



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

REVIEW OF DVA-FUNDED ESO ADVOCACY AND WELFARE SERVICES

Terms of Reference

Content and approach

The Review of DVA-funded ESO Advocacy and Welfare Services (the Review) will be conducted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and will include:

1. reviewing the following programs:
 - a. Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grants Program,
 - b. Training and Information Program, and
 - c. Veteran and Community Grants Program;
2. conducting the Review in consultation with the ex-service community and other relevant stakeholders;
3. examining current ESO service models in considering future funding models for their delivery of advocacy and welfare services to the veteran community in relation to VEA, SRCA and MRCA entitlements; and
4. identifying interdependencies and interactions of the three programs.

Objective

The objective of the Review is to recommend a program that ensures:

- funding levels enable efficient and effective service delivery;
- the range of items eligible for funding are distinct;
- appropriate services are provided for younger veterans;
- the distribution of available funds is transparent and fair;
- there is no duplication of ESO advocacy and welfare services funded by the Government in individual locations; and
- harmonious working relationships are established and maintained.

Key issues

The following points will also be addressed:

- consideration of the recent recommendations made by Professor Dunt as well as the Government's Election Commitment to establish a public register of ex-service officials and conduct regular surveys of them;
- the impact of rolling *Grants-in-Aid* into BEST in 2009/10;
- the sustainability and scalability of future programs;
- opportunities for ESOs to share resources and work in partnership;
- ensuring the concept of "volunteerism" remains a key theme;
- options and implications for change to funding cycles and length of grant funding periods; and
- the effectiveness and efficiency of DVA administrative arrangements, including grant monitoring and acquittal processes.

Key program redesign elements

The Review will consider previous BEST and GIA grant application processes and outcomes, and incorporate the following items for each recommended ongoing program:

- guidelines, operations and administration, including processes, quality assurance, performance measurement and accountability;
- technology and systems,
- eligibility and assessment criteria;
- client demographics;
- location of ESO, DVA and community support groups;
- items that are currently funded;
- the extent to which all programs are meeting the needs of the key stakeholder groups;
- other DVA programs and sources of support; and
- areas of concern from each of the key stakeholder groups.

In considering any new arrangements, the eligibility criteria and items to be funded under the V&CG Program will be taken into account.

Deliverables

The review team will provide a report with recommendations to the Secretary and the Minister.

This will include recommendations for:

- renewed programs that provide appropriate financial support and training;
- sites that would serve as a centre-of-expertise for surrounding more “localised” services, including the nature and extent of technological and administrative needs to support ESO activities;
- streamlined but more rigorous grants application, assessment, contractual and monitoring/acquittal processes; and
- optimal grant allocation timings – that is, frequency of grant Rounds in any given financial year and length of grant coverage (eg one, three, five years).

Timeframe

The Review will commence by end August and will be concluded by mid-December 2009.

Governance

The Review Team will be guided by the National Manager Research, Development and Support on a day-to-day basis. Senior direction will be provided by the Repatriation Commissioner and the General Manager Support Division.

Interdependencies

The Review Team’s analysis will inform the separate consideration being given to the conditions under which the funds remaining from Round 11 will be made available to ESOs within the 2009/10 financial year. The Review Team’s input will be important to the Department making recommendations to the Minister that are not inconsistent with either:

- the decision-making framework applied to Round 11 to date or
- the objectives of the Review.