



## Minutes

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

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

Members **NOTED** the attendance of Department of Defence Warrant Officers to observe and provide any insight from the Australian Defence Force.

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

Members **NOTED** that the minutes from the previous meeting on 9 April 2024 were endorsed out of session and published on the DVA website.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2023YVF/A08, A12, 2024YVF/A02, A03, A04 and A06.

Members **AGREED** that Action Items 2023YVF/A04, A14 2024YVF/A01 and A05 remain in progress.

#### Agenda Item 2.1 2024YVF/A05 DVA Fee Schedules

Members **RAISED** the impact DVA Fee Schedules have on providers and **NOTED** DVA is investigating other financial payment schemes and **DISCUSSED** tangible outcomes of streamlining.

Members **DISCUSSED** concerns regarding current serving members needing to carry out a search for a provider instead of being able to go through a GP. DVA **ENCOURAGED** members to lodge complaints through the complaints system to assist Joint Health Command to address and monitor any issues.

Members **AGREED** that two separate presentations be provided at the next meeting. One concerning education and pathways for medical practitioners and another concerning clarification of rates between DVA, NDIA and Aged Care. Members **AGREED** these presentations may assist them to provide greater detail in future member submissions, drawing on evidence and data.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024YVF/A06</b> – A presentation to be provided at the next YVF on education and pathways of medical practitioners and DVA Fee Schedules.	Chief Health Officer
<b>2024YVF/A07</b> – A presentation to be provided at the next YVF on rates between DVA, NDIA and Aged Care and opportunities for harmonisation of fees to prevent confusion in the veteran community.	Program Delivery/Aged & Community Care Taskforce

### Agenda Item 3 ADF Issues and Trends

Members **NOTED** the attendance of the Department of Defence to observe and provide feedback and input through the meeting from the Australia Defence Force perspective.

**Agenda Item 4 DVA Strategic Update**

Members **NOTED** the update from the Acting Secretary and that DVA is focused on driving change that will make a real difference to the veteran community. Members **DISCUSSED** the Royal Commission, **NOTING** the final report is expected to be released in the coming weeks, and **NOTED** there are issues and obstacles to legislative reform and transition.

Members **NOTED** the Minister introduced legislation intended to simplify and harmonise the veteran rehabilitation and compensation framework to Parliament on 3 July 2024. Once passed, the Bill will consolidate all legislation governing veterans’ compensation and rehabilitation into the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). Members **NOTED** the Bill has been referred to a Senate Inquiry and once through the appropriate Parliamentary proceedings, the Bill is expected to take effect from 1 July 2026.

Members **NOTED** the last of the unallocated claims backlog was cleared and 95 per cent of claims have now been finalised. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** that DVA has increased resourcing for ongoing APS staff and continues training and development in a structured way to enable working through the claims backlog.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024YVF/A08</b> – YVF members to be provided copies of the legislation and memorandum.	Policy

**Agenda Item 5 Update on the Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support and Economy**

Members **NOTED** that DVA established an Aged and Community Care Taskforce (ACCT) in January 2024. The ACCT has been established to deliver a structured approach to DVA aged care services that reflects the changes in DVA’s client demographics and leverages partnerships enabling DVA to respond to the changes happening across the aged care sector, including whole-of-government care and support initiatives. Members **DISCUSSED** the complexities of accessing more services and **NOTED** the ACCT are working with the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to create a pathway to harmonise services and minimise impact on clients. Members **NOTED** that like the broader care sector, DVA is experiencing ‘thin markets’ where there is limited provider capacity to meet demand.

Members were **ENCOURAGED** to notify DVA about any known issues concerning access to in-home services, and access to DVA entitlements within residential aged care facilities by emailing [AGED.COMMUNITY.CARE.TASKFORCE.COORD@dva.gov.au](mailto:AGED.COMMUNITY.CARE.TASKFORCE.COORD@dva.gov.au).

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024YVF/A09</b> – Update to be provided at the next YVF meeting on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sustainability of DVA in-home programs into the future;</li> <li>○ information access and awareness, and veteran recognition within residential aged care;</li> <li>○ awareness of DVA entitlements within aged care.</li> </ul>	Aged & Community Care Taskforce

**Agenda Item 6 Advocacy Update**

Members **NOTED** the establishment of an Advocacy Working Group (the Group) under the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the Group is close to providing advice on improving advocacy through a professional body. This body will include a constitution and by-laws to establish standards and disciplinary processes to improve governance over the advocacy sector.

Members **DISCUSSED** the potential establishment of an ESO Peak Body, noting that an ESO Peak Body should interact with, but remain separate to any Advocacy Governance Body.

Members **NOTED** the importance in establishing high quality advocacy training, free of charge, **NOTING** the importance to monitor performance and gain more accountability, record keeping and a code of conduct.

**Agenda Item 7          Members Submission – Veterans in Custody Update (Royal Australian Regiment Corporation)**

Members **NOTED** the presentation provided by the Royal Australian Regiment Corporation (RARC) and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the common themes with veterans in custody. Members **NOTED** that informed decision making based on community safety and supported through the ESO network is critical for success in the space. Members **NOTED** a pilot program has been developed and the RARC is liaising with ESO’s how it relates to veteran cohort.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** there is no legislative barrier to accessing DVA funded services while incarcerated however clients are unable to claim income support or incapacity payments. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the loss of Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS) Pension and the need to look at how it effects families of incarcerated DVA clients and support a national rollout program.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024YVF/A10</b> – Provide an information pack to YVF members on a strategic look at veterans offending and what is best practice to address these principles and to gauge what the future looks like.	Program Delivery/Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
<b>2024YVF/A11</b> – Updates to be provided to YVF at future meetings on veterans in custody by the Royal Australian Regiment Corporation.	Royal Australian Regiment Corporation

**Agenda Item 8          Members Submission – Establish a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Wellbeing post the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (Returned and Services League of Australia)**

Members **DISCUSSED** the members submission and **NOTED** that the Royal Commission is an independent body and while DVA has actively encouraged the submissions and contributions by all interested parties for the Royal Commissions consideration, DVA is unable to support particular independent submissions.

**Agenda Item 9          Member Submission DVA Delegate/Veteran check in (Soldier On)**

Members **RAISED** concerns around communications standards as they relate to DVA delegates following up on clients, in particular veterans who have received an adverse diagnosis. Members suggested there should be a client management tool that will send out reminders. DVA **ACKNOWLEDGED** members concerns and advised that Delegates/Client Service Officers (CSO) have a manual task reminder function to follow up every 30 days. Members **NOTED** that the policy is due for review and welcomes any feedback or comments on these services and encourages members to provide DVA their details for follow up via the DVA website (<https://www.dva.gov.au/about/feedback>).

**Agenda Item 10        Streamlining Medical Transition Processes for Young Veterans**

Members **RAISED** concerns regarding challenges faced when separating from the Defence Force that some Department of Defence Medical Officers do not provide medical reports when separating from the Force. DVA **ACKNOWLEDGED** this important topic, noting it has raised with Defence and will continue to be a matter for discussion with Joint Health Command for a combined approach.

**Agenda Item 11        Ex-Service Organisation Round Table Update from YVF Representative**

Members **DISCUSSED** the cross-over discussions between the Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum (YVF) and the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT). Members **NOTED** the ESO Peak Body is of interest to both forums, with broad opinions from both forums. Members **NOTED** the YVF Chair will confirm if further engagement and out of session discussion can occur regarding the ESO Peak Body and its progress.

Action Item and Description	Responsible
<b>2024YVF/A12</b> – Discuss out of session the ESO Peak Body and the possibility of an out of session briefing with YVF members on the progress of the work underway of the Nous Group.	Chair

**Agenda Item 12      Other business**

There was no other business raised by members. Members **NOTED** the below the line submissions.

**Meeting closed: 12:39pm**

<b>Members</b>	
Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC, AM	Chair, Repatriation Commissioner
COL James Burns CSM	ADF Liaison Officer to DVA, Department of Defence
SQNLDR Dee Cherry	Air Force Association
Mr Nick Russon	Australian Special Air Service Association
Ms Monique Suters	Defence Families Australia
Ms Georgia Ash	Mates4Mates ( <b>proxy</b> )
Mr James Dallas	Returned and Services League of Australia
Mr Scott Harris	The Warrior's Return
Mr Matthew Bondarczuk RAN	Australian Veterans Alliance
Mr James Milliss	Soldier On
Christopher Tilley	Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
LCDR Graham Thomas RAN Rtd	Naval Association of Australia
<b>Presenters</b>	
Department of Defence	Department of Defence – <b>Item 3</b>
Ms Sarah Kennedy	Assistant Secretary, Aged and Community Care Taskforce – <b>Item 5</b>
Mr Luke Brown	First Assistant Secretary, Policy – <b>Items 6 &amp; 14</b>
Mr Michael Harper	Assistant Secretary, VEA Compensation and Support – <b>Item 9</b>
Ms Helen Wauchope	A/g Assistant Secretary, Compensation Processing & Payments – <b>Item 10</b>
<b>Observers</b>	
Mr Chris Lewis	Defence Force Welfare Association
Mr Marc Diploc	Salute of Service
Mr Peter Kennedy	Young Veterans Australia
Mr Scott Jeffery	TPI Federation of Australia
Mr Mike Von Berg MC OAM	Ex-Service Organisation Round Table member
WO1 Kim Felmingham NSC, AOM	Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army, Department of Defence
WO-N Andrew Bertoncin OAM	Warrant Officer of the Navy, Department of Defence
WOFF Ken Robertson OAM	Senior Enlisted Advisor to CDF, Department of Defence
WOFF David Turnbull	Royal Australian Airforce, Department of Defence
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Ms Morgan S	A/g Assistant Director, International & Stakeholder Relations
Ms Karen G	Senior Secretariat Officer, International & Stakeholder Relations
<b>Apologies</b>	
Ms Emma Whitehead	Mates4Mates
Ms Barbara Boyer	Legacy Australia Inc
Mr Tom Hanley	Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans' Association

**Next Meeting** – 24 September 2024