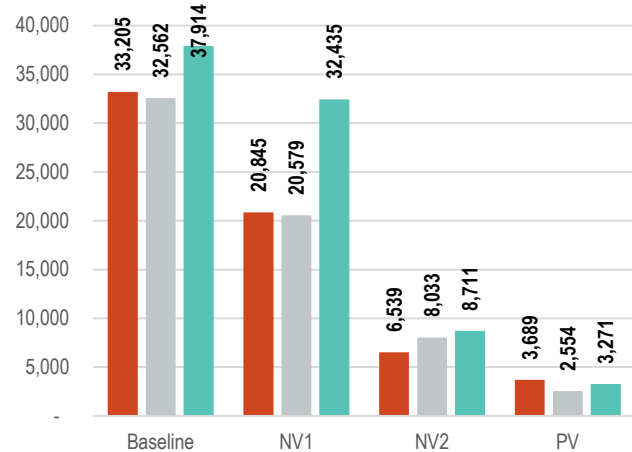
AGSVA completed a record 82,331 security clearances in financial year 2023–24. This is an increase of over 29 per cent, or 18,600 more clearances, compared to last financial year.

Security clearance completions include 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



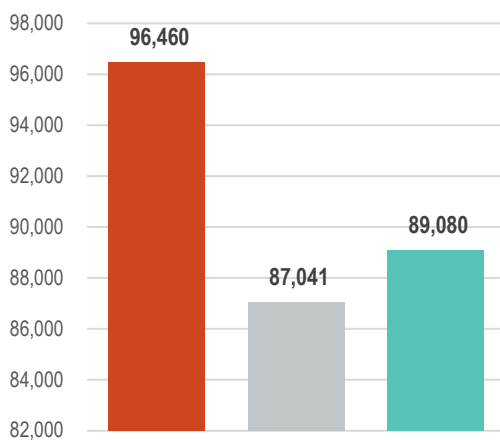
DEMAND FOR CLEARANCES

In 2023–24 there was an increase of 2.3 per cent in total clearance demand from 2022–23 levels. This includes initial applications, upgrades and revalidations.

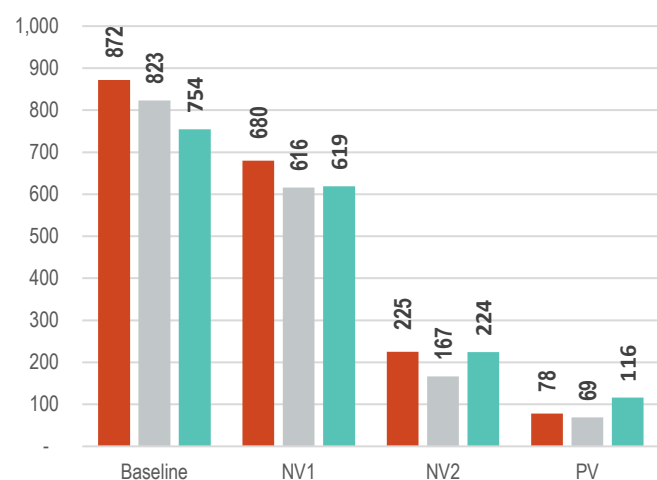
The decline in demand from 2021–22 to 2022–23 is attributable the issues experienced with the implementation of myClearance which required AGSVA to put a temporary pause on revalidations and some Industry clearances.

The Industry pause was lifted in March 2024, and in 2023–24 AGSVA saw an increase in demand for higher level security clearances.

Total demand



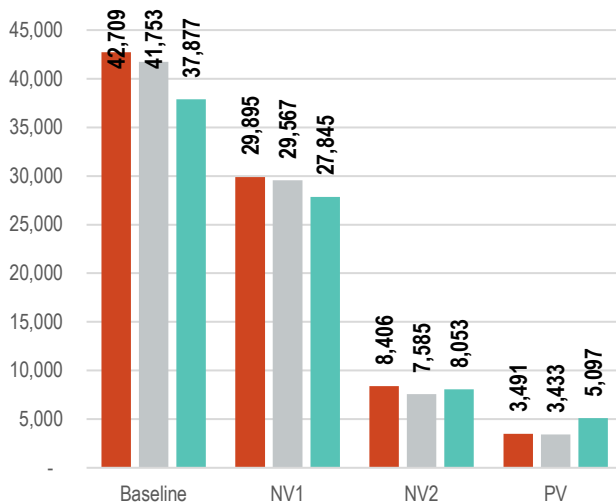
Average weekly application requests by clearance level



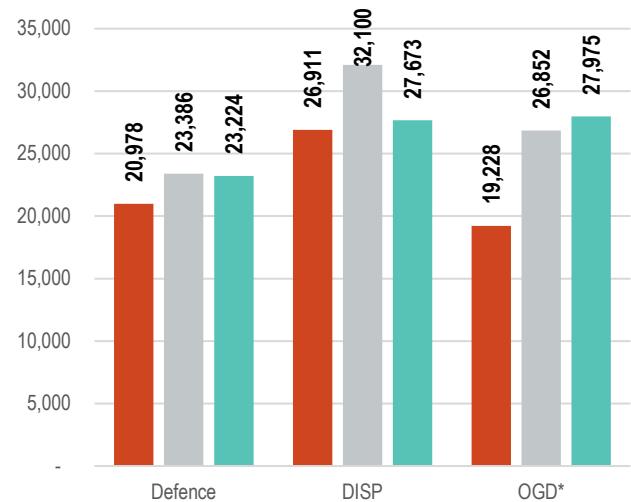
Key: ■ 21–22 ■ 22–23 ■ 23–24

* Data updated from that published in 2022–23

Initial and upgrade demand by clearance level

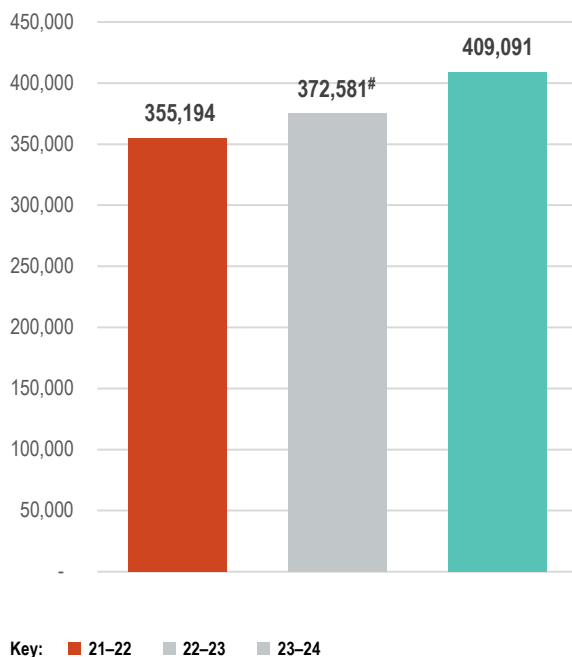


Initial and upgrade demand by sponsor type



ACTIVE SECURITY CLEARANCES

As at 30 June 2024, AGSVA was maintaining 409,091 active security clearances, an increase from 372,581[#] in 2022–23.



Key: ■ 21-22 ■ 22-23 ■ 23-24

OUR CUSTOMERS

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



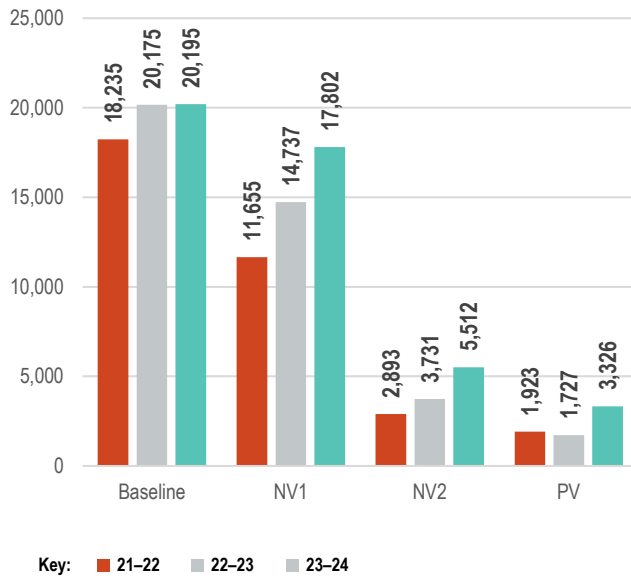
* Other Government Departments

[#] Data updated from that published in 2022–23

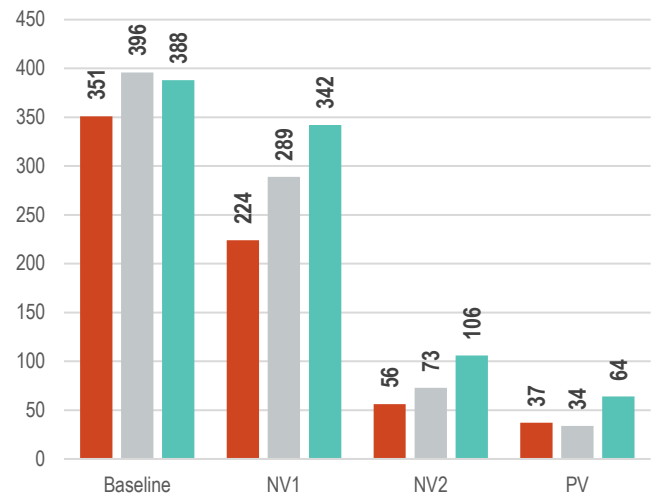
REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

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. AGSVA sent out over 16 per cent more RFIs in 2023–24 than in 2022–23.

Total RFIs sent over the past three financial years



Average volumes of RFIs sent out each week



EXTERNAL SECURITY VETTING SERVICES

AGSVA collaborates with six external vetting companies to provide security clearance assessments on behalf of the Australian Government. These companies, Barrington Corporate Risk Pty Ltd, Cogent Business Solutions Pty Ltd, Omni Pty Ltd, Mitchell Personnel Solutions Pty Ltd, Sirras Consultants Pty Ltd and Staff Check Pty Ltd, consist of 550 vetting analysts and support staff.

In late 2023, AGSVA commenced a process to procure a new External Security Vetting Services (ESVS) Panel. AGSVA is pleased to advise that the panel has been expanded to eight external vetting companies which commenced work on 12th August 2024.

A great deal of time and effort has gone toward enhancing communications between AGSVA and the ESVS cohort, including the introduction of the ESVS Prime Leadership SharePoint site; increased training and development sessions via the Defence Protected Environment; and the secure transfer of documents through Defence's Objective document management system provides.

WHERE WE WORK

AGSVA operates at eight 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 2024



CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

In February 2024, AGSVA established the customer outreach team, dedicated to providing proactive support to Industry, Defence and Other Government Departments.

The purpose of AGSVA's customer outreach is to enhance two-way communication, and the identification and resolution of issues and concerns that are complex and/or sensitive.

As at 30 June 2024, AGSVA has engaged with 45 sponsors (22 x Industry, 7 x Defence and 16 x Other Government Departments) through their outreach program.

The meetings are held at the Director or Chief Security Officer equivalent level, with stakeholders determining the frequency.

Feedback received from stakeholders is very positive and AGSVA looks forward to future expansion of our outreach services to support our sponsors

Risk sharing

The Personnel Security Risk Information Sharing Framework (The Framework) facilitates the sharing of security risk information about personnel who hold a security clearance issued by AGSVA, or who are currently undergoing vetting. The sharing of risk information enables entities to have a better understanding of the risk profile of their workforce and to make informed decisions about how to manage and mitigate any identified risks to national security.

From commencement of The Framework in 2020 to 30 June 2024, AGSVA has provided risk information to 215 sponsoring entities. In 2023–24, AGSVA shared 780 separate pieces of risk information with sponsors. Sponsoring entities continue to provide constructive feedback, which is extremely valuable to continue to refine The Framework.

AGSVA delivers risk information to Chief Security Officers as the information is identified, via Risk Advisory Notices, Residual Risk Advices, Conditional Clearance Agreements and adverse security clearance outcomes. AGSVA briefs in the Chief Security Officer into The Framework prior to the delivery of risk information for their entity. Feedback is that Chief Security Officers appreciate this engagement and support.

Feedback data

During 2023–24, AGSVA received 901 items of feedback from customers; of which 65.9 per cent were positive, 22 per cent were negative, and 12.1 per cent were suggestions.

Compared to 2022–23, positive feedback increased by 24.5 per cent and negative feedback decreased by 7.5 per cent. The negative feedback largely related to myClearance implementation and processing timeframes.

This provides a 78 per cent satisfaction result for 2023–24 (positive feedback + suggestions). While this result falls below the KPI for 2023–24 of 80% it was a significant improvement on last year's result of 72 per cent customer and security officer satisfaction. This is indicative of the considerable efforts made by AGSVA customer service staff this year combined with the remediation of myClearance.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

The Directorate of Psychological Services (DPS), through its specialist behavioural expertise, ensures high levels of confidence in AGSVA's adjudication of security clearance suitability. This expertise delivers assurance to the Commonwealth that emotional, mental health, and personality (EMHP) security risks are effectively assessed, addressed and managed.

The demand for psychological assessment and behavioural expertise, at all security levels, has been increasing. To address this rising demand there was a significant focus on recruiting and training Psychological Assessment Services Panel psychologists in 2023–24, resulting in the Panel growing to 188 Contract Psychologists. This, together with other initiatives, has enabled DPS to significantly increase their work throughput. Over the last financial year, DPS uploaded 4,876 psychological assessment reports, which is the highest number of psychological reports ever uploaded by AGSVA.

DPS also delivers specialised training to vetting operations on key topics such as mental health, and have developed and revised resources such as the EMHP Guide to aid their decision-making. These resources support AGSVA's due diligence of EMHP concerns in accordance with the requirements of the Protective Security Policy Framework.

DPS remains committed to providing behavioural expertise within AGSVA, across all security levels, and will continue to provide high quality assurance to the Commonwealth in assessing, identifying and managing insider risk.

AGSVA RESULTS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023–24

| KPI TARGET | OUTCOME |
|--|--|
| Timeliness category | |
| 1.1 Shared KPI with clearance sponsors: 85 per cent of applications will be submitted by the clearance subject and verified by AGSVA within 30 business days. (Shared KPI) | Not met 66 per cent of applications were completed within the shared KPI |
| 1.2 Baseline clearances: Achieve median processing time of 20 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Baseline cases (excluding cancellations). | Met Median timeframe for cases was 14 days |
| 1.3 Negative Vetting Level 1 clearances: Achieve median processing time of 70 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Negative Vetting Level 1 cases (excluding cancellations). | Not met Median timeframe for cases was 72 days |
| 1.4 Negative Vetting Level 2 clearances: Achieve median processing time of 100 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Negative Vetting Level 2 cases (excluding cancellations). | Met Median timeframe for cases was 100 days |
| 1.5 Positive Vetting clearances: Achieve median processing time of 180 business days or less for routine, non-complex* Positive Vetting cases (excluding cancellations). | Met Median timeframe for cases was 157 days |
| 1.6 Priority Positive Vetting clearances: Achieve median processing time of 90 business days or less for routine, non-complex* priority Positive Vetting cases. | Met Median timeframe for cases was 90 days |
| 1.7 Reactivation of routine, non-complex* inactive clearances: (as per the definition in <u>Protective Security Policy Framework</u> core requirement 12) within 30 business days. | Met Median timeframe for reinstatements was five days |
| 1.8 Phone and email: 85 per cent of all enquiries will be resolved within five business days. | Not met 73 per cent of enquiries were resolved within five days |
| Customer experience category | |
| 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. | Not met 58.6 per cent of routine, non-complex cases were processed within KPI timeframes |
| 2.2 80 per cent of clearance subjects surveyed are satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> using the myClearance application portal and AGSVA website their overall experience of the clearance process. | Not met 78 per cent satisfied |
| 2.3 80 per cent of security officers surveyed are satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> using the myClearance security officer portal and AGSVA website their overall experience with AGSVA. | Not met 78 per cent satisfied |
| Quality category | |
| 3.1 AGSVA will undertake quality assessment of between 2 to 10 per cent of vetting outcomes each year. | Met 2.75 per cent undertaken |
| 3.2 AGSVA will maintain quality management accreditation through ISO 9001 certification. | Met |

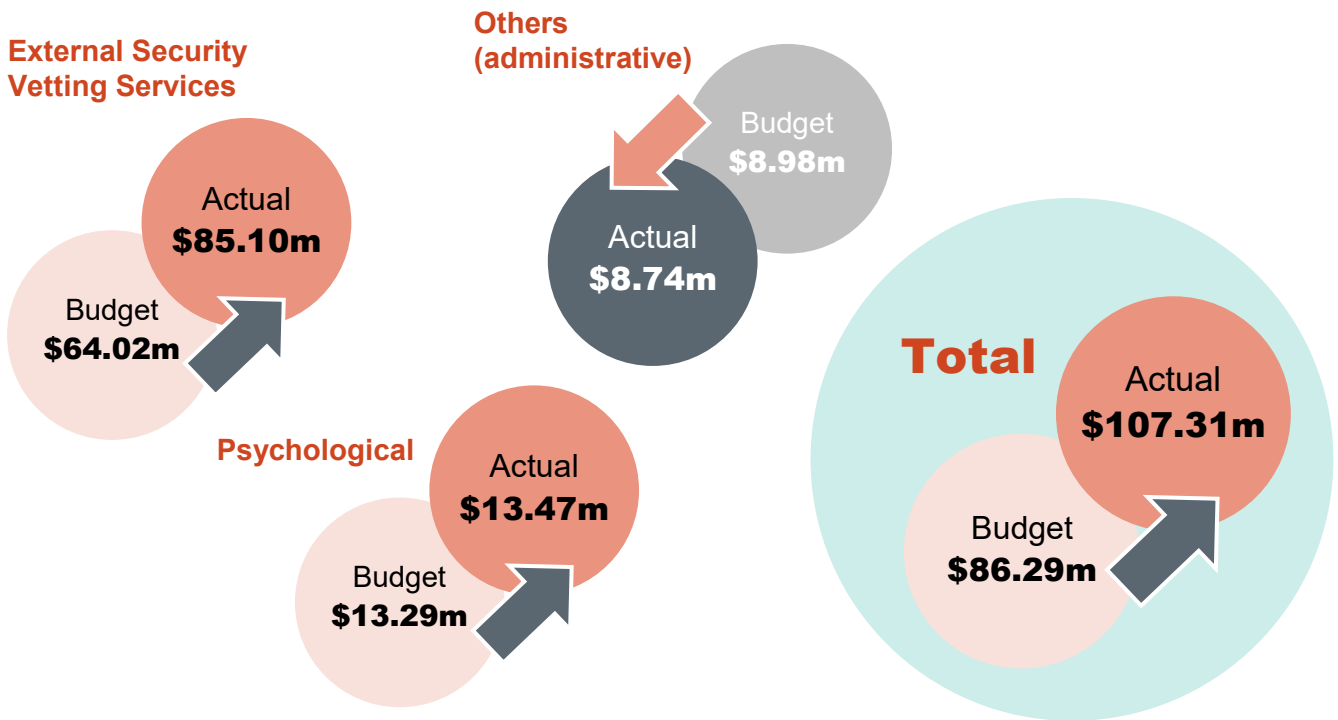
* Routine cases are those that are processed according to KPI timeframes. AGSVA may approve a routine case for urgent or priority processing where the sponsor has raised a formal request, or at AGSVA's discretion. Complex cases are those cases that have:

- 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).

FINANCIAL RESULTS

AGSVA recorded a total operating expenditure of \$114.07 million against a total operating budget of \$86.29 million (not including salary costs for Australian Public Service personnel) in financial year 2023–24.

AGSVA's contracted partners provide vetting, psychological and administrative services. The budget allocation for contracted services included within the AGSVA operating budget was \$96.42 million.



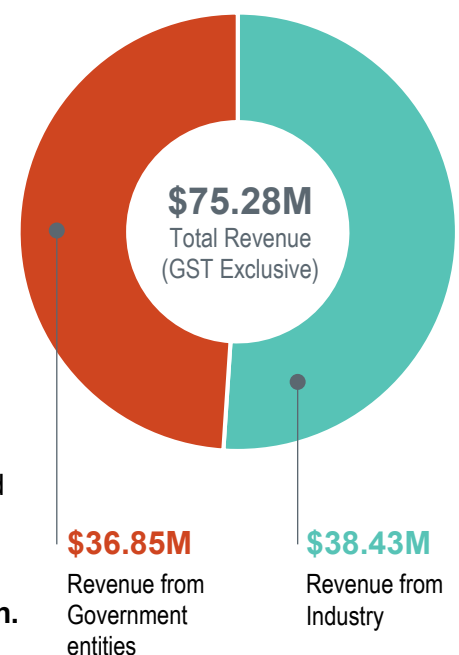
The total number of security clearances processed in 2023–24 was more than projected due to the clearance backlog carried forward from 2022–23. The increased number of security clearances completed required an overspend for External Security Vetting Services and psychological services.

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 2023–24 was \$75.28 million.



Clearance fees 2023–24 and 2024–25

In May 2024, the AGSVA Governance Board endorsed AGSVA's recommendation to retain the 2023–24 vetting fees for 2024–25.

Fees are inclusive of Goods and Services Tax.

Initial / Upgrade / Revalidation

| Clearance level | FY 23–24 fee | FY 24–25 fee | Fee variation (%) |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 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 | — |

Cancellation

| Clearance level | FY 23–24 fee | FY 24–25 fee | Fee variation (%) |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Baseline | \$442.00 | \$442.00 | — |
| NV1 | \$678.00 | \$678.00 | — |
| NV2 | \$1,243.00 | \$1,243.00 | — |

PV cancellation

| Clearance level | FY 23–24 fee | FY 24–25 fee | Fee variation (%) |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 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 | — |

