

DEFENCE DVA EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF MEETING - 30 MAY 2014

The second Defence DVA Executive Committee met on 30 May 2014 in the DVA offices, Lovett Tower.

The meeting was attended by:

Mr Simon Lewis	Secretary Department of Veterans' Affairs
General David Hurley	CDF
Mr Dennis Richardson	Secretary, Department of Defence
Mr Shane Carmody	Deputy President, Repatriation Commission
Ms Rebecca Skinner	Deputy Secretary, Defence People Group

Also in attendance were:

From DVA:

Major General Chalmers (Ret'd), First Assistant Secretary Client and Commemorations;
Ms Joy Russo, Executive Director, Client Strategy and Defence Relations Branch;

From Defence:

Air Vice Marshal Tony Needham, Head People Capability;
Rear Admirable Robyn Walker, Commander, Joint Health Command;
Air Commodore Steve Martin, Joint Program Manager, Support for Wounded, Injured or Ill Program;
Colonel Fleur Froggatt, Headquarters Special Operations Command.

Agenda Item 1 – Opening Remarks and Introductions

- Mr Lewis welcomed members and attendees, and in particular, Ms Skinner and AVM Needham to their first meeting.

Agenda Item 2 – Actions Arising

- It was noted that all actions arising from 7 May 2013 meeting were completed.

Agenda Item 3 – Data and Information Sharing

- Defence and DVA agreed that better access to information on ADF members will assist both agencies to provide the necessary continuum of support and services for ADF members and former members. It will also provide DVA the capacity to process claims more efficiently, for example, by promptly ascertaining proof of identity, qualifying service and salary and allowances information.
- It was noted that the current arrangements have limitations and that technically access to PMKeyS (and later DefenceOne and the Defence eHealth National Information System (DeHNIS)) is unlikely to be a barrier.
- Members agreed that real time access to data and the ability to automate end-to-end transactions will significantly enhance service delivery and gave in-principle agreement for both agencies to work through the necessary processes. It was also agreed that the two agencies will work through the privacy issues.

- A two pronged approach was agreed to facilitate better information flow. Firstly, if there are legal issues concerning privacy, impeding information flow between Defence and DVA, the legislation may need to be changed. Secondly, Defence could redesign the way in which information is transferred to, or accessed by, DVA and/or introduce an opt-out process for consent. DVA, in conjunction with Defence, to consider the concept of inactive client accounts

Action Items:

- 2/1 Defence and DVA to explore options to facilitate real time access to data and information held in the Defence systems and the ability to automate end-to-end transactions.
- 2/2 Defence and DVA to work through any legislative and policy changes necessary to facilitate more effective information flow between Defence and DVA.
- 2/3 Defence to redesign the way in which information is transferred to, or accessed by, DVA and/or introduce an opt-out process for consent.
- 2/4 DVA, in conjunction with Defence, to consider the concept of inactive client accounts.

Agenda Item 4 – Communication with separating and former members

- DVA is aware of only one in six separating members. This current situation is not in the interests of separating members as there are currently only limited ways for DVA to inform separating members about the services and support it provides, such as mental health, GP health assessments and compensation available.
- It was agreed that Defence will send a letter (or similar communication) on behalf of the Secretary, DVA, to all separating members providing information on the services and support available from DVA.
- In the longer term, if legislation is a blockage to DVA providing information to separating members then this is to be addressed.

Action Item:

- 2/5 Defence will send a letter to all separating members on behalf of the Secretary, DVA.
- 2/6 DVA to draft and provide information to Defence.

Agenda Item 5 – Return to Work

- Col Fleur Froggatt provided an update on a return to work case involving both Defence and DVA. A schematic was presented that covered a number of lines of effort – health care; accommodation and relocation; employment; support to wounded, injured or ill and transition support; command responsibilities; and post separation support. It was noted that return to work is a continuum of support provided by both agencies. Noting the collective obligation for veterans who are wounded, injured or ill, the Chair and Mr Richardson discussed taking to the Secretaries Meeting the concept of introducing places for these veterans in all Commonwealth agencies.

Action Item:

2/7 The Chair and Mr Richardson to consider taking the concept of introducing work placements in Commonwealth agencies for veterans who are wounded, injured or ill, to the Secretaries Meeting.

Agenda Item 6 – Veterans’ Employment Initiative

- Mr Carmody informed members about the Veterans’ Employment Initiative being piloted in Queensland. DVA is working with Defence on the initiative, a six month pilot providing former ADF members with assistance in finding and maintaining suitable work, and support for both the member and the employer. The focus of the initiative is on addressing individual needs, recovery and rehabilitation. The pilot involves the development of a vocational rehabilitation plan in consultation with the employee and the employer. It is anticipated that if the pilot is successful the initiative will be rolled out nationally.
- It was noted that the lines are clear between this initiative and Defence’s Career Transition Assistance Scheme.

Agenda Item 7 – Summary of Joint Health Command Rehabilitation and Recovery Conference

- RADM Walker reported on a conference recently convened by Defence to discuss the services and support provided, the outcomes of which include:
 - the development of a communications framework about engagement;
 - a health and rehabilitation capability map;
 - the SWIIP Common Access Portal; and
 - consideration of the same discharge screening tools as DVA’s post separation screening tools;
- A follow up to the conference is planned for every six months.
- RADM Walker agreed that future conferences should have an increased focus on DVA services and support.

Action Item:

2/8 Future Joint Health Command Rehabilitation and Recovery Conferences are to have an increased focus on DVA services and support.

Agenda Item 8 – Other Business

- The Chair thanked Gen Hurley for his service and wished him well in his retirement.
- The Chair thanked RADM Walker and AVM Needham for their support on other Defence/DVA Committees and again welcomed Ms Skinner to DDEC
- The meeting concluded at 1650hrs.