



SHOAMP SERUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ACTIVITY REPORT 2025

BACKGROUND

The Study of Health Outcomes in Aircraft Maintenance Personnel (SHOAMP) Serum Management Committee (SMC) reports to the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (the Commissions) about its operational activities, including the continued storage of serum samples, study data, the data-linkage key, and associated matters; any research proposals received by the SMC; and any access requests from individual study participants.

SUMMARY OF 2025 ACTIVITIES

The following activities were undertaken by, and/or in consultation with, the SHOAMP SMC in 2025 and are discussed in more detail below:

- conducted a serum-sample reconciliation project
- sought ethical approvals
- updated the Terms of Reference
- conducted the annual SMC meeting.

SERUM-SAMPLE RECONCILIATION PROJECT

In 2024, the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) commenced a DVA-commissioned reconciliation project to address inconsistencies between the samples held in storage at QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute (QIMR) and the corresponding manifest records maintained and held by QIMR.

AIFS identified 14 key issues, not unusual for a collection of its age, and has identified corrective actions to address. This will result in a fully reconciled, accurate, and reliable biobank manifest that aligns with the samples stored at QIMR.

The project is due to complete in 2026. Findings from the final report will be reported to the SMC.

INADEQUATE CONSENT FOR BLOOD STORAGE

The reconciliation project identified inadequate records of consent for the storage of serum samples attached to 163 unique participant records (affecting approximately 800 samples).

There has been no disclosure of personal details or harm caused to any individual. However, it was decided that the affected samples should be disposed of to mitigate any 'unauthorised use'.



To this end, DVA — on behalf of the Chair of the SMC —instructed QIMR to retrieve and dispose of the affected samples once the reconciliation process is complete. A communications campaign will be conducted in 2026 to advise former study participants of the actions taken.

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVALS

Approval was received from the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC) in:

- February 2025, for an amendment to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) Data-Management Plan to include reference to:
 - ~ the need to reference obtaining Defence Organisational Support in the data re-use scenarios; and
 - ~ legal advice to not action requests to destroy data whilst National Archives of Australia (NAA) retention notices and disposal freezes in relation to Commonwealth records are in place.
- July 2025, for a Deviation Report drawing DDVA HREC's attention to the identification of inadequate records of consent for 163 participants and outlining the proposed actions associated with this finding (i.e. disposal of impacted samples and relevant communications).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The SMC is guided by its Terms of Reference in relation to its governance remit (i.e. the long-term storage of, and access to, the serum samples, de-identified study data, and the data-linkage key).

The Terms of Reference were last endorsed by Commissions in 2021. At its 2024 meeting, the SHOAMP SMC determined the Terms of Reference should be updated to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Endorsed in 2025 by the Chair of the SMC, its members, and the Commissions, the updated Terms of Reference reflect the comprehensive framework for governing the valuable resources of the SHOAMP study.

ACCESS AND WITHDRAWAL REQUESTS

There were no access or withdrawal requests in 2025.



COMMITTEE MEETING

The SMC met once in 2025 on 13 November, via online video conference.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The members and advisers listed below were current as at the end of 2025.

Chair	
Mr Kahlil FEGAN, DSC, AM	Repatriation Commissioner
Members	
Mr John CLARKSON, CSC	President (Victoria), Air Force Association
Dr Anna COLWELL	Deputy Chief Health Officer, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)
Mr Geoff CURL	Advocate, SHOAMP Deseal—Reseal Support Group
Dr Victoria ROSS	Senior Medical Advisor, Military Population Health, Joint Health Command, Department of Defence
Ms Elaine TSE	Assistant Secretary (acting), Research, Evaluation, and Privacy Branch, DVA
Advisers	
Dr Paul PHAM	Unit Head, Defence and Veteran Insight Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
Dr Blesson VARGHESE	Senior Data & Information Analyst, Defence and Veteran Insight Unit, AIHW
Ms Susan LIST-ARMITAGE	Sample Processing Manager, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute (QIMR)
Ms Melissa SUARES	Project Lead, Data Management and Linkage, Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)
Ms Michelle Silbert	Manager, Data Linkage and Integration, AIFS
Ms Joey Dong	Senior Data Governance Analyst, Data Management and Linkage, AIFS

CONTACT

For inquiries about this Activity Report, please email the SHOAMP SMC Secretariat at research.partnerships@dva.gov.au.