



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 introduced himself to members as the new Repatriation Commissioner and discussed his intentions for the role and forum.

The Chair **ACKNOWLEDGED** the resignation of Talissa Papamau from the Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum (YVF) and the contribution she provided and welcomed Lucinda Casey from the Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc as an observer.

No conflicts of interest were raised. Attendance and apologies are listed at **Annexure A**.

Agenda Item 2 Minutes & actions of previous meeting

Members **ENDORSED** the Minutes of the 19 July 2023 meeting.

Members **AGREED** to close action items Y2021/018, 2023YVF/A05, A06, A07, A09, A10, A11, A12, A13 and A15 and **NOTED** that action items 2023YVF/A04, A08 and A14 will remain in progress.

Agenda Item 3 Open Arms Model of Care

Members **NOTED** the update and the focus that is placed on goal setting and outcomes, as well as the importance of understanding the veteran experience from day one of service. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the impact of service on relationships and families. Members **DISCUSSED** the parameters of Open Arms and **NOTED** the reduction in its crisis accommodation service to ensure it is viewed as a transitional service and not as a longer term solution to managing homelessness.

Members **NOTED** the relationship with Defence and the impact of the increase in ADF personnel numbers by 2029-40 and the potential flow on effect for Open Arms. Members **DISCUSSED** the process of self-reporting to Open Arms for current serving members and if there is an imminent risk of self-harm, that would be reported to Defence. Members also discussed the current ratio of psychologists to social workers, with further discussion to occur at the next YVF meeting.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A16	Open Arms to investigate the ratio of psychologists to social workers, with a breakdown of the types of roles, and report back to YVF at the next meeting.	Open Arms
2023YVF/A17	Open Arms and Legacy Australia representative to discuss definitions of 'imminent risk of self-harm' which is then to be considered at the next meeting.	Open Arms

Agenda Item 4 Transition Update

The Chair introduced the item discussing his own transition experience and acknowledged the opportunity for YVF to contribute to work on transition. Members **NOTED** the Veteran Transition Strategy that was released on 22 August, which aims to align stakeholders, based on a shared vision, in order for a veteran and their family to transition well.

Members **NOTED** the update and **DISCUSSED** the range of pilot initiatives to assist in broadening ideas and possibilities for transitioning veterans in order to help make a difference. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** that transition not only affects the veteran, but their partner and family as well.

Agenda Item 5 Wellbeing Framework Update

Members **NOTED** the update and the work across DVA and Defence and **DISCUSSED** seeking members' views on updates to the wellbeing factors that help underpin the whole of life wellbeing approach. Members **NOTED** that the framework was first introduced in 2020 and a review has commenced to ensure it aligns with Defence's wellbeing model and fills any gaps present. Members **DISCUSSED** the ecosystem that exists which requires support from many stakeholders, including ex-service organisations, providers and community members.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A18	YVF members are invited to comment on the Wellbeing Framework and provide input on the interpretation of "Meaning and Spirituality".	Secretariat and Deputy President

Agenda Item 6 Commemorations Strategy 2024-2029

Members were updated on the work of the Commemorations Branch and **NOTED** the consultation process that will occur to develop a Commemorations Strategy for 2024 and beyond. Members **DISCUSSED** the targeted engagement with ex-service organisations to ensure a strategy is developed that accurately reflects the needs of the veteran community. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the request to provide feedback to Commemorations for this work to progress.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A19	YVF members to provide feedback, by 17 November 2023, on what will resonate with their members and networks in a Commemorations Strategy and how DVA can ensure the relevance of commemorative events and continue to grow involvement of younger generations.	Commemorations

Agenda Item 7 Incorrect Data on DVA Web Site (The Warriors Return)

Members **NOTED** the priority for DVA to clear the claims backlog and how this will allow claims to be processed quicker, reducing the uncertainty and distress for veterans. Members **DISCUSSED** revised communication policies, including specific and clear commitments around timeframes of when DVA will contact clients to update on claims. Members **NOTED** the modernisation program to enhance MyService and to provide consistency and transparency on processing claims. DVA **ACKNOWLEDGED** the challenge when reporting an average for claims processing statistics and that the Department is still on track to clear the backlog by the end of 2023.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A20	Claims Processing Improvement to further consider and investigate the submission provided by The Warriors Return regarding data reported as an average in relation to claims processing, on the DVA website and update at next YVF meeting.	Claims Process Improvement

Agenda Item 8 Lack of Entitlement to Household Services for Younger Widows (Australian Special Air Service Association)

Members **NOTED** the update and the legislative restrictions regarding entitlements for Household Services and the alternative options for support for younger widows. The Australian Special Air Service Association (ASASA) representative **NOTED** the limitations to other supports and members **NOTED** that ASASA and Legacy will provide recommendations to include in advice to government for the expansion of the existing program.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2023YVF/A21	Australian Special Air Service Association and Legacy representatives to provide specific recommendations to DVA on expanding Household Services for younger widows through legislative change.	ASASA, Legacy and Policy and Research

Agenda Item 9 Surveillance of DVA clients and families (Australian Special Air Service Association)

Members **NOTED** the information provided in the paper and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the correction to the paper that surveillance has not been conducted by DVA since 2011.

Agenda Item 10 Douglas Decision

Members **NOTED** the presentation and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the work of the Australian Veteran Alliance representative and the direct impact this work has had on veterans. Members **DISCUSSED** the interdepartmental issue and the work underway between DVA and the ATO on communication of this issue. Members **NOTED** that DVA is working on the development of materials regarding tax treatment of payments from DVA and impacts for superannuation. Members **RECOMMENDED** an interdepartmental working group to consider the application of specific tax related legislation and how it pertains to veterans.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2023YVF/A22	DVA to establish an interdepartmental working group to consider the application of specific tax related legislation and how it relates to veterans. The working group is to develop solutions and report back to YVF with recommendations on next steps.	Policy and Research

Agenda Item 11 Ex-Service Organisation Round Table Update from YVF Representative

Members **NOTED** the update and **DISCUSSED** communication and collaboration both internal and external to the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT). Members **NOTED** there remains a perception that the communication both in and out of ESORT could be enhanced and the value that would have to the veteran community.

Agenda Item 12 Other Business

Members **NOTED** the preference to hold an in-person meeting at the start of 2024.

Agenda Item 12.1 Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc Membership

Member **DISCUSSED** the request of Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc to be included as a YVF member. Members **DISCUSSED** the need to ensure there is separation between the individual and the organisation they are representing and **NOTED** the need to ensure balance and diversity across the membership.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the importance of defining what and who the forum is seeking to represent and to ensure membership is in the best position to reflect the views of the younger generation of veterans. Members **RECOMMENDED** that information be sought through the upcoming National Consultation Framework Review on the nature of the representation that contributes to YVF, to inform the development of a membership policy.

Members **AGREED** that any additions to YVF would need to be considered following the National Consultation Framework Review.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2023YVF/A23	Advice to be sought from the National Consultation Framework Review on the nature of representation that contributes to YVF and develop a related policy for membership on YVF.	Chair

Agenda Item 12.2 Retirement Income Product for ADF Members

Members **NOTED** the letter provided by the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) on a Retirement Income Product for ADF Members and did not express any concerns.

Meeting closed: 12:32pm.

MEMBERS	
Mr Kahlil Fegan AM DSC	Chair, Repatriation Commissioner
COL James Burns CSM	ADF Liaison Officer to DVA, Department of Defence
SQNLDR Dee Cherry	Air Force Association
Mr Nick Russon	Australian Special Air Service Association
Ms Emma Whitehead	Mates4Mates
CMDR Mark Fullick FE Aust, CP Eng, APEC, RAN	Naval Association of Australia
Mr James Dallas	Returned and Services League of Australia
Mr Scott Harris	The Warrior's Return (WR)
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
Presenters	
Mr Michael Burvill	A/g Assistant Secretary, Clinical Operations – <i>Item 3</i>
Ms Kate Pope PSM	Deputy President – <i>Items 4 & 5</i>
Mr John Love	Assistant Secretary, Work Health & Safety, Defence – <i>Item 5</i>
Mr Justin M	Strategic Policy Adviser, Future Focus Team – <i>Item 5</i>
Mr Glen F	Commemoration Review – <i>Item 6</i>
Ms Donna Thomas	Assistant Secretary, Commemorations – <i>Item 6</i>
Mr David Pullen	First Assistant Secretary, Claims Processing Improvement – <i>Item 7</i>
Ms Veronica Hancock	First Assistant Secretary, Policy and Research – <i>Item 8</i>
Mr Adam Weiderman	Assistant Secretary, Benefits Policy – <i>Item 8</i>
Mr Rodger McNally	Assistant Secretary, Integrity, Security and Property – <i>Item 9</i>
Observers	
Ms Alison Hale	Assistant Secretary, Transition – <i>Item 4</i>
Ms Jen H	Director, Future Focus Team – <i>Item 5</i>
Ms Wendy C	Director, Benefits Policy – <i>Item 8</i>
Ms Lucinda Casey	Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc
Secretariat	
Ms Morgan S	A/g Assistant Director, International & Stakeholder Relations
Ms Karen G	Senior Secretariat Officer, International & Stakeholder Relations
Apologies	
Ms Talissa Papamau	Modern Soldier
Mr Chris Tilley	Royal Australian Regiment Association
Ms Monique Suters	Defence Families Australia
Mr Mike Von Berg MC OAM	ESORT Member