

Defence/DVA Executive Committee (DDEC) - Meeting Summary - 22 March 2023

The meeting was held at Russell Offices (Defence).

Meeting Attendees:

Members	
Mr Greg Moriarty	Secretary, Department of Defence
General Angus Campbell AO, DSC	Chief of the Defence Force
Ms Alison Frame	Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs
Mr Matt Yannopoulos	Associate Secretary Department of Defence
Ms Justine Greig	Deputy Secretary Defence People Department of Defence
Mr Stuart Smith AO, DSC	Deputy Secretary Veterans and Families Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ms Kate Pope PSM	Deputy President Repatriation Commission Department of Veterans' Affairs
Observers	
Mr Don Spinks AM	Repatriation Commissioner Department of Veterans' Affairs
MAJGEN Wade Stothart DSC, AM, CSC	Head People Capability Department of Defence
Secretariat	
AIRCDRE Kaarin Kooij CSC	Director General Joint Transition Authority Department of Defence

Agenda Item 1 - Opening Remarks and Introductions

Ms Greig led introductions and noted the meeting was deferred from 15 December 2022.

Agenda Item 2 – Strategic Partnerships

Members agreed on the importance of collaborating when implementing the Government's priorities.

- **Defence Strategic Review - led by Mr Moriarty.** A brief update on the Defence Strategic Review was provided.
- **Defence Act Review - led by Mr Yannopoulos.** Mr Yannopoulos noted the draft of the Defence Act was out for consultation, with submissions being accepted until 21 April 2023. Members noted the significant rewrite that had been undertaken, given the age of the existing Act. It was noted the rewrite did not address the current strategic environment and 'Wellbeing' was not in the initial draft of the Act, but it was acknowledged it will likely be addressed in future iterations and/or in consultation. Defence undertook to engage with DVA as the review progresses and advised MAJGEN Gavin Duncan was the lead for Defence.
- **Claims Backlog - led by Ms Frame.** Members noted the trajectory to reduce the backlog was positive, with a 70% increase in delegates since June 2022. In addition to external recruitment, DVA is also looking at secondment opportunities. Members also noted that the forward modelling was also looking positive. While claim numbers were increasing (i.e. due to

seasonal trends, economic climate impacts), no significance in respect of DRCA and VEA claims was evident as yet. In terms of claims: 40% were from serving ADF members; 15% were ready for processing; and 26% had been received by DVA in the last 90 days. The CDF and Secretary Defence were in support of identifying publically the 'still serving' component (data only) of the backlog. MRCA/ICT future communications on the backlog proposes to extract/call out those claims which are not 'ready for processing' (e.g. pending medical paperwork/diagnosis).

- **Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (RCDVS) - led by Ms Frame and Ms Greig.** Mr Smith had been called as a witness in respect of the Joint Defence and DVA Mental Health Strategy.
- **Strategies.** Members discussed progress of the joint Defence and DVA Mental Health, and Family Support Strategies. It was noted that both strategies had significant MIN VA and DP interest and involvement. The Veteran Transition Strategy was being finalised. Members also discussed the potential role for an Oversight Panel, with various departments involved.

Agenda Item 3 – Budget 2022/23

Led by Ms Frame. Members were briefed there was no capacity for offsetting in the DVA budget, with funding predominantly being required for ICT enhancements.

Agenda Item 4 - Defence/DVA Links Steering Committee (DLSC) Report

Mr Smith and Ms Greig updated Members on the DLSC. It was noted a rewrite of the Defence/DVA Memorandum of Understanding was underway and new research approvals were being considered moving forward. Mr Smith identified potential to consider Defence Home Ownership and Strategic Partners of Defence in the future, noting their scope as retention initiatives. The Defence/DVA data and information exchange arrangements were significantly progressed in 2022, and an upcoming challenge was identified in the new Health records exchange mechanism (JP2060 is the project to replace the current Defence Health Knowledge Management system, and will require CSC and DVA connectivity).

Agenda Item 5 – Other Business

Legislation Reform - led by Ms Frame. Members were updated noting feedback received to date has largely related to VEA offsetting. The CDF noted messaging should be sent out to Defence in the next Defence communication.

Repatriation Commissioner - led by Mr Spinks. Mr Spinks thanked Defence for its ongoing and facilitated access to Defence bases. He briefly outlined his visit schedule, conducted with representatives from the Joint Transition Authority (JTA) and noted the success of these visits. Ms Frame reflected positively on her visit to the Puckapunyal Military Area on 16 March 2023.

Office of the Special Investigator. Members discussed the Defence / DVA readiness to support veterans who have been impacted through the Afghanistan Inquiry / Office of the Special Investigator. Members acknowledged Defence and DVA may have limited notice of veterans who may be impacted.

DVA Seconded to the JTA. Members noted a DVA staff member had been identified.

Overseas ANZAC Day representation. Members discussed planned arrangements, including protocols for

Meeting closed 1615h.