



Minutes

Agenda Item 1 Welcome and apologies

Apologies and attendees list is at Annexure A.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for making the trip to Canberra. She acknowledged that OWP has not met in person since November 2019. The Chair noted apologies from Mr Max Ball, *Vietnam Veterans of Australia*, Ms Rona Lunney, *Partners of Veterans Association*, Mr Ray Kemp OAM, *Naval Association of Australia*, Ms Rhondda Vanzella OAM, *Australian War Widows Inc*, Mr Rod Hutchings, *Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association*.

Agenda Item 2 Minutes & actions of previous meeting

Members **ENDORSED** the minutes from 3 March 2022.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2022A/OWP2, 2022A/OWP3, 2022A/OWP4, 2022A/OWP5, 2022A/OWP8 and 2022A/OWP9 and **NOTED** that the action items 02021/010, 02021/028, 02021/029, 2022A/OWP1, 2022A/OWP6, 2022A/OWP7 and 2022A/OWP10 continue to progress.

The members clarified that 2022A/OWP7 is the internal Triage & Connect form that can be used to gather information to ensure all criteria are met when constructing supporting emails of high priority cases.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022A/OWP11	Secretariat to circulate DVA's Framework for Considering Requests to Fund Medicinal Cannabis.	Secretariat
2022A/OWP12	Updated information regarding latest procedures for Optional Assessment Model for Application for Increase under the VEA to be uploaded to the DVA website and Secretariat to provide members a link to this information when available.	Michael Harper

Agenda Item 3 ADF Firefighter Support Scheme Package

Mr Graeme Bland (*Air Force Association*) provided a member submission seeking to highlight delays in processing claims under the ADF Firefighter Support Scheme package, at the 3 March 2022 meeting. Mr Bland advised most of the issues highlighted in his member submission had been resolved.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022A/OWP13	Mr Michael Harper to contact Mr Graeme Bland directly to take details of outstanding ADF firefighter support scheme package cases and investigate.	Michael Harper
2022A/OWP14	Deputy Chair to provide advice on why it is easier to prove chemical exposure at some locations over others, under the ADF Firefighter Support Scheme Package.	Ms Natasha Cole

The Secretary attended to welcome members and explain DVA's priorities for the rest of the year: supporting an incoming Minister following the Election, supporting the Royal Commission and reducing the claims backlog.

Agenda Item 4 Authority to Act Forms – Workshop Outcomes

At the previous OWP meeting on 3 March 2022, DVA responded to a Members Submission from the ASAS Association regarding simplification of the process to nominate an authority to act. Members agreed to submit feedback on the new design of the form D9325 *Appointing a third party* to represent a DVA client.

Members **DISCUSSED** the new design of the form, providing feedback directly to Mr Alan Jones, Director, Compensation, Process and Payments.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022A/OWP15	Mr Alan Jones to circulate redesigned amended D9325 form to OWP members post approval from DVA legal.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 5 Capturing impairment Assessment Information for Claims – Workshop Outcomes

This item was deferred from the meeting of 3 March 2022 and responds to a Member Submission from the Air Force Association calling for simplification and clarification of the Impairment Assessment Pro-formas (IAPs). The Department can confirm that the forms that Mr Bland considers to be more user friendly (3(a) & 3(b)) are the forms that are currently contained in ISH and Directors and delegates have been directed to use these forms.

Members **NOTED** that the more user friendly (3(a) & 3(b)) are the forms that are currently contained in ISH and used by delegates.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022A/OWP16	DVA to revise the 3(a) and 3 (b) Impairment and Assessment Pro-formas, workshop with medical practitioners and then circulate to OWP members for feedback.	Client Benefits Division
2022A/OWP17	DVA to investigate amending Metabolic Equivalent of Tasks (METs) ratings in SOPs into military wording and descriptions.	Client Benefits Division

Agenda Item 6 Publishing Claims information on the DVA website – Workshop Outcomes

Members **DISCUSSED** the format for publishing claims information on the DVA website, providing feedback about the language used, how the numbers are displayed and how often the webpage will be updated.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022A/OWP18	Secretariat to circulate updated version of the draft options for claims information on the DVA website for OWP members to share with their organisations, requesting further comment.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 7 Medical Practitioner and Veteran reimbursement contributing to decline in accepting DVA arrangements for treatment of veterans

Mr Graeme Bland (**Air Force Association**) provided a submission requesting the Department investigate the decline in General Practitioners providing services for veterans due to increase in paperwork.

Members **NOTED** that there were several components to the submission: there are payment delays to medical practitioners due to the invoices backlog, and there are issues around fees and the gap between what Medicare pay and what DVA pay. Professor Jenny Firman, Chief Health Officer, explained that DVA is developing resources for medical practitioners (such as quick tip documents and guides to filling in claim forms) and expanding their support network in awareness of the current issues. Professor Firman also explained that fees are an ongoing issue, and DVA is still behind the NDIA but yearly budget increases are allowing fee parity with other providers.

Ms Karen Williams, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, spoke to the invoices backlog. She explained that DVA has had a significant increase in relation to household services, rehabilitation, medical and attendant care. Delays in payment are impacting clients and service providers. DVA has engaged resources from other business areas and increased recruitment to get through the backlog, with the aim to pay within 30 days as per normal. In the long term, the Chief Financial Officer Division are exploring automation and other mechanisms to avoid a similar backlog happening in the future.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2022A/OWP19	Chief Health Officer to continue to investigate medical fee discrepancies, and psychiatrists and psychologists not taking on Veteran clients. Outcomes will be provided back to OWP.	CHO
2022A/OWP20	OWP members to be provided with point of contact to raise individual cases of concern.	Secretariat
2022A/OWP21	Secretariat to circulate list of key DVA personnel.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 8 Terms of Reference Facilitation – Outcomes from previous meeting

At the meeting held 3 March 2022, members participated in a facilitator led session and discussed revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Operational Working Party.

Members **AGREED** to the changes in principle, noting a small number of edits will be made and re-circulated with the Minutes.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2022A/OWP22	Secretariat to circulate further amended Terms of Reference and seek endorsement from members.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 9 Other Business

Members **NOTED** an update on the Multi-Act Working Group.

No other business was discussed.

Meeting closed at 3:45pm

MEMBERS/ATTENDEES	
Ms Vicki Rundle PSM (Chair)	Deputy Secretary, Veterans and Families Services Group
Ms Natasha Cole (Deputy Chair)	First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits Division
Mr Graeme Bland	Air Force Association Ltd
Mr Michael Carlon	Australian Special Air Service Association
Mr John McNeill	Australian Veterans Alliance
Mr Robert Connor	Legacy Australia Inc
Ms Pat McCabe OAM	TPI Federation Australia
Mr Bill Roberts OAM	Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia
Mr John King	Returned and Services League of Australia
Presenters	
Prof Jenny Firman	Chief Health Officer
Mr Michael Harper	Deputy Commissioner Victoria,
Ms Karen Williams	Assistant Secretary, Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Mr Christopher Jones	Assistant Director, Health Entitlements, Client Access and Rehabilitation Branch
Mr Brian Eastman	Director, New Initiatives, Policy Development Branch
Mr Alan Jones	Director, Compensation, Processing and Payments
Apologies	
Ms Kylie Robinson	Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Morgan South	Senior Secretariat Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Tahl Kean	Graduate, Governance and Ministerial Events
Mr Max Ball	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Ms Rona Lunney	Partners of Veterans Association
Mr Ray Kemp OAM	Naval Association of Australia
Ms Rhondda Vanzella OAM	Australian War Widows Inc
Mr Rod Hutchings	Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association