

Department of Defence / Department of Veterans' Affairs
Links Steering Committee

Summary of Meeting – 18 March 2026

The 73rd meeting of the Department of Defence/Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Links Steering Committee (DLSC) was held on Wednesday 18 March 2026. The following policy, programs and initiatives were discussed at the meeting.

Strategy

The committee received an update on DVA's strengthened focus on early access to treatment and rehabilitation for Defence members and veterans with service-related conditions as well as the benefits of establishing enhanced connections between DVA and Defence to facilitate effective feedback and support for members health and wellbeing.

The Committee discussed progress made by the Wellbeing Agency Taskforce to establish a new executive agency focused on veterans and family wellbeing, including work underway with DVA, Defence and other key stakeholders following the MYEFO announcement.

Other Business

DVA has commenced work with Phoenix Australia to deliver a five-year research strategy and establish a Community of Practice and Collaborative Knowledge Network. This supports the implementation of the Veteran and Family – Learning and Innovation Network of Knowledge (VF-LINK) model.

Members were provided with an update on the current DVA claims assistance services, including associated service risks and benefits. DVA has identified the opportunity to develop a whole of department approach to claims assistance and support, incorporating the role of the Wellbeing Agency, to maximise outcomes and the resources available.

The Committee noted the annual update on joint Defence–DVA research activity under Schedule 25 of the Memorandum of Understanding. The briefing outlined the current collaborative project supporting suicide-monitoring activities and confirmed that milestones and governance requirements are being met. No risks or issues requiring action were identified.

Veterans' and Families' Hubs (Hubs) deliver integrated support to veterans and families and improve access to local services which may include wellbeing support, advocacy, employment and housing advice, social connection and physical and mental health services.

There are now twelve established Hubs delivering support to veterans and families in Perth, Adelaide, Darwin, Wodonga, Nowra, Caboolture, Burnie, Queanbeyan, Northern Adelaide, Hobart, Launceston and Maitland.

Further Hubs under establishment in Southwest Perth, Ipswich, and Tweed/North Coast are expected to be operational by mid-year. Additional sites in the Hawkesbury and the Surf Coast/Geelong region are expected in 2027.