**Deputy Commissioner’s Consultative Forum - Tasmania**

**Meeting Number 46– Summary**

**9 August 2023**

**Present:**

Luke Brown (Chair) Deputy Commissioner TAS – Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA)

Barry Quinn Returned and Services League (RSL)

BRIG John Withers Veterans Reference Group (VRG)

Mark Hodder Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans’ Association (APPVA)

Charles Hill (proxy) Royal Australian Air Force Association (RAAF-A)

Karen Turner Open Arms (OA)

Jacinta Leahy Partners of Veterans Association (PVA)

Clare McCathy (observer) Partners of Veterans Association (PVA)

Ray Williams OAM Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women Ltd (TPI)

Kevin Evorall Launceston Legacy Inc

Annette Otway (proxy) Legacy Hobart

Gordon Fuller (proxy) Naval Assn Australia- TAS

Neil Grierson Senior ADF Officer (SADFO)

Mark Green (proxy) Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPAC)

Terry Roe Vietnams Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA)

Anne James Executive Officer – Department of Veterans’ Affairs

**Apologies:**

Cathy Starling Mates4Mates (M4M)

David Waddle OAM ATDP Representative

**Business Arising:**

Apologies and proxies noted. Members endorsed minutes from the Budget Brief. There were no outstanding items.

Chair, Luke Brown opened the meeting and offered condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of those lost in the recent HRH-90 Taipan incident in QLD.

**Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services (MATES) program.**

Luke asked who had heard about the Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services (MATES) program which has been in the press recently.

Luke provided an overview of the program and reminded attendees that all DVA Veteran Card Holders have the ability to opt out if they want to.

**Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide**

The Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide is ongoing with hearings in Adelaide recently. DVA Secretary, Alison Frame PSM appeared as a witness. It was relayed that the Commission handed down its Interim Report on 11 August 2022. Recommendation one and two were to:

1. Simplify and harmonise veteran compensation and rehabilitation legislation, and.
2. Eliminate the claims backlog.

Luke briefed the forum on the implementation progress of Recommendations 1 and 2, and provided an update on actions and progress. He reminded members that the process of Legislation change is lengthy and that there will be opportunities for feedback as it progresses particularly during the exposure draft and consultation stages. The reform is on track to meet the timelines required.

**Building works at 254 Liverpool St**

The forum was advised that there will be extensive building works commencing on the Liverpool St site commencing next week. Locally we received very short notice of this occurring but it is welcomed as it will allow additional staff to be located on site. The project is not expected to be completed until Sep 2024. The current parking arrangements for clients will not be available and local staff are working with our property team in Canberra and the building owner and manager to source alterative parking for clients of DVA and OA.

**Kookaburra Kids**

Alison Maltby, Head of Service Delivery Kookaburra Kids – Australia provided the attached information brief.



**Department of the Premier and Cabinet**

Mark Green advised the forum that the State Government have recently launched the **Veterans’ Employment**Strategy [Department of Premier and Cabinet (dpac.tas.gov.au)](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-policy-and-engagement/veterans/tasmanian-veterans-employment-strategy) with the aim of employing 100 new veterans within four years.

He updated attendees on the [**Veteran Wellbeing Voucher Program**](https://veterans.tas.gov.au/wellbeing-vouchers)**.**

He also discussed the availability of Edward “Teddy” Sheean VC Memorial Grants Program 2023-24 Round One is now open with applications closing on 31 Aug 2023. Full details at [Department of Premier and Cabinet (dpac.tas.gov.au)](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-grants/teddy_sheean_grants_program)

**Veterans Reference Group**

New members will be sought for the Veteran’s Reference Group by Expression of Interest (EOI) towards the end of 2023. A link to the EOI document will be promulgated when it becomes available.

**Vietnams Veterans Association of Australia**

Terry Roe reported that the veterans’ retreat at Lake Sorell continues to be well utilised and discussed a number of events surrounding the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War occurring in August.

**Hobart Legacy**

Annette Ottway (proxy) updated the forum on the success of the Legacy’s Centenary celebrations to date. Annette advised that Hobart Legacy have recently begun supporting a veteran family with young children.

**Launceston Legacy**

Kevin Evorall advised that they have a junior Legatee undertaking the Kokoda track soon.

**Partners of Veterans Association**

Jacinta Leahy introduced Clare McCarthy who maybe acting as proxy for PVA in the future. PVA continues as predominately a social group locally, with the AGM being held later in August.

**Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women**

Ray Williams advised that their new volunteer office manager, Sheena Bass, has settled in well. She works two days per week and her assistance is appreciated.

**Naval Association of Australia (NAA)**

Gordon Fuller (proxy) advised that the National Council meeting and AGM were held in May.

Navy Day will be held on 1 Dec 23 at Shropshire Park Ulverstone, all welcome.

**Open Arms**

Kathy Turner reported that Open Arms is now a separate division of DVA which provides increased representation at the departmental level.

Tasmania and Victoria are now managed separately, Kathy is acting Regional Director while Elaine Devlin is on leave.

**Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans’ Assn – (APPVA)**

Mark Horner (proxy) advised that John Findlater is overseas currently.

**Next meeting: Budget 15 November at 2pm**