



Minutes

Agenda Item 1 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

The Chair opened the meeting acknowledging country, veterans, current serving Australian Defence Force personnel and families.

The Chair welcomed the incoming representative for Soldier On, Mr James Millis and thanked Mr Doug Sheridan for his contribution to the forum.

Attendees list is at Annexure A. Members **NOTED** there were no apologies and no conflicts of interest were raised.

Agenda Item 2 Minutes & actions of previous meeting

Members **NOTED** the Minutes from the 8 March 2023 meeting were endorsed out of session and have been uploaded to the DVA website.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2023YVF/A1, 2023YVF/A2 and 2023YVF/A3 and **NOTED** that action item Y2021/018 will remain in progress.

Agenda Item 3 RSL Veteran Catalogue

The Chair welcomed the Returned & Services League of Australia representative to present on the RSL Veteran Catalogue.

Members **NOTED** the RSL Veteran Catalogue launched on 1 November 2022 and that it will be a 12-month collaboration between RSL Australia and Servulink. The Catalogue is an online portal that will provide veterans with access to services and supports available in their community. The RSL hopes to further expand its already extensive database of established Australian services, and sought input from YVF members and their constituents to improve the Catalogue, noting governance of the portal via the feedback mechanism is vital.

Agenda Item 4 Veteran Travel Expenses

Members **NOTED** the information provided on travel for treatment, acknowledging there are differences more broadly in travel rates across DVA's legislation. Members **DISCUSSED** their concerns regarding 'closest practical provider' and **NOTED** the complexities and inconsistencies between the Acts. Members **DISCUSSED** the need to review the way in which key messages are communicated to the ex-service community.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A04	Review how the Department communicates key messages to the community regarding travel and closest practical provider (trusted by the veteran), as well as the use of road tolls.	Program Delivery

Agenda Item 5 The Thompson Institute – National PTSD Research Centre

A presentation from the Thompson Institute, University of Sunshine Coast was provided to members, in which current clinical trials and research underway in the mental health field were highlighted. Members **DISCUSSED** the need to spread awareness of the work underway at the Thompson Institute. In particular, members **NOTED** the Institute's leading work with MRI Brain Scans, Ketamine, and the ongoing plan to expand its research and clinical trials. Members **NOTED** the update and the National PTSD Research Centre that is scheduled to open in 2024.

Agenda Item 6 DVA Strategic Update

Members were provided an update by the Secretary on the current priorities of the Department. Members **NOTED** the increase in staff engaged to reduce the claims backlog, departmental business improvements and restructures, and **NOTED** attraction and retention of claims delegates is an ongoing challenge.

Members **NOTED** the Departments focus on improving compensation claims and prioritising permanent impairment claims.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A05	YVF Chair to seek a nomination from YVF members for a 'direct experience attendee' for the DVA Strategy Day.	Repatriation Commissioner
2023YVF/A06	The Royal Australian Regiment Association representative and the Secretary DVA to meet to discuss veterans within correctional services systems and a framework for nationally consistent support.	Secretariat
2023YVF/A07	The Mates for Mates representative and the Secretary DVA to meet and discuss patient model of care.	Secretariat
2023YVF/A08	YVF Chair invited the Air Force Association representative to send their concern regarding DOHAS contracts and rates offered by financial institutions to the secretariat via email for response.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 7 Retrospective Discharge

Members **NOTED** the complex situation faced by veterans when applying for a retrospective discharge (ie separation) and **DISCUSSED** the Transitional Approach to manage cases where a veteran is in receipt of incapacity payments and Commonwealth-funded superannuation. Members acknowledged the persistence and commitment of the Australia Veterans Alliance representative in representing this issue. Members **NOTED** the need for DVA and ATO subject matter experts to meet with the YVF Chair and the Australia Veterans Alliance representative to share information, clarify/present the impacts on affected veterans and work through the issues of retrospective discharge.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A09	DVA to arrange a meeting with ATO, Australia Veterans Alliance representative and the Repatriation Commissioner to discuss retrospective discharge and backpay.	Secretariat/Policy and Research
2023YVF/A10	Presentation on the Douglas Decision by the Australia Veterans Alliance representative at the November YVF meeting.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 8 Advocacy Reform Update

Members **NOTED** the update that DVA is continuing work through an Advocacy Working Group to develop principles and standards for claims assistance for veterans and families. Members **NOTED** that the Working Group will report back through the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) at the next meeting in September 2023.

Members **NOTED** the update provided on the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) and **DISCUSSED** the increase messaging and transparency of delegate and advocacy training. Members **NOTED** the strengthening of IT infrastructure to ensure the ATDP website is robust.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A11	Secretariat to share advocacy policy email and ADTP website details with YVF members.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 9 **Defence Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response Office (SeMPRO)**

Members were provided with a presentation on the Defence Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO). This is a service available for current serving members and veterans. Members **DISCUSSED** the person centred, trauma informed approach that SeMPRO operates under, and that it is not a reporting agency.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A12	SeMPRO to investigate providing a forum for the Defence mandatory training to be provided to Advocates.	ADF Liaison Officer to DVA / SeMPRO
2023YVF/A13	DVA to investigate the viability of putting a link to the SeMPRO website on the DVA website to raise awareness and provide access to the service for the veteran community.	Communications
2023YVF/A14	SeMPRO to provide YVF Secretariat with re-branded materials that will be disseminated to YVF members.	SeMPRO and Secretariat

Agenda Item 10 **Medical Forms**

Members received an update on the work underway in the Medical Forms Review Project to consolidate forms used and streamline processes. Members **NOTED** progress to date and that final versions of the revised forms will be placed on the DVA website in tranches. Members **NOTED** that comments or feedback can be sent to Sally Dennington, via sally.dennington@dva.gov.au.

Agenda Item 11 **Claims Backlog**

Members received an update on the claims backlog and **NOTED** the increase in staff engaged to reduce the backlog in Initial Liability (IL) cases and that time to process will continue to reduce based on productivity improvements.

Agenda Item 12 **Other Business**

Members **AGREED** that YVF and ESORT need to be more collegiate and share information, with report backs to each meeting from observers. The Chair **DISCUSSED** the possibility of a better representative balance across a range of ages in the younger veteran cohort.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A15	ESORT and YVF Secretariats to add a standing agenda item to each meeting for the ESORT/YVF Observer to provide an overview of issues considered at the observed forum, to their respective forum.	Secretariat

Meeting closed: 2:52pm.

Agenda Item 13 **The Hon Matt Keogh MP Minister for Veterans' Affairs Address**

Members received an update from Minister Keogh.

Annexure A

MEMBERS	
Mr Glen Ferrarotto	Chair, A/g Repatriation Commissioner
COL James Burns CSM and Bar	ADF Liaison Officer to DVA, Department of Defence
SQNLDR Dee Cherry	Air Force Association
Mr Nick Russon	Australian Special Air Service Association
Ms Monique Suters	Defence Families Australia
Ms Emma Whitehead	Mates4Mates
CMDR Mark Fullick FEAust, CPEng, APEC, RAN	Naval Association of Australia
Mr James Dallas	Returned and Services League of Australia
Mr Scott Harris	The Warrior's Return (WR)
Mr Chris Tilley	Royal Australian Regiment Association
Ms Barbara Boyer	Legacy Australia Inc
Mr Tom Hanley	Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans' Association
Mr Bradley Campbell	Australian Veterans Alliance
Mr James Milliss	Soldier On
Ms Talissa Papamau	Modern Soldier – The Representative from Modern Solider was non-contactable and did not respond to the invitation to attend the YVF Forum
Presenters	
Ms Sarah Kennedy	First Assistant Secretary, Client Engagement & Support Services
Ms Alison Frame	Secretary
Ms Alison Hale	A/g First Assistant Secretary, Veteran and Family Policy
Ms Alison McLaren	First Assistant Secretary, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications
Ms Kerrie-Anne Luscombe	General Counsel
Mr David Pullen	First Assistant Secretary, Claims Process Improvement
GPCAPT Fleur James	SeMPRO, Department of Defence
Ms Sally Dennington	Senior Executive Service, Business Improvement & QA
Mr Bernard Clarke	Thompson Institute, University of the Sunshine Coast
Observers	
Ms Elaine Tse	A/g Assistant Secretary, Policy Development
Ms Wendy C	Director, Benefits and Payments
Mr Lee B	Assistant Director, Veterans Recognition
Mr Mike Von Berg MC, OAM	ESORT member
Secretariat	
Ms Belinda B	Director, Governance & Ministerial Events
Ms Morgan S	A/g Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Karen G	Senior Secretariat Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events
Mr Jack M	Secretariat Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events
Apologies	
Nil	