



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Corporate Plan 2024–25



SERVING WELL >> LIVING WELL >> AGEING WELL

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Veterans' Affairs acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia and their continuing spiritual and cultural connection to land, sea and community.

Acknowledgement of Service

We respect and give thanks to all who have served in the Australian Defence Force and their families.

We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of all who commit to defend our nation.

We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served and promise to welcome, embrace and support all military veterans as respected and valued members of our community.

For what they have done, this we will do.

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2024–25

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Secretary's introduction

I am pleased to present the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Corporate Plan 2024–25. This plan has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and sets out the Department's objectives for the next four years, from 2024–25 to 2027–28. It will guide our efforts and provide a standard to measure our progress against.

DVA has undertaken substantial change over the last few years. The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (Royal Commission) has provided an opportunity for DVA to hear and learn from the veteran community's lived experience of engaging with our services. We acknowledge our past performance has not always met the expectations of the veteran community, and we have worked hard to address shortcomings and improve service delivery.



The backlog of unallocated Initial Liability, Incapacity, and Permanent Impairment claims identified by the Royal Commission in its Interim Report was cleared ahead of schedule. As at 30 June 2024, DVA had determined close to 95 per cent of those original claims in the backlog, and we continue to focus our effort on finalising the remainder. At the same time, we are reducing the time it takes to determine all claims on hand. More veterans are now receiving support faster than before. This has been a large undertaking and an achievement of which every staff member can be proud. Importantly, it has laid a strong foundation on which DVA can build.

Today, DVA is better resourced than it has been for three decades. The Royal Commission will release its Final Report and recommendations to the Government by 9 September 2024. Taken together, the Department has a rare opportunity to marshal this convergence of collective will and resources to reimagine how we support the veteran community and drive meaningful improvement in our support to veterans and families.

DVA was established to fulfil the nation's duty to support the wellbeing of Australia's veterans and families. We recognise that wellbeing is multifaceted and does not spring from any single aspect of a person's life. It encompasses physical and mental health, employment, education, income and financial security, the quality of our relationships and our standing within the community. Wellbeing also extends to having a sense of purpose and self-agency. As we look to enhance the services of DVA, our objective is to increase the overall quality of veteran wellbeing.

As DVA works to support the wellbeing of the veteran community, it is incumbent on us to be guided by their lived experiences. Services and supports will only be effective if they respond to the practical needs of the people who rely on them. With this in mind, in June 2024 the Department released the Veteran, Family and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

The Strategy guides how DVA staff engage with the veteran community including through co-designing policies and programs. The Strategy is a critical step in acknowledging the importance of identifying, designing and testing different solutions in partnership with the community.

DVA is also aware that veterans can face difficulty when navigating the veteran support sector. Services are available from a diverse array of providers, including DVA, state and territory government agencies, ex-service organisations (ESOs), community and not-for-profit organisations, and peers within the veteran community. Given the complex range and number of providers and services, there are challenges. From a significant overlap in available programs and services in some areas, while in others – especially in regional and remote Australia – there are gaps. There can also be a lack of clarity and ready access to information about the respective roles, responsibilities and services provided across this veteran support sector.

The establishment of the growing network of Veterans' and Families' Hubs across Australia is helping to integrate service delivery and activate the non-government veteran sector, but there is more to be done.

DVA is focused on enhancing other aspects of the veteran support sector, which include: performing a review of the National Consultation Framework, which will ensure effective and representative engagement with the veteran, family and serving community; working to help establish a professional body for veteran advocacy; and partnering with ESOs to implement new ways to assist veterans with their claims. These changes will help veterans interact with providers, while also enhancing their understanding of what support is available and how it can be accessed.

Over the four years of the Corporate Plan, DVA will seek to deploy our resources to have the greatest positive impact for the veteran community. We will look to engage more meaningfully with our clients, partners and other providers and to create stronger connections. DVA will also build partnerships with other service providers, so that as a sector we can work more efficiently to provide veterans and families the supports they need. In addition, we will seek to:

- continue to reform transition support services so it is easier for veterans to access support in a timelier manner
- implement the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024, if passed by Parliament
- progressively introduce a life-stages model for claims processing, which will form the backbone of our service delivery
- continue to expand the Veterans' and Families' Hub network
- review the support relationships between Open Arms and key Tasmanian partners to gain lessons and best practices insights that can be applied to other states and territories
- implement new training models to help GPs understand veterans and DVA services
- continue to modernise our information and communications technology.

As we progress this work, we will draw on the findings of the Royal Commission's Final Report. The issues and findings through the period of the Royal Commission have already shaped and informed DVA's current strategic priorities. Work is well advanced on the development of a DVA Direction Statement which will outline both the vision that DVA is seeking to achieve and the reform priorities that provide the pathway to this future state. A new tool is also in development which will inform all services DVA offers, and seek to set clear service expectations for both the veteran community and DVA staff.

All of this work is setting a strong foundation for the receipt of the Royal Commission's Final Report, ensuring we are well placed to rapidly and meaningfully respond to its findings and continue along the reform pathway that began with the Veteran Centric Reform Program.

It is a privilege to lead DVA through this transformational period, as we seek to enhance our supports and services to create the greatest benefits for every member of Australia's veteran community.



Alison Frame

Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs



Purpose

For more than 100 years, the Australian Government has committed to repatriate, support, and commemorate the service of veterans to our nation. How we have delivered on this has changed over time, but the purpose of DVA is to support the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and their families, by:

- partnering with organisations and individuals to help design, implement and deliver effective policies, programs and benefits, which enhance the wellbeing of veterans and veteran families
- providing and maintaining war graves and delivering meaningful commemorative activities to promote community recognition and understanding of the service and sacrifice of veterans.

Outcomes and key activities

We achieve our purpose through 3 outcomes, 14 programs and 19 key activities:

Outcome 1:

Maintain and enhance the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of eligible persons and their dependants through access to income support, compensation and other support services, including advice and information about entitlements.

Program and key activities

Program 1.1

- » Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.

Program 1.2

- » Provide disability support and compensation payments to eligible veterans.

Program 1.3

- » Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible dependants.

Program 1.4

- » Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.
- » Enable veterans and families to access housing-related support via Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme and Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance.

Program 1.5

- » Provide eligible children of veterans and families with financial assistance and support to access education and skills development.

Program 1.6

- » Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.
-

Outcome 2:

Maintain and enhance the physical and mental wellbeing and quality of life of eligible persons and their dependants through health and other care services that promote early intervention, prevention and treatment, including advice and information about health service entitlements.

Program and key activities

Program 2.1

- » Work with a range of medical, dental, hearing and allied health providers throughout Australia to ensure veterans and families have access to a comprehensive range of health services.

Program 2.2

- » Make arrangements with public and private hospital service providers throughout Australia to ensure veterans and families have access to a comprehensive range of services.

Program 2.3

- » Provide eligible veterans with access to a broader range of medicines and wound care items at a concession rate.

Program 2.4

- » Provide a range of care and support in the home to assist eligible veterans and families to remain independent for longer.

Program 2.5

- » Provide veterans and families with access to mental health care services, including primary prevention through counselling and complex care coordination.
- » Support veterans with travel for treatment and provide access to aids, appliances and modifications to support independent living.
- » Provide veterans with access to allied health services, including access to telehealth services.
- » Provide access to Open Arms – including individual and family counselling, after-hours counselling, group program interventions, and peer support.

Program 2.6

- » Provide veterans with access to medical management, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation programs and support for employment.
-

Outcome 3:

Acknowledgement and commemoration of those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations through promoting recognition of service and sacrifice, preservation of Australia's wartime heritage, and official commemorations.

Program and key activities

Program 3.1

- » Provide and maintain war cemeteries, war plots, gardens of remembrance and memorials to the missing, and other individual official commemorations for those eligible veterans who have died as a result of their service to Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

Program 3.2

- » Deliver domestic and international commemorative events to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations.
 - » Provide online resources to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations.
-

Operating context

Understanding DVA's operating context is important as it affects how we deliver on our purpose.

Environment

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

The Royal Commission has examined the broad range of themes, systemic issues and risk factors relevant to serving Defence member and veteran deaths by suicide. As the Royal Commission prepares to deliver its Final Report by 9 September 2024, DVA remains dedicated in its preparation for the forthcoming recommendations, which will continue to guide the Department's efforts to innovate and improve in the years to come.

While the Royal Commission has highlighted instances of DVA's shortcomings, it is important to note DVA is not the organisation it was 10 years ago, or even 3 years ago when the Royal Commission commenced its hearings. DVA has acted quickly and successfully to implement the recommendations in the Royal Commission's Interim Report.

DVA has made significant and ongoing investments in staff and systems. The unallocated compensation claims backlog was eliminated, information access has been improved and legislation creating the single-Act system has been introduced into Parliament.

While DVA respects and awaits the Royal Commission's Final Report and recommendations, we continue to invest time and effort in improving services for veterans and families, clearing old cases from the 'on hand' caseload, and making real improvements to ICT systems.

Looking forward, DVA has highlighted several critical areas for consideration in preparation for the Final Report and our ongoing focus on improving services for veterans and families, which will guide future initiatives. These include a continued focus on veteran wellbeing, a veteran-centric approach to supporting veterans and families, addressing data-sharing and privacy challenges, facilitating veterans' transition from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to a civilian life, and further integrating and supporting the wider veteran support sector. The Department anticipates these considerations will drive significant improvements in its capability, interactions with veterans and families, and service delivery.

Complex legislative framework

DVA currently administers a range of interrelated pieces of legislation, which create overlapping entitlements. In response to Recommendation 1 of the Royal Commission's Interim Report, on 28 February 2024, the Australian Government released exposure draft legislation to simplify and harmonise veterans' rehabilitation and compensation legislation. The draft legislation would implement the single ongoing Act model proposed in the Veterans' Legislation Reform Consultation Pathway.

Following extensive consultation on the exposure draft, and after making a number of changes in response to issues raised, the Government introduced into the Parliament the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024 (the VETS Bill) on 3 July 2024. This Bill includes a number of beneficial changes, for example, allowing veterans currently receiving incapacity payments under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) to transition to the more generous arrangements for incapacity payments under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA).

If the VETS Bill as proposed is passed by Parliament, from 1 July 2026 all claims received will be investigated and determined under an improved MRCA. The VETS Bill creates a simpler system under which it will be easier for veterans and families to understand their entitlements and receive the support they need. The guiding principle in preparing the VETS Bill was to ensure that veterans and families in receipt of

benefits do not see those benefits diminished on commencement of the new arrangements. This is achieved by continuing (grandparenting) those payments and indexing them in accordance with existing *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) and DRCA processes after those Acts are closed to new applications on 30 June 2026.

The Treatment Principles and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Instruments provide the legislative framework for the majority of health and community care services funded by DVA. As part of preparing for the commencement of the harmonised legislative framework set out in the VETS Bill, the Department is undertaking a thematic review of the Treatment Principles and related instruments to deliver service design and administration improvements, and to provide a clear regulatory framework for DVA's treatment arrangements.

Services, claims and support for veterans and families

There has been substantial growth in the demand, for DVA benefits and services in recent years, and the number of conditions attached to each claim have increased. This growth is expected to continue.

As a result of this increasing demand, as well as insufficient resourcing, DVA accumulated a significant backlog of unallocated claims for compensation, which was the subject of a specific recommendation in the Royal Commission's Interim Report.

The backlog of unallocated Initial Liability, Incapacity, and Permanent Impairment claims identified by the Royal Commission was cleared ahead of schedule, and DVA is now largely managing 'business as usual' levels of these types of claims. As at 30 June 2024, close to 95 per cent of claims in the original allocations backlog identified by the Royal Commission had been determined.

The Claims Support Officer model introduced and expanded over the last 18 months has delivered reduced processing times and ensured claims are investigation-ready on receipt by delegates, making better use of their time and experience. This, along with the increasing experience and expertise of delegates recruited in late 2022 and early 2023, and improvements to business processes and documentation, has seen a significant boost to delegate productivity.

With the provision of additional funding, DVA continues to expand its workforce so it can sustainably meet legislative time-taken-to-process performance indicators.

For MRCA Initial Liability (IL) claims received from 1 December 2023 and determined by the end of June 2024, the average time to allocate was 7 days, and for final determination, 58 days. The equivalent figures for DRCA IL and VEA were 74 days and 86 days.

DVA will organise its claims decision-making processes on a life stages model over the next 12 to 24 months, which will form the backbone of DVA service delivery. The system will be delivered through co-located multi-disciplinary teams focusing on a particular life stage. This approach will minimise the need for veterans' claims to be moved between delegates, enable teams to be built with the specific skills and experience required for the particular caseload, and facilitate connections to other areas of DVA for assistance with relevant services.

DVA is also focused on the finalisation of a joint Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–2029 and the joint Defence and Veterans' Family Strategy, which are both expected to be published in 2024. Developed in consultation with stakeholders, these strategies will provide important overarching frameworks for DVA's programs and will be delivered under agreed action plans that will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

Partnerships and cooperation

DVA's wellbeing approach is focused on individual veterans and families achieving positive wellbeing outcomes. This can only be achieved through ongoing engagement and consultation with veterans and families to understand their wellbeing needs to design and implement appropriate policies and programs.

The National Consultation Framework (NCF), launched in April 2009, is a consultative structure designed to facilitate communication between the veteran community, the Repatriation and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commissions, and DVA. Forums are chaired by members of the DVA Executive or the Repatriation Commission. Through these direct channels the NCF forums enhance the capacity of the Repatriation Commissioner and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to address issues of strategic importance to the ex-service and defence communities.

The NCF forums include the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table, Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum, National Aged and Community Care Forum, Operational Working Party, the Women Veterans Policy Forum and the Veterans' Families Policy Forum. The NCF is currently being reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the veteran community.

DVA continues to innovate and enhance engagement with veterans, families and other key stakeholders to achieve its purpose. DVA's increased investment in this capability and expanded engagement service offerings has assisted in embedding modern engagement practices in DVA. DVA's Women Veterans Policy Forum and Veterans' Families Policy Forum illustrates this approach. The forums employ modern, inclusive, and outcome-oriented engagement methodologies and are operated in a collaborative design environment. It is critical to recognise that veterans and families move in both military and civilian realms before, during and after service, and therefore supporting positive wellbeing outcomes throughout the various stages of life needs to be a shared priority and responsibility across the veteran support ecosystem.

Acknowledging the interconnectedness of Commonwealth service provision, DVA participates in Inter-Departmental Committees to ensure that the needs of veterans and their families are considered in broader policy design.

DVA also consults with state and territory counterparts to focus on broader veterans' policy issues across the jurisdictions. The Veteran's Ministerial Council (VMC) brings together Commonwealth, and State and Territory Ministers with responsibility for veteran matters to consider how Commonwealth, state and territory governments can better collaborate in supporting the wellbeing of veterans, their families and the broader veteran community. The VMC is supported by the Commonwealth State and Territory Committee (CSTC), which is a vehicle for dialogue and cooperation between the various Federal, State and Territory agencies. The CSTC develops and implements the decisions and action items emerging from the VMC, coordinating efforts to improve and achieve outcomes for the veteran community.

DVA recognises that partnerships are critical to getting the best outcomes for veterans and families. Our partnerships are wide and diverse and include working with Defence, the Department of Health and Aged Care, the National Disability Insurance Agency, Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation, Services Australia, the Department of Social Services, the Treasury and other Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments, ESOs, research institutions and service providers, with a continued focus on:

- clarifying and communicating the roles, responsibilities and connection points within the veteran support ecosystem
- cooperating at a whole-of-government level to ensure veteran and family needs are met, while reducing duplication and minimising gaps in services and supports
- partnering with others through research, policy, program and service design to simplify and speed up the way veterans and families get support and assistance when they need it most.

FIGURE 1: Veteran Support Ecosystem



Wellbeing Framework

DVA recognises the critical links between health, wellbeing and suicide prevention, while also taking into account protective factors and the fundamental needs of veterans and families. DVA has placed veterans and families at the centre of our strategic approach through the DVA Wellbeing Framework and its 9 domains of wellbeing. The Wellbeing Framework highlights the dynamic nature of wellbeing needs across the 'serving well, living well, ageing well' life journey, and recognises DVA's role and responsibilities within the broader veteran support ecosystem. Alongside other key DVA strategic documents, the Wellbeing Framework guides and underpins the development and delivery of DVA initiatives, programs and service offerings.

Key research partners

DVA has a long-term commitment to research that results in ongoing benefits to the health and wellbeing of veterans and families. To strengthen this commitment, DVA is progressing a new research and evaluation model that will involve multiple strategic partnerships to work with DVA over the next 5 years on initiative research priorities. The objectives of the model are to increase the production, use and sharing of evidence to support decision-making and policy, program and service design. This initiative builds on and complements existing relationships with key research partners such as the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Defence and the international Five Eyes Veteran Research Committee, and existing funded partnerships with research institutions. DVA's ongoing commitment to research will only become more important as the Royal Commission concludes, recommendations are considered and those agreed by Government are implemented.

Veterans' and Families' Hubs

The advent of Veterans' and Families' Hubs enables the delivery of support by veterans for veterans. Each Hub brings together a unique service offering determined by the local veteran community, which is managed and operated by a lead organisation, usually an ESO. Hub services can include mental and physical health services, wellbeing support, advocacy, employment and housing advice, and social connection. Hubs provide important services and community connection for veterans and families both locally and in the surrounding regions.

There are currently 8 established Hubs delivering support to veterans and families in Perth, Townsville, Adelaide, Darwin, Wodonga, Nowra, Caboolture and Burnie. Eight new Hubs are being established in areas with significant veteran populations, and are expected to be open through to mid-2026.

DVA is also piloting new teleconferencing/videoconferencing facilities in selected Hubs to provide digital facilities and dedicated spaces for veterans and families, facilitating access to a range of health and wellbeing services that may not otherwise be available to them, including:

- Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling
- Veteran Support Officers
- the Advocacy Training and Development Program
- other DVA and Australian Government programs
- community organisations and ESOs
- physical and mental health practitioners
- wellbeing service providers.

These digital facilities will provide a platform for the national hubs network across Australia to connect and collaborate with each other to improve the range and quality of services offered to veterans and families. Used creatively, these facilities have the potential to inspire new collaborations and social connections and for organisations to share what is working and making a difference, multiplying good outcomes.

Tasmanian Mental Health and Alcohol Directorate

DVA is working in partnership with the Tasmanian Mental Health and Alcohol Directorate and Primary Health Tasmania, and the federal Department of Health and Aged Care, to reach members of the veteran community not previously known to DVA, who would benefit from Open Arms services. The initiative is founded on the introduction of a question to identify veterans and families in the state-based mental health central intake service, which will then allow veterans to be referred to Open Arms, where appropriate.

The initiative also includes a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Treatment and Recovery program which began as a pilot in Tasmania, and a program for families, which complements available state-based and local services. These community-based programs will also be delivered in regional cities, such as Burnie and Launceston, where veterans have historically struggled to get access to mental health services. These initiatives are examples of continuing innovation and service connection DVA is working to establish in priority areas for veterans' services. This pilot has been designed based on a model of care, which will be replicated in other states and territories.

Transition Branch and the Joint Transition Authority

Transitioning to a predominantly civilian life can be a challenging time for some ADF members and families. Supporting positive transition outcomes is a shared responsibility between individuals, community, providers and government. DVA works with Defence, with a focus on rehabilitation, income support, employment, physical health and mental wellbeing, in an effort to support a positive transition. The Joint Transition Authority, operating within Defence, works in partnership with DVA and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation to ensure veterans and families are better prepared and supported through transition from a predominantly ADF service-centred life to a predominantly civilian life.

DVA has introduced several initiatives to improve and better support the transition journey an individual or family may take. The Transition Medical Assessment Pilot Project and Enhanced Veteran Support Officer Pilot provide important targeted support to medically separating veterans. The establishment of the Transition Branch in DVA, with a mix of service, policy and program areas, the DVA Transition Synchronisation Committee, and the Joint Transition Oversight Panel with Defence and other federal agencies, has helped to focus and coordinate efforts both within DVA, and across agencies.

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

The Military and Veterans' Psychiatry Training Program increases veteran access to psychiatrists who have specialist training in veteran and military mental health and trauma-focused care by delivering up to ten psychiatry registrar training posts each year. By increasing the number of psychiatrists with training in military and veteran mental health, the psychiatry workforce will be better equipped to address the unique needs of military personnel and veterans and recognises the importance of a mental health workforce that has specialist skills and knowledge relating to the unique nature of military service and its impacts on veterans. Training placements formally began in February 2022 and the program will run until July 2025.

Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program

The Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program is being undertaken with the support of Defence. It was established in recognition of the vital role ADF chaplains can play in supporting spiritual wellbeing during service and helping address the lack of equivalent services available when transitioning to civilian life.

The pilot program provides counselling and support in a non-clinical setting and pathways for veterans (including those transitioning) and families to access mental health and wellbeing support, as well as foster community connections. The program provides continuity of pastoral care to veterans and families through and after transition from the ADF.

The 2024–25 Budget extended the pilot program for one year to provide time to consider and address findings from the evaluation of the pilot for ongoing future suitability and benefit.

Aged and Community Care Taskforce

Establishing the Aged and Community Care Taskforce, leverages partnerships with other federal agencies and demonstrates DVA's commitment to ensuring the veteran community has accessible information and supports to transition into and live well in residential aged care, and sustainable in-home services for those who wish to remain independent at home. The Taskforce demonstrates DVA's focus on supporting veterans and families to access supports to enable them to live well at home for as long as desired, and to transition to residential aged care, by delivering a structured approach to activities that are aligned with care and support economy reforms.

Ex-service organisations

DVA is continuing to progress a number of initiatives in partnership with the ESO community to further strengthen veterans' advocacy and support. These include:

- exploring options for a professional body for advocates to provide greater leadership to, and governance of, claims lodgement and wellbeing advocates supporting veterans and families in their engagement with DVA and other organisations
- the Claims Lodgement Assistance Program utilising DVA staff with compensation claims processing experience to provide direct assistance to veterans with the preparation and lodgement of their DVA claims and supporting ESO advocates in understanding the claims lodgement process
- streamlining and refreshing the Advocacy Training and Development Program including in light of legislative reforms
- a communications campaign promoting free ESO advocacy services
- information-sharing sessions between DVA and ESO advocates on DVA services and support and insights from the advocates about their experiences supporting veterans with their claims.

DVA is developing options for an independent Representative Body incorporating feedback from veterans, families and the ESO stakeholders. The Representative Body within the sector is proposed to provide various services for its members and other interested parties.

This represents a significant opportunity to further serve veterans and families with the potential to deliver many benefits. These include providing:

- a unified representative voice to DVA and the Government
- streamlined consultation processes, reducing duplication of effort
- a collaborative approach, fostering consensus and driving success.

Grants Programs – enhancing engagement and ESO capability

DVA delivers a suite of grants programs that are designed to support a broad range of veteran and community needs. DVA grants programs have 3 main purposes: to support health and wellbeing, support the provision of advocacy services, or assist commemorations.

DVA grants programs, and the partnerships they support, enable organisations to implement new or better ways to support the veteran community.

DVA is currently reviewing its suite of grants programs to identify emerging issues affecting the veteran community that could be addressed through grants programs. Opportunities to collaborate, co-design or enhance grants programs are being explored with representatives from major ESOs. This work aims to identify ways to improve the activation and allocation of both government and ESO funding to maximise veteran and family support.

DVA is consulting with state and territory governments to better understand their grants offerings. Following the mapping of veteran-targeted grants programs across jurisdictions and the establishment of a temporary Grants Advisory Working Group with representatives from major ESOs, DVA will work to deliver revised grants programs that are designed to identify and respond to emerging issues affecting the veteran community.

International partnerships

Ministerial and international engagement in a global world is about building and maintaining effective relationships. DVA's approach is based on collaboration and mutual exchange of information, helping to achieve our purpose and outcomes to support and provide services to veterans and families.

The International Ministerial (Five Eyes) Conference on Veteran's Issues is an important international forum that allows the Minister for Veterans' Affairs to directly engage with their ministerial counterparts from Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. This engagement is supported at agency-head level through the Five Eyes Official Meetings, and at officer level through a range of working groups under the Veterans' Research Network. These forums aim to provide better outcomes for veterans and families through dialogue, research and data sharing.

DVA represents the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, to ensure the service and sacrifice of Australia's servicemen and women is commemorated and remembered in cemeteries across the world.

DVA manages significant international commemorations annually in Türkiye and France, and supports other local commemorations in Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Thailand. DVA is also responsible for the management and operations of 3 interpretative centres located in France, Thailand and Malaysia, and the care and maintenance of official Australian overseas memorials. This work requires close engagement with our host nations.

There is an ongoing challenge for DVA to consider the risks of doing business in each country and ensure that appropriate mitigation strategies are in place to maintain operations that reflect Australian Government standards and expectations. DVA's close working relationship across the whole-of-government, but in particular the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence underpins this work.

Capability

Our people / workforce capability planning

DVA is progressing towards integrated, enterprise-level workforce planning to identify organisational structure, resourcing, knowledge and capability to deliver the Department's strategic priorities over the next 5 years. In accordance with the Government's plan for APS Reform, DVA is building on the existing capability of staff to create a skilled and confident workforce. We will continue to focus on building manager capability to effectively manage in a hybrid work environment, while ensuring operational requirements and individual psychosocial needs are met.

DVA will provide a range of supports for employees with the intent to inform, consult, and empower them to participate in opportunities to learn and build on their skills, so they are better positioned to support veterans and families. This includes a focus on building employee resilience, and a compassionate approach to trauma-informed care practices and principles. The recent launch of the NewAccess Workplaces coaching program (to supplement the Department's Employee Assistance Program) provides additional valuable resources specifically tailored to individual employee needs. These supports combine to continue to build our employee capability and support a safe and productive workplace.

In accordance with the Government's plan for APS Reform, DVA is also implementing the APSC Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance and Leadership Framework, to ensure a holistic approach to SES performance and leadership, and to build a culture of transparency and accountability.

DVA is continuing to build an inclusive workplace that improves the experience of staff and enhances our interactions with clients. We are continuously striving to achieve higher representation across diversity groups to ensure the workforce reflects the community we serve. We will identify actions to promote cultural capability, improve recruitment, mobility and promotion, and continue to develop a culture that values diversity.

The 2024–25 Budget provides additional funding and staffing to ensure DVA can continue to meet the needs of veterans and families and deliver high quality services. The Budget provides funding to retain 638 staff, with a permanent increase to the service delivery workforce (including claims processing) by an additional ongoing Average Staffing Level of 141.

To address the flow-on from clearing the backlog of unallocated claims, DVA continues to conduct recruitment activities as well as redeploying, retraining, and rebalancing the skills and capabilities within claims processing teams.

In 2024–25, the Department will further reduce outsourcing of core work in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework. DVA's targets for 2024–25 focus on reduced outsourcing of Science and Health, and Service Delivery job families, with an expected reduction of around \$3 million in 2024–25 in outsourcing expenditure. DVA's strategy is to focus on converting contracted staff into APS positions where possible, whilst continuing to source external experience as required.

The Department is also aligning its property plan with its workforce plan to ensure talent can be engaged in areas of most need and availability.

DVA recognises the importance of building the trust and confidence of the community and is expanding and making greater use of feedback mechanisms and recently introduced 'Town Hall' events. DVA continues to invest in its staff, particularly through its training programs, as this is critical to aid staff to support veterans and families across all DVA's services and supports. DVA will continue to draw on the capability and ideas of its staff as part of an innovation culture, including through uptake of staff-proposed initiatives to streamline DVA processes and improve the client experience.

Lived Experience Framework

The value of involving consumers in policy, program and service delivery design and implementation is recognised as best practice across multiple social services sectors. The investment in ensuring lived experience informs organisational decision-making is emerging in parallel sectors, such as bereavement services, homelessness, and alcohol and other drugs recovery journeys. DVA is the first federal agency to work to implement an enterprise-wide Lived Experience Framework for internal workforce capability as well as external co-design and consultation. The Lived Experience Framework considers the inclusion of lived-experience professionals within DVA and also envisions collaboration with external lived-experience experts from across the community.

DVA continues to make significant progress in embedding lived experience, including through the Open Arms peer workforce.

ICT capability

DVA continues to invest in establishing a modern, connected ICT ecosystem focused on addressing inefficiencies with our fragmented legacy systems and replacing them with modern, scalable and connected capability platforms. The program to modernise DVA's ICT ecosystem, data infrastructure and analytics capabilities, is focused on meeting the veteran community's needs today, and into the future, and greatly improving digital experiences when they connect with DVA.

DVA's ICT ecosystem is underpinned by legacy ICT systems, many of which are approaching end of life, are not fit-for-purpose and are costly to maintain. DVA's ICT ecosystem is complex, encompassing a wide variety of platforms and technologies, all of which require significant integration. Since 2023, DVA has invested in enhancements to its ICT systems that focus on the experience for veterans interacting with DVA digitally and reducing the complexity of the claims system, in accordance with Recommendation 3 of the Royal Commission's Interim Report.

This work has made improvements to DVA's back-end processing systems and delivered important enhancements to MyService, including:

- improved transparency through MyService so clients know where their claim is up to, including displaying key information about the claim, regardless of the channel it was submitted through
- improved digital document upload capabilities for claims, including those not lodged through MyService, and new prompts to ensure clients know when we are expecting them to provide supporting information for a claim
- added task notification capabilities, to remind clients when there is outstanding information they need to provide to progress their claim
- increased information displayed through MyService for benefits like Lump Sum Advances and Pension Bonuses.

DVA has started to replace its legacy financial management system that enables administered payments to veterans and families as well as service providers. This project will replace the legacy system with a capable modern solution before the end of 2025. DVA is also implementing a new clinical case management solution for Open Arms over the next 2 years, replacing an existing system that is no longer fit for purpose. This will also provide an opportunity to assess the solution for broader use across the Department.

DVA has also developed a Digital Resilience Roadmap to guide efforts to move to a modern, connected ICT ecosystem while anticipating the need and expectations of future generations of veterans and families, and preparing systems with the agility to implement legislative reform.

In implementing the Roadmap, DVA's ICT target state will prioritise:

- implementation of 'best-of-breed' solutions for core ICT capabilities, that can be integrated and re-used to support business processes
- solutions that empower business areas to make changes without the need for ICT development (e.g. permitting users to create/modify templates, workflows, business rules)
- re-using solutions across the Department and leveraging partnerships across Australian Government agencies, to promote an 'adopt not adapt' and a 'configure not customise' approach
- solutions that natively integrate to facilitate interoperability across the veteran support system
- a preference for low/no code ICT solutions.

We will conduct significant work to ensure existing DVA ICT systems are prepared for the start of expected future legislative change. DVA will continue to invest in enhancements to MyService as the Department's primary digital claims submission channel, as well as in piloting modern enterprise solutions to understand their suitability for broader use across the Department.

Data

DVA is investing in building its data and analytics capabilities to benefit veterans and families. This includes the integration of DVA data into whole-of-government de-identified data assets, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics data assets, which enable the comparison of veteran and family cohorts with reference groups in the general population, to understand the impacts (positive and negative) of ADF service on veterans and families as well as continuing work to implement the Defence/DVA Data Sharing and Analytics Solution.

Understanding the specific needs of different client cohorts can be used to develop predictions of future service utilisation and needs, to help ensure DVA is ready to support future ADF members, veterans and families as they serve, separate or transfer and transition to post-ADF service life.

Enhancing our data and analytics capabilities requires DVA to continue to engage with the veteran community around the use and sharing of its data. To this end, a more sophisticated approach to the dynamic management of consent for data sharing will be required. To support this, DVA will initiate a program to uplift data governance, literacy and capability development.

With the advances in data warehousing and automation, including artificial intelligence tools, such as machine learning, there is potential over the next 4 years for DVA to proactively match veterans with the services and support most appropriate for their needs, enabling them to select from a curated range of services rather than being overwhelmed by or unaware of the options available to them. Data can then be fed back to DVA and providers, to measure efficacy of interventions to improve the accuracy and utility of recommendations and the sharing of best or better practice.

DVA continues to undertake significant work on its research and data investments and capability to better inform and improve the development, delivery and evaluation of DVA policies, programs and initiatives. This includes establishing a modern enterprise data warehouse (EDW) and analytical capabilities, collaborating on improved information-sharing with Defence, and a new model for governing, funding and procuring research and evaluation work.

Further work is required to build curated data assets within the EDW to provide better data capability. This includes documenting the data in the EDW, defining and publishing metadata and data quality, and building assets designed to support self-service data capability, while maintaining clear data provenance and security requirements.

DVA continues to develop its research partnerships in Australia and overseas, including through Five Eyes partners. DVA is working on key data-related initiatives to improve the understanding of its clients, and tailor its services and programs, including the Priority Investment Approach, the Data-driven Client Segmentation, and the Commonwealth Person Level Integrated Data Asset. Whilst balancing veteran privacy and adhering to the *Privacy Act 1988*, DVA is exploring future opportunities around a National Veteran Data Asset and National Veteran Indicator, as well as ways to overcome legislative barriers to improve data-sharing, particularly between Defence and DVA, which is critical to facilitating improvements to the provision of services.

Future focus

DVA is working proactively to better understand the needs of its clients, the environment in which it operates, and likely future environmental, demographic, and service delivery demand trends. Part of this future focus involves gaining a better understanding of opportunities to enhance and automate processes through the application of technology.

DVA will also increase its cyber maturity and engage with established federal client authentication tools to help protect against fraudulent access to services.

DVA has established a Research, Evaluation and Data (RED) Division to increase the development and appropriate use and sharing of knowledge and evidence to support policy, program and service design and decision making, and ultimately to improve the wellbeing outcomes for veterans and families. Building this capability will enable DVA to look for new ways and opportunities to deliver outcomes for veterans and families through policy co-design and using lived experience to inform pilots to test ideas that are refined based on research and evaluation. The RED Division will also bolster DVA's data governance program to ensure the Department can support this data-sharing agenda with robust governance controls that are aligned with key legislative principles set out in the *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022*.

DVA has invested in the development of robust co-design, engagement and survey capabilities. This ensures these activities are consistent, coordinated and risks are minimised. The capability ensures the voice of the veteran, families and external stakeholders are amplified. Actionable insights are generated using collaborative human-centred design methodologies which directly inform decision making. In 2024 an enterprise-wide Veteran, Family and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy was launched. This guides all DVA staff on how to engage with the veteran community and promotes a structured and consistent approach to consultation across DVA. The Strategy not only represents DVA's commitment to open, genuine and meaningful engagement with the veteran community, it also sets the standard by which the Department holds itself accountable.

The shift to become a wellbeing-focused organisation is a significant undertaking for DVA that will take time. DVA continues its targeted effort and application of common principles to embed and align wellbeing efforts across the ecosystem, now and into the future. DVA is actively investing in a futures capability through the APS Futures Capability project, led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and funded by the APS Capability Reinvestment Fund. The primary objective of this initiative is to build the futures-thinking capability and seamlessly integrate futures thinking into a whole-of-government approach.

In the next 12 months, DVA will deliver on the recommendations of the Capability Review currently being undertaken as part of the Australian Public Service Commission's review program, which aims to embed a culture of continuous improvement across the APS and ensure agencies can deliver outcomes for Australians. The Capability Review will assess how DVA's operating context may change over the next 4 years, and focus on the capabilities it will need to be successful. The process also provides an opportunity to have a conversation about DVA's desired future state, to highlight strengths and organisational capability gaps and to identify opportunities to act on them.

Risk

Effective risk management is integral to achieving DVA's objectives and supporting its purpose. DVA is committed to promoting a proactive risk culture that considers threats and opportunities. DVA's Chief Risk Officer is responsible for promoting a strong culture of appropriate risk behaviours across all levels of the enterprise. All staff have a responsibility to manage risk, as part of day-to-day activities. Building risk capability and culture is addressed by a range of training and awareness activities including mandatory online risk management training. Increased engagement with staff on risk management is planned for the remainder of 2024 to improve DVA's risk maturity.

Our Risk Management Framework

DVA's Accountable Authority Instructions and Risk Management Framework provides the foundation and organisational arrangements to nurture risk culture and manage risk across the enterprise. The Framework sets out our systems of risk oversight and management in accordance with section 16 of the PGPA Act and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. It is aligned with the International Standard on Risk Management, *ISO 31000:2018 Risk management— Guidelines*, and federal best practice guidance. Implementation of a single Framework across DVA contributes to strengthening management practices, decision-making and innovation.

FIGURE 2: DVA's Risk Environment and Management Framework



Management of key strategic risks

In practice, risks are managed at the appropriate level across DVA and business activities. This includes management and oversight of strategic (enterprise) risks directly by the Executive Board and Enterprise Risk Stewards through to operational-level risks managed by respective divisions and branches. DVA regularly scans the operating environment to identify and treat emerging risks and continues to undertake periodic reviews of its risks, critical controls and supporting frameworks to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Strategic risk management, described as enterprise risk management in DVA, identifies overarching risk focus areas which, if realised, will affect DVA's ability to achieve its purpose and objectives. DVA's identification and oversight of strategic risk is captured through a dynamic strategic risk management scan and appointment of Enterprise Risk Stewards. These strategic risk focus areas are purposely expressed as aspirational statements with the view that the Executive Board discussions are focused on achievement and performance. The Executive Board comprehensively review each of the enterprise risks at least annually.

The Department's enterprise risk focus areas and mitigation strategies in line with its risk appetite and tolerance, are outlined below. Some of these mitigation strategies span multiple enterprise risk focus areas.

Enterprise Risk Key Focus Area	Why is this a focus for DVA?	Mitigation Strategies
<p>Supporting our veterans and the veteran community at all times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding emerging needs • Identify appropriate support in a changing wellbeing landscape • Embracing sector reform • Awareness of the global security and economic environment • Responding to natural disasters / climate change • Delivery of relevant programs 	<p>So we deliver high quality outcomes that improve the health and wellbeing of veterans and the veteran community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVA develops policy and programs based on research, data, wide engagement and evidence. • Plans developed for handling emergencies or crises. • Maintain open communication with stakeholders, demonstrating a commitment to accountability and transparency.
<p>Managing claims efficiently and effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying innovative solutions to reduce backlog • Building capability through recruitment, skills development and retention • Modernising and sustaining IT Systems • Being transparent in our dealings with clients so they are aware of the claims process 	<p>So we have processes, systems and resources to deliver timely payments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement efficient workflows and automated systems to expedite claims processing and reduce errors. • Reviews of current workforce provisioning and practices to meet the demand of claims processing. • Regularly audit and review claim processes to identify areas for improvement and ensure compliance. • Maintain transparent communication with claimants regarding status of their claims, expectations and any required supporting documentation.

Enterprise Risk Key Focus Area	Why is this a focus for DVA?	Mitigation Strategies
<p>Responding to the Government and the Royal Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving legislative reform • Proactively advising the Government and implementing priorities • Deliver high-quality evidence-based policy advice 	<p>So we respond to the Royal Commission recommendations and deliver Government priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build strong relationships with stakeholders to understand perspectives, gather support and influence the legislative process. • Oversight and monitoring of priorities and outcomes through robust processes. • Timely development and implementation of aligned, evidence-based policy advice.
<p>Operational Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy and data integrity is maintained • Accountability for actions and decisions • Compliance with policies, processes and procedures to support delivery • Manage the safety and wellbeing of staff to become an employer of choice • Systems are robust to support the delivery of services and payments • Projects deliver desired outcomes 	<p>So we are trusted by Government and our stakeholders (including veterans and veteran families, support providers, other government entities, the Parliament, employees and service providers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust data security measures are developed to protect sensitive information. • Foster a culture of integrity and ethical behaviour by setting clear expectations and leading by example. • Establish strong internal controls to prevent non-compliance • Implement enterprise solution architecture to ensure strategic and operational objectives are achieved in a way that derives value from technology investments. • Develop and maintain strong relationships with providers to actively manage ICT risks.
<p>Looking after our people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing flexible working arrangements • Overall staff wellbeing and their connection to purpose and vision • Measurement, detection and response to emerging workforce issues – and how we effectively engage and communicate with staff on these matters • Workforce of the future (skill gaps and priorities, size and composition, ways of working, ageing workforce and loss of knowledge) 	<p>So we ensure our people are supported to deliver the best outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise employee health and safety through strategies, implement initiatives and provide staff access to resources to prevent and manage physical and psychosocial risk and hazards. • Regularly solicit and address feedback from employees. • Invest in developing strong leadership capabilities at all levels. • Develop strategies to attract and retain skilled people in recognition of a changing workforce.

Performance

Performance Reporting Framework

DVA's Corporate Plan is a key component of the Performance Reporting Framework and aligns closely with DVA's Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS).

The PBS sets out DVA's 3 outcomes, the corresponding Budget programs, and the measures DVA will use to monitor performance of these programs. The Corporate Plan communicates DVA's strategic priorities for 2024–25, and includes performance measures and targets aligned with the Department's purpose and key activities to demonstrate how success will be measured in 2024–25 to 2027–28.

The performance measures in this plan will be reported in the annual performance statements within DVA's 2024–25 Annual Report. The annual performance statements report DVA's actual performance for the year against the performance measures and targets in DVA's Corporate Plan and PBS, and provide analysis of the extent to which the Department has achieved its purpose including the factors that contribute to the outcomes.

DVA's Performance Framework measures its ability to deliver on its purpose in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

For information on the Commonwealth Performance Framework, including the relationship between performance information in the PBS, corporate plan and annual performance statements, refer to the PBS user guide on page viii.

The priorities and key activities outlined in this Corporate Plan will flow through to DVA division and branch plans, and finally into individual staff performance agreements. This provides a clear line of sight from DVA's purpose to the work of individuals.

DVA's performance measures and targets are detailed further in the 'Our performance measures' section.

DVA continues to explore and undertake business improvement opportunities to enhance the way it reports on performance, in line with possible recommendations from the Royal Commission, relevant legislation harmonisation, as well as lessons learned from participating in the annual performance statements audits carried out by the Australian National Audit Office.

Measuring performance

Good performance information demonstrates how DVA, in line with its purpose, achieves the overarching outcomes it is funded to deliver through Budget programs.

DVA's Corporate Plan presents a range of key activities against each of the outcomes and Budget programs. How DVA performs in undertaking those activities is monitored through performance measures and targets, which are detailed in the 'Our performance measures' section.

For a complete overview, performance measures and targets should be read in tandem with program financial and performance information published in DVA's PBS.

Achievement against the performance criteria in this Corporate Plan and the PBS, is reviewed by DVA's Executive Board on a triannual basis and will be reported externally in the annual performance statements published as part of DVA's 2024–25 Annual Report.

DVA uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures and includes output and effectiveness measures to provide a basis for the measurement and assessment of its performance.

Since 2023–24, DVA has made changes to measures and targets, particularly in Outcome 3, to strengthen reporting on performance. These changes are summarised in Appendix A.

Since the 2024–25 PBS, the only additional change to the performance measures and targets is the revised target for "official commemorations are satisfactorily maintained to recognise the service and sacrifice of veterans (measure 3.1-3)" from "number of complaints is less than 1% of the total number of official commemorations" to "less than 10 complaints regarding the maintenance of any official commemoration". This target was revised for improved clarity.

Performance measures and targets included in this Corporate Plan apply to each year from 2024–25 through to 2027–28, except for measure 3.1-1, where the target will increase annually by 5% from $\geq 75\%$ in 2024–25, to $\geq 90\%$ in 2027–28.

DVA will review its measures after the Royal Commission report is handed down and legislative reform takes place, to ensure its suite of measures and targets remain appropriate for demonstrating performance in line with our purpose.

In Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, DVA assesses performance using timeliness, quality, and client satisfaction measures. In Outcome 3, DVA assesses performance using timeliness, client satisfaction, quality of service and effectiveness across War Graves and Commemorations.

Below is a summary of how DVA performance criteria are measured:

Timeliness

These are measures of the time taken to process claims and change of circumstances requests, or timeliness of access to services.

For Outcome 1, targets are set as the same as or greater than 50 per cent to enable a comparison of performance across different claim types. DVA will review this as part of its annual review.

Timeliness measures are used to give an indication of efficiency over time.

Improved timeliness continues to be a goal. Factors affecting this are complexity of claims including the number of conditions, multiple Acts, absence of supporting medical documentation, reliance on third parties for supporting information and client inactivity.

For Outcome 2, targets are the percentage of claims processed, referrals allocated, or assessments completed within a set timeframe.

Quality

Quality (**correctness rate**) performance measures assess the correctness, including eligibility, entitlements received, decision-making and processing of claims. These assessments are conducted monthly on a random statistical sample by quality assurance officers using assessment criteria relevant to the function (e.g. Initial Liability, Permanent Impairment and Incapacity etc.). To support independence, quality assurance officers are a separate group to the delegates who process claims. All results are recorded and are reported quarterly. Errors are deviations from the entitlements an eligible veteran or family member should or should not have received. Errors may involve both financial and non-financial impacts, including, for example, failure to formally notify a veteran of a decision.

In addition to assessing quality through correctness rates, this year DVA has introduced a replacement measure for Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance (1.4-4), which assesses compliance with the requirements of the 2020 General Insurance Code of Practice. This measure captures a breadth of DSH Insurance work in claims and policy, and assesses quality across a range of areas including timeliness, communication and accuracy, to give a more complete picture of DSH Insurance service delivery performance. This provides a more comprehensive view of performance compared to the 2023–24 performance measure, which generally had low response rates and only looked at one aspect of DSH Insurance business (claims).

Quality (**service**) measures predominantly provide a comparison of the number of complaints recorded about the programs compared to the number of clients accessing services. Complaints are registered in the Client Feedback Management System when they are received by DVA. Reports from a database of all client feedback identifies the number of complaints registered in relation to unmet access and/or quality of service.

Client satisfaction

In most cases, client satisfaction is measured by surveying individuals about their experience when claiming or accessing entitlements through DVA. Surveys are tailored to the relevant claim type, service or program and ask questions specifically to understand satisfaction in relation to claiming or accessing the entitlement. Responding to surveys is voluntary.

Our performance measures – Outcome 1

Maintain and enhance the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of eligible persons and their dependants through access to income support, compensation and other support services, including advice and information about entitlements.

Program 1.1: Veterans' Income Support and Allowances

This program delivers means-tested income support pensions and other allowances to eligible veterans and dependants under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*. Income support provides a regular means-tested payment for eligible veterans and their dependants with limited means.

Key Activities:

» Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
1.1-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days ¹	≥50%	29-30
1.1-2	Timeliness: The percentage of change of circumstances processed within 10 days ²	≥50%	29-30
1.1-3	Quality: Correctness rate of processed new claims ¹	≥95%	29-30
1.1-4	Quality: Correctness rate of processed change of circumstances ²	≥95%	29-30
1.1-5	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ³	≥80%	29-30

Program 1.2: Veterans' Disability Support

This program provides compensation in the form of disability compensation payments and ancillary benefits to eligible veterans for the tangible effects of war or defence service.

Key Activities:

» Provide disability support and compensation payments to eligible veterans

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
1.2-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 100 days ⁴	≥50%	31
1.2-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims ⁵	≥95%	31
1.2-3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ⁵	≥80%	31

Program 1.3: Assistance to Defence Widow/ers and their Dependants

The war widow/ers pension is part of a compensation package provided in recognition of the special circumstances and to compensate a widowed partner of a veteran, where there was a connection between the veteran's death and service. Eligible children are also provided with financial support.

Key Activities:

- » Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible dependants

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
1.3-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days ⁶	≥50%	32
1.3-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims ⁷	≥95%	32
1.3-3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ⁸	≥80%	32

Program 1.4: Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependants

This program delivers other allowances and assistance to eligible veterans and dependants under the VEA and related legislation, including home insurance, funeral benefits, prisoner of war ex gratia payments, and payments on behalf of Commonwealth and allied countries. Assistance is also provided to the ex-service community via Building Excellence in Support and Training grants and the Advocacy Training and Development Program.

Key Activities:

- » Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families
- » Enable veterans and families to access housing-related support via Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme and Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
Funeral benefits			
1.4-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 10 days ⁹	≥50%	33
1.4-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims ⁹	≥95%	33
1.4-3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ⁹	≥80%	33
Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance			
1.4-4	Quality: DSH Insurance complies with/meets the requirements of the 2020 General Insurance Code of Practice ¹⁰	≥90%	33

Program 1.5: Veterans' Children Education Scheme

Under the Veterans' Children Education Scheme and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme, education allowances are paid to eligible children of ADF members who have died or been severely injured as a result of service. The schemes provide financial assistance, student support services, guidance and counselling for eligible students undertaking primary, secondary and tertiary full-time study within Australia.

Key Activities:

- » Provide eligible children of veterans and families with financial assistance and support to access education and skills development

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
1.5-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 28 days	≥50%	34
1.5-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims	≥95%	34

Program 1.6: Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Acts Payments – Income Support and Compensation

This program provides compensation to eligible veterans and dependants under the DRCA, the MRCA and related legislation. The DRCA (and MRCA for injuries since 1 July 2004) provides coverage for injured ADF members to support their return to health, work and independence. There is also compensation for eligible dependants, and MRCA health care and other ancillary benefits.

Key Activities:

- » Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
1.6-1	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 100 days	≥50%	35–36
1.6-2	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 100 days	≥50%	35–36
1.6-3	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days	≥50%	35–36
1.6-4	Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA liability claims	≥95%	35–36
1.6-5	Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA permanent impairment claims	≥95%	35–36
1.6-6	Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA incapacity claims	≥95%	35–36
1.6-7	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 90 days	≥50%	35–36
1.6-8	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 90 days	≥50%	35–36
1.6-9	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days	≥50%	35–36
1.6-10	Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA liability claims	≥95%	35–36
1.6-11	Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA permanent impairment claims	≥95%	35–36
1.6-12	Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA incapacity claims	≥95%	35–36
1.6-13	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ¹¹	≥80%	35–36

Our performance measures – Outcome 2

Maintain and enhance the physical and mental wellbeing and quality of life of eligible persons and their dependants through health and other care services that promote early intervention, prevention and treatment, including advice and information about health service entitlements.

Program 2.1: General Medical Consultations and Services

DVA has arrangements in place with medical and allied health practitioners in both the public and private sectors to deliver a comprehensive range of services throughout Australia, provided in hospitals, in providers' rooms and in the homes of veterans and families. To ensure that eligible veterans and dependants are able to access necessary services, DVA will either pay for travel to the nearest service provider or pay a provider to travel to other locations to provide services to eligible veterans and dependants.

Key Activities:

- » Work with a range of medical, dental, hearing and allied health providers throughout Australia to ensure veterans and families have access to a comprehensive range of health services

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
2.1-1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality compared to the total number of clients accessing services ¹²	<1%	45

Program 2.2: Veterans' Hospital Services

This program provides access to inpatient and outpatient hospital services for eligible veterans through arrangements with private hospitals, day procedure centres and mental health hospitals, as well as all public hospitals operated by the state and territory governments.

Key Activities:

- » Make arrangements with public and private hospital service providers throughout Australia to ensure veterans and families have access to a comprehensive range of services

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
2.2-1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality compared to the total number of clients accessing services ¹²	<1%	46

Program 2.3: Veterans' Pharmaceutical Benefits

The Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme provides clients with access to a comprehensive range of pharmaceuticals and wound dressings for the treatment of their health care needs, including items available to the broader Australian community under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Key Activities:

- » Provide eligible veterans with access to a broader range of medicines and wound care items at a concession rate

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
2.3-1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality compared to the total number of clients accessing services ¹²	<1%	47

Program 2.4: Veterans' Community Care and Support

DVA manages community support and residential aged care programs for clients, including the Veterans' Home Care program and the Community Nursing program, which aim to support people to remain independent in their homes and improve their quality of life and health. This program also provides subsidies and supplements for DVA clients living in residential care facilities.

Key Activities:

- » Provide a range of care and support in the home to assist eligible veterans and families to remain independent for longer

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
2.4-1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality compared to the total number of clients accessing services ¹²	<1%	48

Program 2.5: Veterans' Counselling and Other Health Services

This program provides a wide range of mental and allied health care services, including counselling and referral services for veterans and families. The program also supports eligible veterans and families with funding for aids and appliances, and travel for treatment.

Key Activities:

- » Provide veterans and families with access to mental health care services, including primary prevention through counselling and complex care coordination
- » Support veterans with travel for treatment and provide access to aids, appliances and modifications to support independent living
- » Provide veterans with access to allied health services, including access to telehealth services
- » Provide access to Open Arms including individual and family counselling, after-hours counselling, group program interventions, and peer support

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
Access to services			
2.5-1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality compared to the total number of clients accessing services ¹²	<1%	49-50
Travel			
2.5-2	Timeliness: Target percentage of claims for reimbursement processed within 28 days	≥95%	49-50
Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling Services			
2.5-4	Percentage of clients allocated to an Open Arms clinician within 2 weeks of initial intake	≥65%	49-50
2.5-5	Client satisfaction ¹³	≥80%	49-50

Program 2.6: Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Acts – Health and Other Care Services

DVA arranges for the provision of rehabilitation, medical and other related services under the DRCA, the MRCA and related legislation. The services include payment for medical treatment, rehabilitation services, attendant care and household services.

Key Activities:

- » Provide veterans with access to medical management, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation programs and support for employment

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
2.6-1	Timeliness: The percentage of rehabilitation assessments completed within 30 days of assessment referral	≥75%	51
2.6-3	Client satisfaction: An annual survey of client satisfaction with the rehabilitation program ¹⁴	≥75%	51

Our performance measures – Outcome 3

Acknowledgement and commemoration of those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations through promoting recognition of service and sacrifice, preservation of Australia's wartime heritage, and official commemorations.

In Outcome 3, DVA assesses performance across the Office of Australian War Graves and Commemorations.

Since 2023–24, DVA has made changes to strengthen reporting on war graves and commemorations performance. Changes to performance measures are reflected in the 2024–25 PBS and in this Corporate Plan. These changes include the addition of a new measure to reflect the important role of education in commemorating service and sacrifice.

Program 3.1: War Graves

This program acknowledges and commemorates veterans' service and sacrifice, and promotes an increased understanding of Australia's wartime history. To meet the Australian Government's commitment, the Office of Australian War Graves cares for and maintains official commemorations and sites of collective official commemoration to the standards set by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Key Activities:

- » Provide and maintain war cemeteries, war plots, gardens of remembrance and memorials to the missing and other individual official commemorations for those eligible veterans who have died as a result of their service to Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
3.1-1	Quality of service: New official commemorations are completed within published timeframes ¹⁵	2024-25 ≥75% 2025-26 ≥80% 2026-27 ≥85% 2027-28 ≥90%	55-56
3.1-3	Quality: Official commemorations are satisfactorily maintained to recognise the service and sacrifice of veterans	less than 10 complaints regarding the maintenance of any official commemoration ¹⁶	55-56

Program 3.2: Commemorative Activities

Commemorative activities are delivered to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

Key Activities:

- » Deliver domestic and international commemorative events to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations
- » Provide online resources to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations

No	Performance criteria	Target	PBS page
3.2-1	Commemorative event quality: Commemorative events are conducted to commemorate veterans' service in a dignified, solemn and respectful manner ¹⁷	The number of discrete complaints is less than 1% of the estimated audience for any one event	57
3.2-2	Increase the public's understanding and awareness of the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations	Increased engagement with the Anzac portal ¹⁸	57

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of changes to DVA's performance measure suite since 2023–24

Relevant performance information from DVA Corporate Plan 2023–24	Performance information changes in Corporate Plan 2024–25	Summary of change	Rationale for change
<p>1.4-4 Policyholder satisfaction: The percentage of policyholders satisfied with the service provided when their claim for damage to their home has been finalised</p> <p>Target: ≥90%</p>	<p>1.4-4 Quality: Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance complies with/meets the requirements of the 2020 General Insurance Code of Practice</p> <p>Target: ≥90%</p>	Measure replaced in 2024–25 PBS and reflected in 2024–25 Corporate Plan	Benchmarks performance against industry standards. The new measure encompasses a greater breadth of DSH Insurance work (claims, policy) and assesses quality across a range of areas.
<p>3.1-1 Quality of Service: New official commemorations are completed within published timeframes</p> <p>Target: ≥95%</p>	<p>3.1-1 Quality of Service: New official commemorations are completed within published timeframes</p> <p>Target: 2024–25 ≥75%</p> <p>2025–26 ≥80%</p> <p>2026–27 ≥85%</p> <p>2027–28 ≥90%</p>	Target amended in 2024–25 PBS and reflected in 2024–25 Corporate Plan	Provides a more realistic but still stretch target.
<p>3.1-2 Quality of Service: Maintain public access to memorial sites in Thailand, Malaysia and France</p> <p>Target: Unscheduled closures ≤5 days</p> <p>Key Activity: To operate and maintain memorial sites in Thailand, Malaysia and France</p>	N/A	Measure, target and related key activity removed from 2024–25 PBS	Removed due to issues surrounding completeness and potential bias in the data utilised

Relevant performance information from DVA Corporate Plan 2023–24	Performance information changes in Corporate Plan 2024–25	Summary of change	Rationale for change
<p>3.1-3 Quality of service: Official commemorations are inspected to ensure they continue to meet the Commonwealth War Graves Commission standard Target: ≥95% inspected</p>	<p>3.1-3 Quality: Official commemorations are satisfactorily maintained to recognise the service and sacrifice of veterans Target: Less than 10 complaints regarding the maintenance of any official commemoration</p>	<p>Measure and target replaced in 2024–25 PBS Further amendment to target made in 2024–25 Corporate Plan</p>	<p>To more directly capture community satisfaction with official commemorations</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>3.2-2: Increase the public's understanding and awareness of the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations Target: Increased engagement with the Anzac portal Key Activity: Provide online resources to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations</p>	<p>New measure, target and related key activity added to 2024–25 PBS</p>	<p>Added to enable measurement of community awareness and engagement</p>

Appendix B: PGPA Act Requirements

The Corporate Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act; and
- subsection 16E(2) of the PGPA Rule 2014.

DVA has no subsidiaries as defined by the PGPA Act.

Endnotes

- ¹ This measure considers the following claim types under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* and the *Social Security Act 1991*: Service Pension, Income Support Supplement, Veteran Payment, Age Pension, Qualifying Service, Gold Card, Orange Card, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, and the Home Equity Assurance Scheme (formally known as the Pension Loan Scheme).
- ² A Change of Circumstance (CoC) includes personal changes (eg. phone number, relationship status, accommodation, financial circumstances, etc).
- ³ This measure considers the following claim types under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*: Service Pension, Veteran Payment, and Income Support Supplement.
- ⁴ This measure considers the following claim types under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*: Disability Compensation Payment claims, applications for increase, and assessments/reviews.
- ⁵ This measure considers the following claim types under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*: Disability Compensation Payment claims (including Initial Liability), applications for increase, assessments, and reviews.
- ⁶ This measure considers the following claim types under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*: War widows claims.
- ⁷ This measure considers the following claim types under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*: Death claims.
- ⁸ This measure considers the following claim types under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*: War Widows Pension.
- ⁹ This measure considers the following claim types: Funeral Benefits.
- ¹⁰ The Code is mandatory and assesses quality and efficiency of the business across a range of areas such as claims and complaints.
- ¹¹ This measure considers the following claim types: MRCA and DRCA Initial Liability, MRCA and DRCA Permanent Impairment, as well as MRCA and DRCA Incapacity.
- ¹² Complaints are registered in the Client Feedback Management System when they are received by DVA.
- ¹³ Client satisfaction is measured by a questionnaire. Satisfaction questionnaires are offered by clinicians at the end of an episode of care. All clients who answer 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' to the question 'How satisfied are you with the counselling provided to you?' will be measured as satisfied. The questionnaire is not compulsory for clients to complete.
- ¹⁴ Client satisfaction is measured through an independent survey by ORIMA Research of DVA clients who have recently started and/or completed the rehabilitation program. Client satisfaction for this measure is calculated through the responses to 7 questions in both Part A and Part B of the survey, which assess participants overall views of the program as well as the rehabilitation plan commencement, implementation and closure process.
- ¹⁵ This measure considers the time from when DVA received the offer acceptance from the family to when the commemoration is complete. The payment of the invoice is taken as a proxy for the completion date. Published timeframes include 240 days for graves completions, 120 days for ashes placements completions and 90 days for bronze plaque in garden of remembrance completions.
- ¹⁶ This target has been revised for greater clarity. In the 2024–25 PBS, the target reads as, '*number of complaints is less than 1% of total number of official commemorations*'.
- ¹⁷ Complaints are registered in the Client Feedback Management System. Estimated television audiences viewing commemorative events are sourced from the ABC, and combined with estimates of live attendees to represent the total estimated audience.
- ¹⁸ This measure has been added in 2024-25 and will be used as a baseline.



