



Operational Working Party February 2026

Operating Working Party Meeting

The Operational Working Party (OWP) met on Wednesday 18 February 2026.

OWP Member Submissions

Continuation of OWP into the Future

Royal Australian Regiment Corporation

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) agreed to discuss the priorities of the Operational Working Party as well as other advocacy issues raised by members.

DVA Critical Initiatives

Legislative Reform Transition Process – General Update

Members noted the update provided on Legislative Reform.

Legislative Reform Training Modules

Members noted the four new Advocate Training Modules that cover upcoming changes as part of the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025* (VETS Act) implementation.

Advocacy Update

Members noted the Australian Government funding to support the operations of the Institute of Veterans Advocacy and increase funding available to ESOs through the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) grants program.

Members also noted that the Government has responded to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Report into issues relating to advocacy services for veterans accessing compensation and income support; and is undertaking a public consultation on reform options to better protect veterans.

Claims Processing Update

The most recent claims reporting data can be accessed through the DVA Claims Processing Webpage: <https://www.dva.gov.au/claim-processing>, which encompasses all key metrics relating to the claims process.

Claim Process Changing – Nomination of Treating Practitioner

Members noted the verbal update provided by the Chair on changes to the Claims Process.

OWP Members in attendance:
Andrew Kefford PSM, Deputy Secretary, Policy and Programs
Tara Hatzismalis, Deputy Chair, A/g First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits Division
Vanessa Cheng, Airforce Association
Michael Carlon JP, Australian Special Air Services Association
Jenny Gregory OAM, Australian War Widows
Rob Connor, Legacy Canberra
Narelle Bromhead OAM, Partners of Veterans Association of Australia
Bill Roberts OAM JP, Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia
Keely Dreghorn, Returned and Services League of Australia
Clem Russell OAM, The Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
Max Ball, Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia
Apologies:
Scott Jeffrey, TPI Federation