



Minutes

Agenda Item 1 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

The Chair opened the meeting acknowledging country, veterans, current serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) Personnel and welcomed observers.

Members **NOTED** apologies as listed at Annexure A and no conflicts of interest were raised.

The Chair **NOTED** the Air Force Association had not sent a representative to the last three YVF meetings. In line with the Terms of Reference, the Secretariat were asked to raise correspondence about continued representation.

The Ode was recited, and members acknowledged the service and sacrifice of all veterans and families.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2025YVF/AXX	Write to Air Force Association about continued representation on YVF.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 2 Action items

Members **NOTED** the minutes from the previous meeting on 23 July 2025 were endorsed out of session and published on the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) website.

Members **AGREED** to close Action Items 2024YVF/A10, A14, 2025YVF/A01, A08, A09, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14, A16, A17 and A18.

Members **AGREED** that Action Items 2024YVF/A05, 2025YVF/A04, A05, A15 and A19 remain open or in progress.

Agenda Item 3 Overview of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pilots and AI Use

Members **NOTED** the update on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in DVA to deliver greater service to veterans and their families.

Members **NOTED** the Department of Finance runs and secures the AI tools utilised by DVA and safeguards veteran information.

Members **EXPRESSED** support for the initiative and **RECOGNISED** the positive outcomes already achieved.

Agenda Item 4 DVA Provider Integrity Concerns and Activities

Members **NOTED** the update on the concerning behaviours of some providers and advocates identified by DVA

Members **NOTED** the avenue to report suspected fraud or non-compliance.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the efforts of DVA to ensure veterans receive clinically necessary and high-quality care.

Agenda Item 5 How can we help younger veterans access health care?

Members **NOTED** the interactive session with the Chief Health Officer regarding the difficulties experienced by younger veterans in accessing DVA funded primary care and specialist medical services.

Members **DISCUSSED** the barriers for younger veterans in accessing health care and the ways DVA can assist.

Agenda Item 6 Accessing Information Webforms

Members **NOTED** the new Freedom of Information (FOI) and Personal Information Request (PIR) web-based forms.

Members were **ADVISED** these forms were developed to streamline the information access application process and enhance existing mechanisms when requesting information from the Department.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** that requests for information can still be made via phone, email and post.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2025YVF/AXX	Outline the process for coordinating temporary access to information for advocates that represent veterans in custody.	Ministerial Engagement and Communications & Secretariat

Agenda Item 7 Heart Health Program

Members **NOTED** the submission submitted by Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) concerning the restrictive nature of the Heart Health Program and whether the program can be extended to include access to all veterans.

Members **NOTED** the eligibility criteria for the Heart Health Program applies specifically to individuals with war-like service or certain pension entitlements.

Members were **INFORMED** that eligibility has been expanded over the past 20 years to include a broader commitment to improve preventative health care for the veteran community.

Agenda Item 8 Commemorations for contemporary service personnel (or similar)

Members **PARTICIPATED** in a MENTI survey to gather input on how significant anniversaries for more recent wars and conflicts should be commemorated in the coming years.

Agenda Item 9 Update on Grants

Members **NOTED** the update regarding the annual and terminating grants administered by the Grants and Hubs Branch.

Members **DISCUSSED** grant operating guidelines and the how assessments are made in administering grants.

Agenda Item 10 Update on Streamlining Forms and Administrative Processes to Support Service Delivery

Members **NOTED** the work underway to streamline forms and administrative processes to support service delivery.

Members **DISCUSSED** the complexity of the current Authority to Represent form and ways in which it could be simplified for the veteran community, including veterans in custody.

Agenda Item 11 Phase 2 Claims Lodgement Assistance (CLA) Program - National Expansion

Members **NOTED** the support provided by DVA to ESOs nationwide with setting-up, navigating and troubleshooting the MyOrg/MyService online platforms.

Members **NOTED** the Claims Lodgement Assistance team will continue to be available to provide training sessions and individual support with MyOrg.

Agenda Item 12 Compensation Claims Processing Update and time Taken to Process

Members **NOTED** the update on key metrics pertinent to claims processing.

Agenda Item 13 Veteran and Family - Learning and Innovation Network of Knowledge (VF-Link)

Members **NOTED** DVA and Phoenix Australia have entered a 5-year strategic partnership to support the implementation and delivery of VF-LINK. Research will be conducted in the fields of suicide, suicide prevention, research and evaluation.

Members **NOTED** DVA will consult with YVF forum members on opportunities to contribute to this work.

Agenda Item 14 Moral Injury Update

Members **NOTED** the update on Moral Injury in Defence and veteran contexts in line with The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, Recommendation 78.

Members **DISCUSSED** the ways Defence and DVA are working to better identify, minimise and treat moral injury for current and ex-serving ADF members and their families.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2025YVF/AXX	Pursue the attendance of Department of Defence representative at the next YVF meeting to update members on the progress of Recommendation 78.	Chair, ADF Liaison Officer to DVA and Secretariat

Agenda Item 15 Advocacy Update

Members **NOTED** the progress of the Institute of Veterans Advocacy and Advocacy Inquiry Report.

Agenda Item 16 Legislative Reform Update

Members **NOTED** the work underway to implement Recommendation 1 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's Interim Report.

Members **NOTED** the update on the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures No 1) Bill 2025 and associated system changes, communications and training being made to simplify and harmonise veterans' legislation.

Agenda Item 17 YVF Strategic Discussion

Members **NOTED** the update by the Repatriation Commissioner.

Members **DISCUSSED** compensation and rehabilitation options for veterans.

Members **DISCUSSED** employability and deployability classifications in Defence and how this maximises retention of injured sailors, soldiers and aviators.

Members **DISCUSSED** veteran pathway options at Australian Universities for transitioning members.

Agenda Item 18 DVA Strategic Update

Members **NOTED** the update provided by the Secretary, including:

- Royal Commission responses
- Suicide Prevention Framework released by Minister
- Improving veteran access to treatment and reducing claims backlog

- Fraud response and provider compliance
- Interviews with veteran family applicants to assist with delivery of ANZAC Day commemorative services in 2026
- Taskforce on Wellbeing Agency and Peak Body

Members **DISCUSSED** ways to encourage veterans to become volunteer advocates with their local Ex-Service Organisations.

Agenda Item 19 Other Business

Members **ACCEPTED** the rationale for conducting the 6 November 2025 meeting virtually rather than in person.

Members **DISCUSSED** the importance of DVA taking a proactive approach in using mainstream media to address misinformation within the veteran community.

Members **AGREED** the ESORT update would be provided separately by the YVF Representative.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2025YVF/AXX	ESORT Representative to provide a written report on ESORT update to members.	ESORT Representative and Secretariat

Agenda Item 20 YVF Communique

Members were provided the YVF Communique following the meeting for endorsement and publishing on the DVA website.

Meeting closed: 3:45 pm

Annexure A

Members	
Kahlil Fegan DSC, AM	Chair, Repatriation Commissioner
COL James Burns CSM and Bar	ADF Liaison Officer to DVA, Department of Defence
Rod Henderson	Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans' Association
Nick Russon	Australian Special Air Service Association
Matthew Bondarzcuk RAN Rtd	Australian Veterans Alliance
Eden Santos	Defence Families Australia (Proxy)
Georgia Ash	Mates4Mates
Andrew Jaynes	Naval Association of Australia
Chris Tilley	Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
James Milliss	Soldier On
Scott Harris	The Warrior's Return
Presenters	
Alison Frame	DVA Secretary
Sarah Kennedy	A/g First Assistant Secretary, Veteran Experience and Transition Division
Tara Cavanagh	First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits
Alex Caroly	First Assistant Secretary, Technology, Digital and Data Division
Dr Steph Davis	DVA Chief Health Officer
Sophie Gribbin	A/g Assistant Secretary, Benefits and Payments
Simon Hill	Assistant Secretary, Health Programs and Services Branch
Paula Goodwin	A/g Deputy Secretary, Veteran, Family and Stakeholder Experience Group

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Dr Sally Bradford	Senior Director, Provider Compliance and Integrity Reform
Joumana El Hassan	Assistant Secretary, Ministerial, Client and Information Access Branch
Cath Haffner	Assistant Secretary, Health and Wellbeing Policy
Jess Hadley	A/g Assistant Secretary, Research, Evaluation and Privacy Assurance
Observers	
Mike von Berg MC OAM	Ex-Service Organisation Round Table member
Rebecca Turner	A/g Assistant Secretary, Commemorations Branch
Aaron Elix	Assistant Director, Engagement and Co-Design Branch
Luke Wrigley	Director, Advocacy Policy Section
Debbie Arnold	First Assistant Secretary, Ministerial, Engagement and Communications Division
Nadine Clode	Assistant Secretary, Research, Evaluation and Privacy Branch
Peta McKinnon	Director, Compensation Invoice Compliance, Client Benefits Division
Secretariat	
Brad Clarke	Assistant Director, International & Stakeholder Relations
Julie Hackett	Senior Secretariat Officer, International & Stakeholder Relations
Apologies	
Barbara Boyer	Legacy Australia Inc (No proxy identified)
SQNLDR Dee Cherry	Air Force Association (No proxy identified)
James Dallas	Returned and Services League of Australia (No proxy identified)
Charlotte Webb	Defence Families Australia

Next Meeting – TBA

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