



MINUTES

Agenda Item 1 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

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

Agenda Item 2 Action items

Members **NOTED** the Minutes from the previous meeting on 18 June 2024 were endorsed out of session on 15 July 2024 and published on the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Website on 19 July 2024.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2023NACCF/A18, 2024NACCF/A05, 2024NACCF/A07 and **NOTED** that action item 2024NACCF/A06 and 2024NACCF/A08 will remain open.

Agenda Item 3 Member Submission – Communicating with older veterans and war widows (Australian War Widows Inc)

Members **NOTED** and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the introduction of Ms. Paula Goodwin as the new First Assistant Secretary of Ministerial Engagement and Communications.

Members **NOTED** the submission regarding older veterans and war widows missing essential information about their entitlements due to limited, or no access, to digital resources.

Members **NOTED** that DVA uses diverse channels of communication, including print, electronic newsletters, phone support, in-person services, and online resources. Recognising older clients' preferences, DVA aims to enhance communication through a strategic plan, tailored resources, and integrated efforts to ensure effective engagement and accessibility by 2026.

Agenda Item 4 Member Submission – Definition of a Government Pension (Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia)

Members **NOTED** the submission regarding the specific definition of 'Government Pension' when used by the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) and whether it was in reference to the Service Pension, Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP) or Total Permanent Impairment (TPI).

Members **NOTED** in such cases, DoHAC are broadly referring to means tested aged care entitlements such as Age Pension, Carer Payment, Disability Support Pension, Income Support Supplement, Service Pension and Veteran Payment.

Members **NOTED** a 'Government Pension' in this context would not refer to SRDP, which is exempt from means testing. DOHAC and DVA are working together to develop publicly available information, including case study examples, about the various DVA pensions and payments and their relationship with DHAC means testing for aged care purposes.

Action Item	Description	Responsible
2024NACCF/A09	NACCF members to be advised whether the war widow pension is considered a compensation payment in terms of aged care means testing.	Policy

Agenda Item 5 Member Submission – Assisting a Veteran (Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia)

Members **NOTED** and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the introduction of Ms. Tara Cavanagh, First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits.

Members **NOTED** the submission regarding ambiguity in DVA’s policy regarding who is authorised to notify the Department about veterans or widows needing assistance.

Members **NOTED** the first point of call should be The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on 1800 951 822 (Monday to Friday between 9am-5pm) for any concerns or complaints by anyone regardless of whether they are identified as the Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) or Nominated Representative. Where it is identified that the person contacting is not a Nominated Representative and does not have permission to act or enquire on the person’s behalf with DVA, DVA staff will provide information on how they can become a Nominated Representative.

Members **DISCUSSED** the need for clearer guidelines to facilitate appropriate reporting channels for those assisting clients in need.

Action Item	Description	Responsible
2024NACCF/A10	Feedback to be provided on what information can and cannot be disclosed when it comes to general queries about DVA policy and entitlements.	Client Benefits

Agenda Item 6 Department of Health and Aged Care Update

Members **NOTED** and **ACKNOWLEDGED** the introduction of Ms. Susan Trainor, Assistant Secretary, Funding Operations & Analysis Branch who will now represent the Department of Health and Ageing (DOHAC) and the National Aged and Community Care Forum (NACCF).

Members **NOTED** the New Aged Care Bill had been introduced to Parliament and was up for debate in the Senate. Members **NOTED** DOHAC have been responding to queries about fair and equitable changes to contributions, questions around living free arrangements, fees for higher services and hardship provisions, settings in place for those who can’t turn assets into income and increases in medical expenses.

Members **NOTED** those currently in aged care will remain on existing arrangements, with those entering aged care from 1 July 2025 to fall under the New Aged Care Act. Members **DISCUSSED** the need to ensure the government’s response to New Aged Care Bill is circulated to the National Consultative Framework (NCF) forums once cleared.

Agenda Item 7 Legislative Reform

Members **NOTED** the update provided on the Legislative Reform.

Members **DISCUSSED** the need to ensure the government’s response to The Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (VETS) Bill 2024 is circulated to the National Consultative Framework (NCF) forums once cleared.

Members **NOTED** ongoing consideration of the ‘Wholly Dependent Partner’ label, with the Government open to feedback and no decision made on preferred language or amendments to the VETS Bill.

Action Item	Description	Responsible
2024NACCF /A11	Circulate the Australian Government Response to the Senate Standing Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Inquiry Report into the VETS Bill 2024, once tabled.	Policy

Agenda Item 8 Daily Patient Contribution for long stay hospital patients

Members **NOTED** the concerns raised about perceived changes in the administration of the daily patient contribution fee by hospitals. Members **NOTED** the daily patient contribution fee has been in place since 1984 for private and public hospitals in all states and territories including the twice annual fee indexation.

Members **NOTED** the 35-day period application, the impact of admission under accident, illness or rehabilitation in relation to the daily patient contribution fee and the availability of the short-term convalescent care program.

Members **NOTED** DVA will assist veterans in securing a Convalescent Care Program is required and **DISCUSSED** that a convalescent bed is not confined to a dedicated convalescent facility and may be situated within a hospital setting that offers convalescent care services.

Agenda Item 9 Assistance with Veterans and War Widows accessing Aged Care

Members **NOTED** the submission regarding assistance with veterans and war widows accessing aged care. Most of the Aged Veteran Community are not located near a Hub, yet their needs remain significant and diverse. Well-being advocates need significant legal support from departments including DVA, but they are not receiving it.

Members **NOTED** the Taskforce has developed products to specifically improve communication and support for veterans accessing aged care, including information about Elder Abuse. These resources, created in consultation with ESO wellbeing advocates, will be available on the DVA website followed by a hard copy distribution mail out in early 2025.

Action Item	Description	Responsible
2024NACCF/A12	Explore communication avenues such as publishing an article in 'VET Affairs' to raise awareness on elder abuse and related supported initiative.	Aged & Community Care Taskforce and Communications

Agenda Item 10 DVA Aged Care Web pages content/design

Members **NOTED** the update planned for the DVA Aged Care webpage content and design. Members were given an opportunity to provide input on what they would like to see on the webpage to ensure that the information provided is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the veteran community.

Agenda Item 11 Other Business

Members **NOTED** the National Aged and Community Care Forum (NACCF) Secretariat is in the process of finalising meeting dates for the year 2025.

Members **DISCUSSED** concerns regarding what health care cost supports are available for veteran partners who perform a carers role.

Members **DISCUSSED** DVA's ability to provide bins, and regular collection, for the disposal of incontinence products such as pads and underwear for veterans.

Members **NOTED** home care package waits are exceedingly long and, when combined with an increase in the number of patients discharging without an aftercare program, are adversely affecting veteran's health and well-being.

Action Item	Description	Responsible
2024NACCF/A13	Research into what health care cost support can be provided for partners of veterans who are suffering ill health and perform the role of carer for their veteran spouse.	Client Benefits
2024NACCF/A14	Investigate the potential for DVA to implement measures related to incontinence care, including the provision of specialised bins for the disposal of incontinence products, as well as the supply of reusable incontinence underwear.	Aged & Community Care Taskforce

Members/Attendees	
Mr. Andrew Kefford PSM	Chair, Deputy Secretary Policy & Programs, Department of Veteran's Affairs
Ms. Leanne Cameron	Deputy Chair, First Assistant Secretary, Aged & Community Care Taskforce
Dr Anna Colwell	Deputy Chief Health Officer, Department of Veteran's Affairs (proxy)
Mr. Kahlil Fegan DSC AM	Repatriation Commissioner
CMDR RAN RTD Ward Gainey MIEAUST JP	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Mr. Malcolm McCulloch	Legacy Australia
Mr. Mike Pope	Department of Health and Aged Care
Mr. Terrence Joe JP	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Mrs. Jenny Gregory OAM	Australian War Widows Inc.
Ms. Pat McCabe OAM	TPI Federation
Ms. Wendy Bateman	Returned and Services League of Australia
Presenters	
Mr. Adam Weiderman	Assistant Secretary, Benefits Policy Branch <i>(Item 4)</i>
Ms. Bernice Kain	Assistant Director, Residential Aged Care Section <i>(Item 10)</i>
Ms. Charlotte Inglis	Director, Residential Aged Care Section <i>(Item 10)</i>
Ms. Paula Goodwin	First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial Engagement & Communications <i>(Item 3)</i>
Ms. Sally Bradford	Assistant Secretary, Health Programs and Services Branch <i>(Item 8)</i>
Ms. Sarah Kennedy	Assistant Secretary, Aged & Community Care Taskforce <i>(Item 9)</i>
Mr. Simon Hill	Assistant Secretary, Legislative Reform Branch <i>(Item 7)</i>
Ms. Susan Trainor	Assistant Secretary, Funding Operations & Analysis Branch, Department of Health and Aged Care <i>(Item 6)</i>
Ms. Tara Cavanagh	First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits <i>(Item 5)</i>
Observers	
Mr. Danny Ryding	Assistant Director, Aged Care Payments and Stakeholder Relations, Department of Health and Aged Care <i>(Item 6)</i>
Ms. Gwen Cherne	Veteran Family Advocate
Mr. Peter Thompson	Director, Subsidy and Supplements Section, Department of Health and Aged Care <i>(Item 6)</i>
Secretariat	
Mrs. Morgan S	Assistant Director, International and Stakeholder Relations
Ms. Julie H	Senior Secretariat Officer, International and Stakeholder Relations
Apologies	
Professor Jenny Firman AM	Chief Health Officer, Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ms. Raelene Hill	Partners of Veterans' Association of Australia Inc