



Minutes

Agenda Item 1 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

The Chair opened the meeting acknowledging country, veterans, current serving Australian Defence Force Personnel and welcomed observers. Members **NOTED** apologies as listed at Annexure A and no conflicts of interest were raised.

Members **NOTED** the update on activities progressing within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, including the recruitment process for a permanent Commissioner. Members **NOTED** the preparations underway for Senate Estimates.

Members **DISCUSSED** the need to protect veterans from exploitation in service fee structures. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** that fee-for-service arrangements will continue, but percentage and outcome-based fees can expose veterans to overcharging. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the importance of veterans having clear, up-front cost information before entering a contract.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** DVA's continued focus on reforms to improve integrity and streamline claims processes.

Agenda Item 2 Action Items

Members **NOTED** that the minutes from the previous meeting on 2 October 2025 were endorsed out-of-session on 24 October 2025 and published on the DVA Website on 26 November 2025.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2025OWP/A29, 30 and 31.

Members **NOTED** that no action items remain open or in progress.

Agenda Item 3 Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries (mTBI)

Members **NOTED Defence** and DVA will continue to collaborate on the design of a brain injury program to support serving and ex-serving personnel across their lifetime and the first literature review is expected to be delivered December 2025.

Members **NOTED** research identified in the literature review will be provided to relevant stakeholders.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** liability for Blast-Induced Mild Traumatic Brain Injury.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2025OWP/A32	Inform members when the dedicated website to host the mTBI fact sheet has been uploaded to the DVA website.	Policy & Research Secretariat

Agenda Item 4 Legislative Reform Transition Process – General Update

Members **NOTED** the update on Legislative Reform Transition Process.

Members **NOTED** the Policy and Research Division's focus on preparing advocates for the 1 July 2026 major cut-off date, including developing 14-15 training videos for the ADTP website and face-to-face training in early 2026.

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Members **NOTED** the VETs Act is an amending Act, with two technical amendment bills progressing, the first currently in the House of Representatives and the second yet to be introduced.

Members **NOTED** that a new *Repatriation Commission and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission* will be established under MRCA and will commence 1 July 2026.

Agenda Item 5 Legislative Training Modules

Members **NOTED** the four training modules that have been provided to advocates as part of the implementation of the VETS Act.

Members **NOTED** DVA is open to feedback from the general public once training modules are live on the ADTP website.

Members **DISCUSSED** the Special Forces Disability Allowance and **ACKNOWLEDGED** it is narrowly defined and generally paid indefinitely. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the measure was outlined in the Federal Budget for \$222 million over the last two years of the forward estimates for that period, with ongoing funding after the forward estimates.

Members **DISCUSSED** claims and transport compensation for travel for treatment. Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** post-payment checks will occur routinely, supported by increased system automation, and legislation requires clients to use the closest provider.

Agenda Item 6 Advocacy Update

Members **NOTED** the verbal update provided.

Members **NOTED** DVA had a Senate referred inquiry into services and the report has been published on the Senate website.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** funding for the Institute of Veterans Advocacy is under discussion and no decision has been made yet.

Agenda Item 7 Advocacy Approaches to Claims Outside of Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) Statements of Principles (SOPs)

Members **NOTED** the information provided in relation to how 'non-SOP' investigations are conducted.

Members **NOTED** as part of the legislative reform implementation work, the Department will be making changes to the publicly available policy in CLIK and will include reviewing the policy information relating to non-SOP conditions to make further improvements.

Agenda Item 8 Claims Processing Update

Members **NOTED** the claims reporting data provided at the DVA Claims Processing Webpage.

Agenda Item 9.1 Continuation of OWP into the Future

Members **NOTED** the update and discussion on the continuation of OWP into the future and **NOTED** the Chair's view that there is benefit in continuing the OWP on a required basis.

Members **NOTED** that there will not be a meeting scheduled for December 2025.

Agenda Item 9.2 Claims Process Change – Nomination of Treating Practitioner

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Members **NOTED** the improved compliance activities underway to ensure the integrity of the Veteran Support System.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2025OWP/A33	Provide link for web resources to members.	Client Benefits
2025OWP/A34	Item to be included on next agenda for further discussion.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 9.3 DVA Form D9325 – Appoint a Representative

Members **NOTED** the verbal update on the DVA Form D935 – appoint a representative.

Members **DISCUSSED** ongoing issues with advocate access in MyService due to limits of the current opt-in model, and access difficulties for families where a DVA file or service number is required.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** risks of multiple advocates accessing a single veteran's information and current reliance on legal penalties for misuse.

Members **NOTED** the planned enhancements, including dashboards and improved access-level controls.

Members **AGREED** further work is needed to streamline processes and reduce reliance on the information access unit.

Agenda Item 9.4 Medical Incapacity Ecosystem Review

Members **NOTED** the Medical Incapacity Ecosystem Review (MEIR) update and that implementation remains in a pre-decision phase.

Members **NOTED** DVA continues to support the MEIR and to seek opportunities to improve the experience for veterans experiencing medical incapacity and those who support them.

Agenda Item 10 Other Business

Members **NOTED** no additional business was raised.

Agenda Item 11 Communique

Members **NOTED** the OWP Communique will be endorsed by members out-of-session.

Meeting closed: 2:26pm

Members	
Andrew Kefford PSM	Chair, Deputy Secretary, Policy and Programs
Tara Cavanagh	Deputy Chair, First Assistant Secretary, Program Delivery
Michael Harper	A/g First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits
Vanessa Cheng	Air Force Association
Michael Carlon JP	Australian Special Air Services Association
Robynne Mitchell	Australian War Widows Inc (Proxy)
Bob Connor	Legacy Canberra
Scott Jeffrey	TPI Federation of Australia
Keely Dreghorn	Returned and Services League of Australia
Max Ball	Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia
Bill Roberts OAM JP	Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia (Attending virtually)
FLTLT Rod Hutchings	Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (Attending virtually)
Presenters	
Mr Luke Brown	First Assistant Secretary, Policy and Research Division (Item 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)
Mr Michael Harper	Acting First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits Division (Item 9.2, 9.3)
Ms Samantha Patuto	Assistant Secretary, Compensation Payments and Processing Branch (Item 9.4)
Secretariat	
Brad Clarke	Assistant Director, International & Stakeholder Relations
Kaitlyn Godfrey	Secretariat Officer, International & Stakeholder Relations
Apologies	
John McNeill	Australian Veterans Alliance (No proxy identified)
Jenny Gregory OAM	Australian War Widows Inc
Clem Russell OAM	The Royal Australian Regiment Corporation (No proxy identified)
Luci Casey-Billington	Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc. (Proxy)
Narelle Bromhead OAM	Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

Next Meeting – TBC