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DVA is enhancing the PIA-V to support key initiatives such as budget estimates, policy proposal evaluation and long-term cost projections, and is continuing to integrate evidence from the platform into its strategic objectives and service delivery.

### **Single View of Person**

As referenced above in relation to *Area of Action 3* and *Area of Action 5*, DVA is continuing to expand its Single View of Person (SVoP) platform, removing the need for staff to search across multiple systems to find the information they require to help clients, and supporting more personalised, proactive and data-driven services.

### **Data-sharing**

DVA is undertaking a number of initiatives in relation to data-sharing with other agencies. DVA is part of a ‘veterans’ health’ working group as part of the national data-sharing agreement. A key element of this working group is to explore opportunities to improve and increase data-sharing across the Commonwealth.

DVA has also been granted access to the ABS Multi Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP – see *Area of Action 6* above), which will expand the range of data available to measure veteran and family wellbeing.

### **Other data initiatives**

DVA has also a number of other data initiatives in train, including:

- Work on a Single Source of Truth (SSOT) for reporting and analytics. This includes building the new Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), to modernise DVA’s capability to store, curate and deliver data to support business areas. When completed, this will provide DVA with a consistent and quality source of data to support department-wide analysis and reporting activities and capabilities;
- Met with AIHW to undertake various research reports, including a report relating to wellbeing measurement using the ABS MADIP data set (see *Area of Action 6* above);
- Use of dashboards developed to provide information about services delivered to clients under the Coordinated Veterans’ Care Program, based on Medicare data on service provider claims for payment. As the focus of the Program is to assist clients with chronic disease management, the data will inform improvements to policy and program delivery.

### ***Area of Action 10: Investing in claims teams***

Professor Collie acknowledged that claims management in DVA is a complex task, and that claims staff can have a substantial impact on the experiences and health of clients (both positive and negative). As such, investment in the training and supports for DVA claims staff should be a critical component of any future claims model reform. There is also the opportunity to provide further skills training within the current claims model.

Professor Collie made a number of specific suggestions for further investment, including:

- training front-line staff in techniques such as motivational interviewing to enable staff to provide greater support to clients with complex conditions;
- using resources such as the SuperFriend Best Practice Framework for Managing Psychological Claims, which provides information regarding recruitment, structuring teams, training and rewarding staff and managers;
- utilising the Personal Injury Education Foundation that is a registered training provider and also provides a forum for engagement with other organisations that have similar claims management functions; and
- using the set of core capabilities for front-line staff and initiatives to embed these capabilities developed as part of VCR.

### DVA Actions

DVA continues to invest in its claims management staff via a number of training programs and other initiatives.

### **Training**

DVA delivers regular, dedicated training for its delegates and other service delivery staff via the Quarterly Update – Education, Support and Training (QUEST). QUEST informs service delivery staff of upcoming changes in policy and transformation, reinforces key corporate messages, and provides further education on tools and techniques, for example the March 2022 QUEST included a training session on trauma-informed care.

Since 2021, all DVA staff, including claims staff have access to monthly training on Administrative Law and Good Decision-making. In 2022, DVA commenced delivery of an ‘Empowering Excellence’ training program for claims staff, focussed on improving team performance. Other DVA business areas are managing additional specific ongoing training requirements for their staff.

DVA continues to evolve its staff training. Providers for further training in relation to Trauma Informed Care Training for claims staff have been identified. In particular, an Australian Public Service Commission course titled ‘Compassionate’ will be delivered at a foundation level and mandatory for all claims staff.

Further training for Team Leaders and Senior Delegates will be provided in Mental Health First Aid certification. A third of claims team leaders and senior delegates have completed Mental Health First Aid as at July 2022. The remaining staff will undertake the training throughout the 2022-23 Financial Year.

### **Other initiatives**

In the Federal Budget 2021-22, DVA was allocated \$98.5 million to substantially increase the number of DVA claims processing staff. Recruitment processes commenced in May 2021 with the initial recruitment of approximately 100 contractors to assist in clearing DVA’s claims backlog.

In September 2021, DVA established a bi-monthly National Compensation Senior Delegate Forum to provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss changes to policies, procedures, and operational business practices, and to deliver training or awareness sessions to Senior Delegates for initiatives relevant to their work.

A quarterly Client Benefit Division National Team Leader Forum was established in 2022 to share subject matter expertise, create networks of support, and identify opportunities for development management, leadership and coaching skills.

From October 2021, social workers have been engaged to offer support to delegates in claims processing across DVA.

### **Healthcare Management Advisers Review**

The 2018 Healthcare Management Advisers (HMA) review of DVA client service training programs investigated how DVA might better support staff, particularly those working with veterans.

The HMA review set out 19 recommendations, all of which have since been implemented. DVA actions on the recommendations include:

- the creation of service delivery job profiles which include the capabilities described in the Service Delivery Capability Framework;
- the inclusion of the service delivery job titles and job profiles into the DVA Job Family Framework;
- the inclusion of job title codes into DVA training profiles for staff to assist the development of learning plans relevant to job roles; and
- the delivery of a course on medical terminology for client-facing staff.

### **Federal Budget 2022-23 Update**

- In the Federal Budget 2022-23 released on 25 October 2022, the Australian Government provided \$233.9 million over four years, including ongoing funding, for 500 additional Australian Public Service Staff to help eliminate DVA's compensation claims backlog and reduce wait times for veterans and families, improving health outcomes and wellbeing in the veteran community.

### ***Area of Action 11: Legislative reform***

Professor Collie noted that the overlapping eligibility and requirements of DVA's legislation adds multiple layers of complexity to the veteran rehabilitation and compensation system, which can ultimately impact the health and recovery of clients. He noted "that neither the process via which legislative reform is achieved, nor the outcome of such reform, is within the DVA's control. However, there is a clear rationale for legislative reform. As noted in the Productivity Commission (PC) draft report and the DVA submission to the issues paper for the PC inquiry".

Professor Collie suggested that simplifying DVA's legislative framework has the potential to substantially improve the mental health outcomes of veterans, and that without significant reform the outcomes of DVA actions across his other identified areas would be constrained in the benefits that would be delivered to veterans.

#### DVA Actions

##### **Legislative Reform**

Since the release of the PC inquiry Report 'A Better Way to Support Veterans' in 2019, DVA has consulted extensively with the veteran community and other stakeholders about a range of recommendations, including those relating to legislative harmonisation and simplification.

In December 2020, the DVA Secretary sought feedback from Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) members on specific recommendations in the PC Report. This feedback continues to inform work currently underway.

DVA has also held a series of policy workshops with claims processing and other staff within the Department to discuss issues relating to legislative simplification and harmonisation. The first of the workshops was held on 14 December 2021, with subsequent workshops held on 17 February, 15 March 2022, 24 June and 5 July 2022.

Issues relating to DVA's compensation framework have also been discussed in detail throughout the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. In the Royal Commission's Interim Report released on 11 August 2022, the Royal Commission recommended that the Australian Government develop and implement legislation to simplify and harmonise the framework for veterans' compensation, rehabilitation and other entitlements.

On 26 September 2022 the Government agreed to this recommendation.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Matt Keogh MP, announced in Parliament on 28 November 2022 that work is currently underway on developing the pathway for simplification and harmonisation of veteran compensation and rehabilitation legislation, and that the pathway will be outlined in 2023.

### **Federal Budget 2022-23 Update**

In the Federal Budget 2022-23 released on 25 October 2022, the Australian Government provided \$9.5 million over two years to create a pathway for legislation improvement to address longstanding complexities in the veteran support system.

The funding will also assist in establishing a governance and assurance framework to manage the implementation of the recommendations from the Royal Commission's Interim Report accepted by the Government.

DVA is continuing to work with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs to develop the preferred pathway for legislative reform. Once the preferred pathway is developed, a Government decision will be required to commence consultation with stakeholders.