



## Minutes

### Agenda Item 1 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

The Chair opened the meeting acknowledging country, veterans, and current serving Australian Defence Force Personnel. Members **NOTED** apologies as listed at Annexure A and no conflicts of interest were raised.

### Agenda Item 2 Minutes & actions of previous meeting

Members **NOTED** the minutes from the previous meeting on 15 November 2024 were endorsed out of session and placed on the website.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2023OWP/A8, A21, A22, A26, A27, A29 and A30.

Members **NOTED** that the action items 2023OWP/A10, A11, A28 and A31 remain in progress.

### Agenda Item 3 Computer Based Decision Making

Members **NOTED** the application of the 'decision-ready' policy and computer based decisions. Members were **ADVISED** information on the use of Computer Based Decision Making (CBDM) is planned to be placed on a publicly available webpage within DVA's Consolidated Library of Information and Knowledge (CLIK) and discussions will commence about leveraging advances in technology in the future provisions of services.

Members **DISCUSSED** that only accepted conditions will be automatically accepted through the decision ready-made pathways if they meet that criteria. Members **AGREED** presumptive claims should be included in the automated decision ready-made pathway. Members **NOTED** the focus on CBDM and appreciate members feedback on draft content by 6 May 2024, so it can be published on a publicly available webpage.

Members **AGREED** with the recommendation for Special Matter Experts (SME) to participate in relevant working groups.

### Agenda Item 4 Compensation Claims Processing Update

Members **NOTED** the claims backlog has been a top priority for DVA and the backlog of unallocated claims are cleared, with DVA now managing a 'business as usual' level of claims. Members **NOTED** concern around veterans' dealing multiple Client Support Officers (CSO) and having to re-do their claims. Members were **ADVISED** that there are a number of measures in place to ensure clients don't have multiple CSO's for their work and ensuring that existing relationships are flagged in the system but in some instances clients do need to be allocated to a new CSO or delegate for example if their CSO or delegate is on leave.

Members **NOTED** DVA continues to prioritise the training and experience of its claims processing workforce, with the increase in staff employed directly with the Department (ongoing and non-ongoing).

Members were **ADVISED** that no DVA claims staff have been seconded to Services Australia, only staff who were seconded to DVA have returned to Services Australia.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024OWP/A01</b> Australian Veterans' Alliance to provide examples to DVA of Delegates dealing with multiple CSOs.	Australian Veterans' Alliance
<b>2024OWP/A02</b> Australian Veterans' Alliance to identify and provide examples to DVA of Contracted Medical Advisors taking three months to provide medical advice.	Australian Veterans' Alliance

**Agenda Item 5 Modernisation Program Update**

Members **NOTED** the update provided on the Modernisation Program and presentation on MyService Claims Engagement Project. Members **NOTED** further enhancements to the program are scheduled for release by June 2024.

Members **NOTED** that MyService Banners regarding advocates will be workshopped with the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) Advocacy Working Group on 4 May 2024. Further advice will be provided back to members at the next meeting.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024OWP/A03</b> Provide a copy of modernisation powerpoint presentation to OWP members.	Finance, Technology & Insights

**Agenda Item 6 Veterans’ and Families’ Hub Update**

Members **NOTED** the update provided on Veteran’s and Families’ Hubs, including the locations they are being established and the approval of grants for all new hubs announced by the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs. Members **NOTED** the lead organisations selected for the eight new locations.

Members **NOTED** the main purpose for the Hubs is to provide better coordinated access to services and help understand what services are available, and to create a service model that remains fluid with changing needs of the area.

Members **NOTED** Hubs in all locations provide outreach services for people living in larger cities, and DVA is looking at how they can better utilise digital connectivity to ensure people facing difficulty accessing Hubs still have the ability to access services. Members were **ADVISED** that the push for digital connectivity is not an effort to reach Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but an effort to help more veterans’ connect with services.

**Agenda Item 7 Advocacy Update**

Members **NOTED** that work is progressing to support veterans and veterans’ advocacy. Members were **ADVISED** the claims assistance pilot commenced in February 2024 and that DVA has partnered with ASASA and RSL WA to support ESO advocates in understanding the DVA claims process.

Members **NOTED** that work continues on refining the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) Continuous Professional Development (CPD) policy and **NOTED** that level 4 course is undergoing a trial with two delegates.

Members **DISCUSSED** continued concerns on nominated representative procedures and the passage of information. Members **NOTED** the submission provided by the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia (VVFA) and how it related to previous submission provided by members. Members **AGREED** for further discussion to occur at the next meeting regarding this issue.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024OWP/A04</b> Item to be added to the July OWP meeting on nominated representatives and passage of information to further discuss and resolve concerns. Related to Action Item 2023OWP/A31.	Client Benefits and Policy

**Agenda Item 8 Legislative Reform**

Members received an update on Legislative Reform and **NOTED** the submissions closing date 28 April 2024.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024OWP/A05</b> Australian Veterans' Alliance to talk offline with the Legislative Reform Team to discuss legislation around eligibility for young person's payments and bereavement payments.	Policy

**Agenda Item 9 Member Submissions - Telephone Security – The Australian Special Air Services Association**

Members **NOTED** the response provided to the member submission and **ACKNOWLEDGED** growing concern for breach of privacy and scam calls when receiving calls from delegates with no caller ID requesting personal information. DVA **SUGGESTED** clients request the delegates ID number and call back through the 1800 number to validate that it is a DVA staff member.

Members **AGREED** with the recommendation of DVA investigating the departments name appearing when delegates call instead of 'no caller ID', as well as a review of softphone to assist with voicemail services and contact with delegates

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024OWP/A06</b> Advice to be provided to members on the viability of changing 'no caller ID' to 'DVA' when delegates are calling clients.	Client Benefits

**Agenda Item 9.2 Member Submission - DVA Telephone Communication with Western Australia Advocates**

Members **NOTED** the response to the members submission and the concerns for clients and advocates in Western Australia to reach delegates during their business hours. DVA **RECOMMENDED** the use of the 1800 number that Western Australia advocates can call to reach a delegate.

**Agenda Item 10 Other Business**

The Chair invited members to raise suggestions for agenda items for the next meeting out of session. There was no other business raised.

**Meeting closed: 12:06pm**

<b>MEMBERS/ATTENDEES</b>	
Mr David Pullen	A/g Chair, A/g Deputy Secretary Policy & Programs, Department of Veteran's Affairs
Ms Pat McCabe OAM	TPI Federation
Mr John King	Returned and Services league of Australia
Mr Max Ball	Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia
Mr William (Bill) Roberts	Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia
Mr Michael Carlon	Australian Special Air Services Association
Mr Rob Connor	Legacy Canberra
Ms Beverley Benporath	Partners of veterans Association of Australia Inc. ( <i>proxy</i> )
Mr John McNeil	Australian Veterans Alliance
Ms Jenny Gregory	Australian War Widows Inc.
Mr Clem Russell	The Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
<b>Presenters</b>	
Mr Alexander Caroly	A/g First Assistant Secretary, Claims Process Improvement ( <i>item 3, 4</i> )
Ms Sally Dennington	A/g Assistant Secretary, Business Improvement & Quality Assurance ( <i>item 3</i> )
Mr Alexander Lewis	A/g Chief Information Officer ( <i>item 5</i> )
Ms Kirrily Magill	Assistant Secretary, Hubs ( <i>item 6</i> )
Mr Luke Brown	A/g First Assistant Secretary, Policy ( <i>item 7, 8</i> )
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Karen G	Senior Secretariat Officer, International and Stakeholder Relations
Morgan S	A/g Assistant Director, International and Stakeholder Relations
<b>Apologies</b>	
Mr Andrew Kefford PSM	Deputy Secretary, Policy & Programs, DVA
Ms Natasha Cole	First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits, DVA
Ms Narelle Bromhead OAM	Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc.
Mr Rod Hutchings	Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association
Ms Vanessa Cheng	Air Force Association