



Wednesday 21 February 2024

Summary

<b>Location:</b>	Hobart and Launceston – Tasmania
<b>Time:</b>	10am - 12 noon

**DVA Participants**

Luke Brown	First Assistant Secretary Royal Commission Implementation Division (a/g) Deputy Commissioner Tas (Chair)
Anne James	Executive Officer (Scribe)

**Attendees**

Name	Organisation
Barry Quinn	RSL Tasmania
Garry Beven	ATDP
Doug Chipman	RAAF-A
LTCOL Neil Grierson	Senior ADF Liaison Officer
Jacinta Leahy	PVA- Tas
Ray Williams OAM	TPI Assn
Mark Green	DPAC
Kevin Evorall	Legacy Launceston
Brian Harper	VVAA – Tas
John Withers	VRG
Kathy Turner	Open Arms

**Apologies**

Cathy Starling	Mates4Mates
David Waddle	Hobart Legacy
Brian Ellis	NAA- A
Neil Grierson	SADFO

**Guest Speaker**

David Cunningham	Representing Michael Harper ,Deputy Commissioner Victoria AS VEA Compensation and Support Branch
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### **Business arising**

Meeting chaired in Hobart and held via TEAMS in other locations.

Apologies noted and proxies welcomed.

Mr Doug Chipman was welcomed to his first DCCF – TAS as proxy for Alan Robertson RAAF-A

Forum endorsed minutes from Meeting 49 on 8 Nov 2023.

Luke welcomed Brian Harper as the incoming President VVAA- Tas and thanked Terry Roe for his many years of representing the VVAA and RSL Tas at the DCCF –Tas.

Luke thanked representatives in northern Tasmania for embracing the technology of TEAMS.

### **Agenda item submitted**

Nil

### **Deputy Commissioner Update**

#### **Mates Program**

Luke appraised the forum members of the current situation regards the Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services Program (Veterans' MATES Program). The program has been ceased as a result of the recent concerns about veteran card holder privacy and data. MATES was an opt out program.

It is important to note that the Veterans' MATES Program is not affiliated with Mates 4 Mates.

#### **Royal Commission**

Luke advised that we have missed a milestone date in that the draft Legislation was not available by 22 Dec 2023 as requested by the RC. It is anticipated that this will be completed in the near future. The delay was because of the complexity of the Legislation, DVA continue to work closely with the Operational Parliamentary Committee (OPC).

The three recommendations were discussed.

*Recommendation 1. Simplify and harmonise DVA legislation*

Key points included:

- Claims after a specified cutover date (currently 1 Jul 2025) would be assessed under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) as the sole ongoing Act
- After the cutover date, the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) and the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) would be closed to new claims

- Under the Government's proposal existing entitlements under the DRCA and VEA would be preserved through grandparenting arrangements i.e. there would be no change to existing benefits, and pensions would continue to be indexed normally.
- Feedback received during the last consultation period was broadly positive with concerns being expressed over specific issues such as continuation of Extreme Disability Adjustment (EDA) payments.
- The Government is likely to make an announcement and release draft legislation for public consultation in a matter of week if not days.
- It is hoped that the Legislation will be introduced in the June sitting period.

*Recommendation 2. Eliminate the claims backlog by Mar 2024*

Luke advised that this work is on track, with a press release from the Minister to that effect on 13 Feb 2024. <https://minister.dva.gov.au/news-and-media>.

Figures in relation to claim processing times are available at: [www.dva.gov.au/claim-processing](http://www.dva.gov.au/claim-processing)

*Recommendation 3. Improving the administration of the claims system*

The quarterly report is available on the RC website at [dva.gov.au/recommendation3-quarterly-report-october-december-2023.pdf](http://dva.gov.au/recommendation3-quarterly-report-october-december-2023.pdf) and is attached:



Recommendation3-  
quarterly-report-oct

The next report will provide an update as at 31 March 2024.

Presentation – David Cunningham, Director VEA Compensation Support Branch & Advocacy, Training and Development Program (ATDP)



DC TAS  
Consultative Forum

The publicly accessible register of ATDP trained Advocates can be viewed at: [www.advocateregister.org.au](http://www.advocateregister.org.au). Individual Advocates are not named on the site to ensure their privacy. Only ESO supported Advocates are listed. Fee for service providers may be included on the register if they are endorsed by an ESO, only their ESO endorsed advocacy services are covered by the ESO Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association (VITA) insurance. [atdp.org.au/docs/vita/VITABrochure2022](http://atdp.org.au/docs/vita/VITABrochure2022). Veterans are encouraged to contact an ESO or ATDP [atdp.org.au](http://atdp.org.au) for assistance. There are many myths and untruths that having a paid advocate will get a faster and "better" outcome.

Luke reminded attendees that ATDP is not advocacy, it is a training program. There is ongoing discussion nationally, not just in the Veteran space about advocacy services and possible regulation of fee for service Advocates.

Luke thanked David for his attendance and presentation today and wished him well for his upcoming retirement.

### **Attendee updates**

#### **Returned and Services League**

Barry Quinn advised that work on the new constitution which was introduced 23 Nov 2023 continues.

The Circular Head Sub branch has closed voluntarily due to lack of support from the local community.

#### **Department of the Premier and Cabinet**

Mark Green reminded forum members that the State Government is in caretaker mode until the election on 23 March. He encouraged representatives to look out for election commitments.

The Teddy Sheean VC Grants are currently open. They close on 1 March and won't be announced until the new government is formed post the State election

#### **Veterans Representative Group**

John Withers advised that as a result of the EOI last year five new members have been appointed. Their initial meeting has been delayed due to the State Government being in caretaker mode until the election on 23 Mar.

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

Ray Williams advised that their AGM will be held in May 2023 with there being unusually high interest in nominations recently.

The BEST Grant application has been submitted and the social committee are very active with combined north and south actives being undertaken for the first time.

Anzac Day activity planning is proceeding well with support from schools, guest speakers, the Southern Football League (SFL), and the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

#### **Royal Australian Air Force Association**

Doug Chipman representing Alan Robertson advised that RAAF-A will be a supporting Partner for the Tasmania Veterans' and Families' Hub.

Social outings are being undertaken thanks to wellbeing grants through DVA.

#### **Partners of Veterans Assn**

Jacinta Leahy advised that PVA are undertaking business as usual.

### **Returned and Services League**

Barry Quinn advised that work on the new constitution which was introduced 23 Nov 2023 continues.

The Circular Head Sub branch has closed voluntarily due to lack of support from the local community.

### **Open Arms**

Kathy Turner discussed the work Open Arms are undertaking with a number of organisations including state, public and private health providers and Ex- Service Organisations. Jon Lane has developed a new program, the Stress, Resilience and Functioning Program which will be piloted in Tasmania.

### **Launceston Legacy**

Kevin Evorall thanked "Bernice" for her efforts in completing a claim in three days just prior to Christmas.

### **VVAA- TAS**

Brian Harper reported business as usual. Brian explained that it is likely that he will become the President of Launceston Legacy later in the year.

**Next scheduled meeting: Budget Brief 15 May 2024 @ 2pm**