

## GULF WAR SERUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

The Gulf War Serum Management Committee (GWSMC) is responsible to the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (the Commissions) for providing annual reporting on operational activities around the continued management and storage of the Gulf War Study serum samples and any research proposals that seek access to the serum samples or study data.

The following activities were undertaken by the GWSMC during 2021:

### Committee meetings

In accordance with the GWSMC's Term of Reference, the December 2021 meeting was deferred for 12 months to December 2022, as there was no urgent business requiring discussion. The GWSMC was provided with an updated 2021 business and status report in December, with a view to dealing with any outstanding business out of session.

### Committee membership

The following key membership changes occurred during 2021;

- Mr Mark Stewart-Jones was appointed as the Naval Association of Australia representative on the Committee, and
- Dr Trish Batchelor (DVA Deputy Chief Health Officer) was appointed to replace the retired Dr Warren Harrex.

### 2021 Committee Members

Chair	
Mr Donald Spinks AM	Repatriation Commissioner
Members	
Dr Trish Batchelor	Deputy Chief Health Officer, DVA
Dr Victoria Ross	Senior Medical Adviser, Department of Defence
Mr Justin Mein/Ms Jane Stuart	Executive Directors (role share), Strategic Planning Unit, DVA
Mr Mark Stewart-Jones	Naval Association of Australia
Mr David Watts	Chairman, Gulf War Veterans' Association
Observers	
Dr Helen Kelsall	Monash University
Mr Stephen Nygaard	SA Pathology

### Committee governance

Updated Terms of Reference were approved by the Repatriation Commission on 9 September 2021, following consultation and input from the GWSMC.

Internal GWSMC Governance Manual was reviewed and updated in 2021.

## **Serum samples**

### ***Access or destruction requests***

No requests for access to the serum samples were received in 2021.

No requests were received from any study participants, for the destruction of their individual samples during 2021.

### ***Inspection of samples***

GWSMC members Dr Warren Harrex and Mr Mark Stewart-Jones conducted an inspection of Gulf War samples on 11 February 2021.

### ***Storage of samples***

The GWSMC members who attended the inspection reported that all samples were correctly stored and managed. The GWSMC was satisfied with the current storage conditions and arrangements based on the photographs and reports from the February 2021 inspection.

## **Data requests**

No requests were received to access Gulf War data in 2021.

Monash University were advised that DVA is not able to approve their 2020 request for de-identified data from the 2011-12 Gulf War Veterans Follow-up Health Study to the Depression Screening Data (DEPRESSD), as it did not sufficiently align with the original purpose for which the data was collected.