



## Minutes

MEMBERS		ATTENDING VIA
Mr Mark Garrity (Deputy Chair)	Acting First Assistant Secretary, Client Engagement and Support Services Division	GovTeams
Ms Amanda Miller	Acting Director, Aged Care Fees, Department of Health	GovTeams
Mr Michael Benyk	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia	GovTeams
Mr Shawn Bergquist	Legacy Australia Incorporated	GovTeams
Ms Alison Bowman	Partners of Veterans Association	GovTeams
Ms Wendy Bateman	Returned and Services League of Australia	GovTeams
Ms Pat McCabe OAM	TPI Federation Australia	GovTeams
Mr Ward Gainey JP	Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia	GovTeams
Dr Kathryn Spurling (Proxy)	Australian War Widows Inc. (AWWI)	GovTeams
PRESENTERS		
Ms Leanne Cameron	First Assistant Secretary Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Division (Item 9)	GovTeams
Ms Helen Braun	Acting National Manager Open Arms - Veterans and Families Counselling (Item 9)	GovTeams
Mr Simon Hill	Assistant Secretary, Policy Development Branch (Item 6)	GovTeams
Mr Dylan Kurtz	Assistant Secretary Wellbeing Policy Branch (Items 7 and 8)	GovTeams
OBSERVERS		
Mr Damien Beard	Director Care and Assistance Programs, Client Programs Branch (Item 5)	GovTeams
SECRETARIAT		
Ms Tiki Stephens	Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events Section	GovTeams
Mr Lachie Dunk	Secretariat Support Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events Section	GovTeams
APOLOGIES		
Ms Jenny Gregory	Australian War Widows Inc. (AWWI)	
Ms Vicki Rundle PSM (Chair)	Deputy Secretary, Veterans and Families Services	



### Agenda Item 1 Welcome

The Deputy Chair, Mr Mark Garrity, welcomed members to the meeting and noted the late apology from the Chair, Ms Vicki Rundle.

The Deputy Chair also acknowledged the apology from Ms Jenny Gregory of the **Australian War Widows Inc** and welcome Dr Kathryn Spurling as her proxy.

The Deputy Chair also noted that Ms Amanda Miller will replace Mr James Benson as the representative from the **Department of Health**.

Mr Garrity also noted a change to the circulated agenda - that the Open Arms update would be pushed back to agenda item 9.

### Agenda item 2 Minutes and Action Items

The Minutes of the previous meeting held 10 June 2021 were NOTED with no comments.

Members agreed to close all Actions Items as listed in the paper. Members also agreed to close Action Item N2021/008, agreeing that this had been addressed in the material provided for Agenda Item 4, Update from the Department of Health.

### Agenda Item 3 Strategic Update

The Deputy Chair provided members a summary of the current DVA priorities, Budget measures and the subsequent priority areas for the Department in the next 12 months. Noting the continued focus on reducing the Claims backlog and streamlining departmental processes.

Mr Garrity noted that DVA continues to provide business as usual services despite the impact of COVID.

Members noted and discussed the increased services available to DVA clients in Services Australia shopfronts and the increased outreach by VAN offices in helping to manage the claims backlog.

Item	Action	Assigned to
N2021/009	Secretariat to distribute Claims Data provided at November ESORT meeting to NACCF members.	Secretariat
N2021/010	Secretariat to provide link to DVA Annual Report when available	Secretariat

### Agenda Item 4 Department of Health Update

The Deputy Chair introduced Ms Amanda Miller, A/g Director Aged Care Fees, Department of Health to provide an update.

Ms Miller responded to the Member Submission from **War Widows Inc**, providing an update on the status of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). Members noted the implementation of the



Support at Home Program, which will replace the CHSP. Ms Miller confirmed that that the CHSP grant agreements had been extended to 30 June 2023.

Ms Miller acknowledged the significant change in the Sector, and advised members of the consultation with stakeholders that the Department of Health is undertaking. Members noted that regular updates are available via factsheets on the Department of Health website.

### Agenda Item 5 Release of the final report of the Hearing Services Program review

The Deputy Chair addressed this item and welcomed Mr Damien Beard as an observer. Members noted the distribution of the final Report and expressed dismay at the outcome. Members expressed disappointment at the perceived lack of consideration of veteran specific issues.

Mr Beard and Ms McCabe, **TPI Federation**, agreed to discuss the matter further offline.

### Agenda Item 6 Carer's Allowance – Confirmation of Automatic eligibility for TPI Veterans and Families & proposal for a Partners and Veteran's Carer's Allowance Bonus

The Deputy Chair invited Ms Pat McCabe, **TPI Federation**, to summarise her Member Submissions, noting that Mr Simon Hill, Assistant Secretary Policy Development Branch was on hand to address the matters raised.

Members noted that eligibility for a Carer Allowance, including the application of the Carer Allowance Income Test is administered by Services Australia.

Ms McCabe requested consideration be given to the introduction of a "Veteran's Carer's Allowance Bonus", as a measure to assist carers to afford their own health care in recognition that carers are unable to work due to their responsibilities. Members discussed the proposal and broad support was expressed, with the proviso that the proposal be extended to partners of other cohorts.

Mr Hill noted the suggestion and advised that any changes would require consideration by government.

Members asked to continue the discussion around Carers more broadly and Mr Hill agreed to return to the forum for further discussion.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
N2021/012	Secretariat to invite Mr Hill to attend future meeting for further discussion on Carers.	Secretariat



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### Agenda Item 7 DVA Fees for Occupational Therapy Services

The Deputy Chair invited Dr Kathryn Spurling, **War Widows Inc**, to summarise the Member Submission and introduced Mr Dylan Kurtz, A/g Assistant Secretary Wellbeing Policy Branch was on hand to address the matter raised.

Dr Spurling noted the shortage of specialists in the ACT including practitioners willing to accept DVA arrangements, resulting in veterans having to travel to obtain specialist services.

Mr Kurtz acknowledged this, particularly with reference to psychiatric and psychology services, noting the increase in DVA fees to that sector in the latest Budget.

Members discussed this and agreed that anecdotal evidence suggests difficulty in accessing specialists is widespread.

### Agenda Item 8 Proposed changes to Prostheses Costs

The Deputy Chair invited Ms Pat McCabe, **TPI Federation**, to summarise her Member Submission, noting that Mr Dylan Kurtz, A/g Assistant Secretary Wellbeing Policy Branch was on hand to address the matter.

Ms McCabe queried how the veteran community would be affected by changes to eh prostheses list being undertaken by Health.

Mr Kurtz acknowledged the concerns, and advised that DVA clients would unlikely be affected as the changes are aimed at making sure Private Health insurers don't overpay for prostheses.

### Agenda Item 9 Open Arms Update

The Deputy Chair introduced Ms Leanne Cameron, First Assistant Secretary Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Division and Ms Helen Braun, A/g National Manager Open Arms to provide members a verbal update.

Ms Cameron advised members of the establishment of a new Division with DVA; Mental Health and Wellbeing Services, incorporating Open Arms.

Members noted that the new Division brings together Open Arms and Coordinated Client Support together to facilitate faster response times and better outcomes for clients. Ms Cameron strove to confirm that Open Arms will remain separate from DVA and provide complementary services.

Members also noted that Dr Hodson is on secondment to the Department of Health for 6 months.

Members requested the link to an updated Organisational Chart and a summary of Open Arms Services.

Members noted the launch of DVA TV – DVA's YouTube channel. Mr Benyk, **Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia**, queried how this would serve older veterans and if it was money well spent. Ms Cameron advised that the channel is cost effective as material is sourced in house, further noting that this is just one of many information channels to address all audiences.



# National Aged and Community Care Forum

12 October 2021

10am – 1pm (AEDT)

GovTeams

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<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
N2021/011	Secretariat to distribute link to Organisational Chart and Open Arms Summary of Services	Secretariat

## Agenda Item 12 Other Business

Nothing further was raised.

The meeting closed at 1pm. The next meeting is yet to be scheduled.