



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Review of DVA-funded ESO Advocacy and Welfare Services
Questions and Answers

What progress has been made?

The Department of Veterans' Affairs held consultation sessions with the ex-service community across the country during October and November 2009. More than 130 written submissions have been received. The Review team has identified some common themes emerging through this consultation process. Information on these themes is available on the [DVA website](#).

Where and when were the consultations held?

Focus Groups and a range of other consultations were held across the country, with nearly 200 participants contributing. The meetings were held at:

Date	Event	Place
Sept		
14	Secretary	Canberra
16	DVA Deputy Commissioner's meeting	Melbourne
21	Grants team in SA	Adelaide
23	VVF Centre visit	Page ACT
Oct		
1	John Printz, National TIP Chair	Melbourne
8	NSW Regional Focus Group	Dubbo
8	WA Office staff	Perth
9	WA Focus Group	Perth
12	TAS Focus Group	Launceston
13	VIC Focus Group	Melbourne
14	NSW Regional Focus Group	Lismore
15	VITA AGM	Canberra
15	PMAC	Canberra
16	Ken Doolan - Nat Pres RSL	Canberra
19	QLD Regional Focus Group	Townsville
20	QLD Focus Group	Brisbane
21	QLD Regional Focus Group	Rockhampton
22	TIP National Conference	Brisbane
23	NSW Focus Group	Sydney
29-30	DVA Executive Management Group	Canberra
Nov		
4	SA Focus Group	Adelaide
6	ACT Focus Group	Canberra
12	Operational Working Party	Canberra
26-27	ESO Round Table	Canberra
Dec		
14-15	DVA Executive Management Group	Canberra
15	PMAC Teleconference	Canberra

Will the report of the Review be available?

Review outcomes will be published following due consideration by the Department and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

When will the Department act on the Review's report?

The Government will respond when it has considered all the issues raised in the Review report.

What is the purpose of the Review?

The Australian Government wants to ensure that current and future veterans and ex-service personnel, and their families, have access to advocacy and welfare services, and support through Veteran and Community Grants. Through DVA, the Government invested some \$11m in supporting ESOs to provide these services in 2008-09 through BEST, TIP and Veteran and Community Grants.

This Review will examine current ESO service delivery models and recommend future options for both government funding and training support. The Review will consider the interdependencies and interactions of the three current programs and the implications of the changing demographics of the veteran community now and into the future. The Review is being conducted in consultation with the ex-service community and relevant stakeholders.

What programs are being reviewed?

The Review is examining the following programs:

- Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST);
- Training and Information Program (TIP); and
- Veteran and Community (V&C) Grants.

Who is undertaking the Review?

The review is being undertaken by DVA, led by the Repatriation Commissioner, BRIG Bill Rolfe AO (Retd).

When will the Review be finalised?

The Review is expected to report to the Minister by the first quarter of 2010.

Were ESOs consulted during the course of the Review?

ESOs have been consulted at both National and State levels. Comments were also sought from BEST Round 11 successful and unsuccessful applicants.

What was the purpose of this consultation?

To ensure that the views of key stakeholders are taken into account and to ensure that the Review responds to the needs of the veteran and defence communities.

Was consultation held with the TIP Chairs?

The Review recognises the importance of understanding local circumstances and the nexus between services and appropriately trained personnel available to meet demand. The Review team has met with TIP chairs both nationally and at the State TIP level, and addressed the TIP Chair Conference in October 2009.

How will this Review affect ESOs?

ESOs at the National and State level were invited to participate in the consultation phase of the Review.

The Review recognises the invaluable service provided by ESOs to the veteran and defence communities. It will seek to support them by ensuring:

- funding levels provide efficient and effective service delivery;
- the eligibility guidelines for funding programs are clear and unambiguous;
- appropriate services are provided for younger veterans;
- the distribution of available funds is transparent and fair;
- there is no duplication of ESO advocacy and welfare services funded by the Government in individual locations; and
- harmonious working relationships are established and maintained.

Will the current process for grants change?

Grant program policies and eligibility will be considered by the Review in order to improve application, assessment, notification and monitoring processes.

When can I apply for the 2010/2011 BEST funding round?

Application forms for Round 12 of BEST funding will be available soon on the DVA website. Visit www.dva.gov.au/grants for more information.

Will the Review impact on the next V&C funding round?

The next V&C round will proceed as scheduled in March 2010. The primary emphasis of the Review is on the BEST and TIP programs but will consider issues of alignment with V&C funding.

Will models other than the Victorian Support Centre model be considered?

The Review recognises that one size does not fit all and is interested in looking at the experience of a range of ESOs as well as international experience.

Why is there such an emphasis on co-operation and collaboration between ESOs?

The Review seeks to ensure that available resources are used to best effect. This may be achieved through increased co-operation and collaboration between ESOs, including the sharing of facilities and resources. This model is working effectively in various locations around Australia. At the same time, the Review is mindful of such issues as rural and remote localities, service specific groups and the relative size of other funding sources that may be available to some ESOs.

Will the VPAD system be considered in the Review?

The Review will consider VPAD in terms of current usage and the opportunity for enhancements, including the extent to which there are opportunities for better interaction with the claims and appeals decision-making processes.

Will the Review lead to changes in the amount of funding available for BEST and V&C grants?

The issue of future funding will be considered by the Review. This Review is not intended to reduce current funding to ESOs but to ensure funding is effectively meeting the needs of all members of the veteran community.

Will BEST funding be available for rent?

Rental costs of ESO premises, along with a range of other items, are currently excluded from BEST funding. The Review will consider all items that ESOs have sought funding for in recent years to recommend appropriate and clear guidelines for a revised BEST grant program.

Will Grants-in-Aid (GIA) funding be considered by the Review?

The Review will consider what, if any, impacts occurred when GIA funds were rolled into BEST in 2009/2010.

Will the Review consider the DUNT recommendations?

The Government has endorsed the findings of Professor David Dunt's *Independent Study into Suicide in the Ex-Service Community*. The Review will be considering the Dunt recommendations in relation to the provision of advocacy and advice services.

Will the Review consider the Government's Election Promise to establish a public register of ex-service officials and conduct regular surveys of them?

The Review team will consider these commitments in consultation with the veteran and defence communities and in terms of the overall program design.

Why is the V&C Grants Program included in the Review?

While the primary emphasis of the Review is on the BEST and TIP programs, it will consider issues of alignment with V&C funding.

Did ESOs at the local level have an opportunity to contribute to the Review?

All ESOs and interested parties were provided an opportunity to contribute to the Review through the submission process. Ex-service organisations and individuals were able to contribute to the Review by providing comments on the emerging themes which can be found on the [DVA website](#).