

DEFENCE DVA EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF MEETING - 7 MAY 13

The Defence DVA Executive Committee met for the first time on 7 May 13 in Russell Offices.

The meeting was attended by:

General David Hurley	CDF
Mr Dennis Richardson	Secretary Department of Defence
Mr Simon Lewis	Secretary designate Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ms Carmel McGregor	Deputy Secretary Defence People
Mr Shane Carmody	Repatriation Commission

Mr Ian Campbell sent his apologies.

Also in attendance were Major General Fogarty, Head People Capability and Major General Chalmers (Ret'd), First Assistant Secretary Client and Commemorations.

Agenda Item 1 - Key Deliberations of Defence Links Steering Committee since Aug 2012.

- **Memorandum of Understanding.**
 - The members noted the signing of the new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Cooperative Delivery of Care and Support to Eligible Persons on 5 Feb 13. There was general agreement that the MoU provided structure to the relationship and would help ensure the continued close engagement between the two Departments.
 - The members also noted that the MoU set out the arrangements that govern the ongoing engagement between the two Departments including the Terms of Reference for the DDEC.
 - Noting that the DDEC only meets once annually, the members directed that a summary of all Defence Links Steering Committee meetings be provided to allow for ongoing situational awareness by the DDEC membership.
- **Proposed Amendment to MoU**
 - Members noted that there had been positive feedback from the Ex-Service community following the release of the MoU; however, questions had been raised over the definition of a veteran included in the MoU.
 - Noting that the term veteran was only used once in the document, members agreed to a minor amendment to the MoU that removes the term and thus the need for a definition. A similar amendment to the Summary of Principles was also agreed.

- Members also agreed to the inclusion of a definition for “eligible member”.
- **Support Continuum Performance Summary**
 - An overview of the Performance Metrics developed to allow the Defence Links Steering Committee to manage the performance of the Support Continuum was provided. A copy of the Performance Summary provided at the meeting is at Attachment 1.

Agenda Item 2 – Post Afghanistan Issues

- **Improved External Communications of the Measures to Support Seriously Wounded, Injured or Ill Members**
 - Members noted the difficulty in accurately and succinctly describing the wide variety of activity underway across both Departments.
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 - CDF advised that he had tasked VCDF Group to develop a more effective communications strategy.
 - CJHLTH has the lead on this work and will raise it for discussion at the next Defence Links Steering Committee meeting.
- **Employment Opportunities for Seriously Wounded, Injured or Ill Members**
 - Mr Richardson advised the meeting of actions underway within Defence to engage a small number of seriously injured ADF members as APS. Employment and location would be tailored to the members’ requirements and capabilities.
 - Such engagement sits comfortably under Defence’s disability strategy; however, Defence will move slowly on rolling out this initiative further as it is important that Defence gets this right. Future consideration will include members with PTSD.
 - Members agreed that this was a positive initiative that could be considered more broadly by the Secretaries Board.
 - Members also noted that employment was not the only issue facing members with disabilities and it was important to develop robust policies, and supporting arrangements, to cover all challenges.

Agenda Item 3 – Privacy Considerations

- MAJGEN Fogarty advised members that Defence had now received advice from the Office of the Australian Government Solicitor which, once implemented, would allow Defence to proactively advise DVA when a member is involved in a serious incident or becomes seriously ill while remaining compliant with the Privacy Act.

- Defence will now implement this recommendation. In doing so, Defence will also look at expanding the provision of advice to include early notification of members who are to separate on medical grounds.

Agenda Item 4 – Rehabilitation of Reservists

- The members noted that, subject to the passage of the required legislation, CDF will become the rehabilitation authority for reservists from 1 July 2013.
- Noting DVA is better placed to rehabilitate members to their civilian employment and has broader national coverage, Defence proposed that the point of transition of responsibility for the rehabilitation of reservists (not on CFTS) should be the point at which DVA accepts liability. Defence reasoning was that DVA was better placed to rehabilitate a Reservist to their civilian employment and had better national coverage.
- The meeting referred the proposal to the Defence Links Steering Committee for further consideration.