



GULF WAR SERUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

Background

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 Australian Gulf War Veterans' Health Study serum samples, and any research proposals that seek access to the serum samples or study data.

Summary of 2022 Activities

The following activities were undertaken by the GWSMC in 2022 and are discussed in more detail below.

- One replacement committee member representing DVA was required.
- One request declined to access study data.

Committee Meetings

In accordance with the GWSMC's Terms of Reference, the December 2021 meeting was deferred, as there were no business needs that required discussion. It is not unprecedented for the GWSMC to go for a period without activity or meeting.

GWSMC members were advised in October 2022 of the proposed actions and activities planned for 2023, which include a serum sample inspection and committee meeting.

Committee Members

Membership remained stable, noting that personnel changes within DVA have seen Ms Alison Hale (Assistant Secretary, Community Policy Branch) joining the Committee in 2022, replacing Mr Justin Mein and Ms Jane Stuart (Executive Directors, Strategic Planning Unit, DVA).

Chair	
Mr Don SPINKS AM	Repatriation Commissioner
Members	
Dr Trish BATCHELOR	Deputy Chief Health Officer, DVA
Ms Alison HALE	Assistant Secretary, Community Policy Branch, DVA
Dr Victoria ROSS	Senior Medical Advisor for Military Population Health, Joint Health Command, Department of Defence
Mr Mark STEWART-JONES	Naval Association of Australia
Mr David WATTS	Chairman, Gulf War Veterans' Association
Advisers	
Dr Helen KELSALL	Senior Research Fellow, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University
Mr Stephen NYGAARD	Medical Scientist, SA Pathology

Committee Governance

No updates were made to the Terms of Reference or internal GWSMC Governance Manual in 2022.

Serum Samples

[Access or destruction requests](#)

During 2022, no requests were received:

- to use the data
- to access the serum samples
- from study participants for the destruction of their individual samples.

[Stocktake or inspection](#)

- No stocktakes or inspections of the serum samples were conducted during 2022.

Data Requests

In February 2022, DVA notified researchers from Monash University that their 2020 request to use non-identifiable Australian Gulf War Veterans' Follow-Up Health Study data for additional research was not approved.

In making this decision, DVA considered:

- the criteria outlined in the governance manual for this data
- the wording of the Australian Gulf War Veterans' Follow Up Health Study consent form and explanatory statement
- the opinions expressed by veteran representatives at the SMC meeting.

No new requests for data access were received in 2022.