

OFFICIAL: Sensitive



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

## Incoming Minister Brief



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### **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Department of Veterans' Affairs acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia and their continuing spiritual and cultural connection to land, sea and community.

### **Acknowledgement of Service**

We respect and give thanks to all who have served in our defence force and their families.

We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of all who commit to defend our nation.

We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served, and promise to welcome, embrace, and support all military veterans as respected and valued members of our community.

For what they have done, this we will do.



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## Overview

This Incoming Government Brief (IGB) provides information on the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) structure, purpose and functions.

**We support service and sacrifice.** Volunteering to join the Australian Defence Force (ADF) means pledging a solemn vow to surrender individual rights, adhere to laws beyond those applicable to the broader population, employ lethal force and put your life at risk in the interests of Australia and its people.

**Veteran needs continue to change.** The Department of Repatriation was set up at the end of the First World War in recognition of the conditions, hardships and the scale of sacrifice faced by veterans of the then Australian Imperial Force. These early efforts were well meaning but fragmented, and the 1924 Royal Commission on the Assessment of War Service Disabilities found inconsistent application of assessment criteria and insufficient support services. The aftermath of the Second World War brought a fresh wave of veterans with more complex issues, and improvements were made to compensation processes, service gaps, administrative efficiencies, and ultimately the transformation of the Repatriation Department into DVA in 1976. DVA is keen to recognise and address the needs of contemporary veterans.

**DVA operates as part of a complex legislative, funding and service delivery ecosystem** so you will hear many different (and often contradictory) perspectives. Within this ecosystem, supports and services are delivered to veterans by various federal, state and territory government agencies, around 5,000 ex-service and veteran organisations (ESOs), community and not-for-profit organisations, and peers within the veteran community. In addition, veterans and families from different eras have different expectations of DVA. This results in a significant challenge in navigating these relationships and is compounded by high community expectations following the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The Department is here to support you to navigate this complex and interdependent service environment.

## The Portfolio

The Veterans' Affairs Portfolio is responsible for carrying out government policy and implementing programs to fulfil Australia's obligations to: veterans; war widow/ers; families; serving and former members of the ADF; certain Australian Federal Police officers with overseas peacekeeping service; and Australian participants in British nuclear tests in Australia and their families.



DVA (the Department), the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and several other statutory bodies administered by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, are formally part of the Defence Portfolio. The schedule to the annual Appropriation Acts lists both DVA and the AWM as receiving monies appropriated from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The other statutory commissions and boards in the Veterans' Affairs portfolio receive their funding under arrangements with DVA, and their administrative staff are employees of DVA.

For information on resourcing across the portfolio, please refer to Part 1: Agency Financial Resourcing in Budget Paper No. 4: Agency Resourcing.

## Department of Veterans' Affairs

The purpose of DVA is to support the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and their families. This is achieved by: partnering with organisations and individuals to help design, implement and deliver effective programs and benefits which enhance the wellbeing of veterans and their families; and providing compensation and income support, in-home services and community care, rehabilitation and physical and mental health services including counselling through Open Arms. DVA also maintains war graves; and delivers meaningful commemorative activities to promote community recognition and understanding of the service and sacrifice of veterans. DVA is therefore the primary Australian Government entity responsible for developing and implementing programs that assist the veteran and ex-service communities.

DVA provides administrative support to the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and is responsible for advising the Commissions on policies and programs for beneficiaries, and for administering these policies and programs. Decisions made by the Department are in the name of the Commissions, and not the Minister. Under the direction of these Commissions, DVA provides wide-ranging programs and services that can be broadly grouped into 3 main areas: care, compensation and commemoration. DVA also administers legislation such as the *Defence Service Homes Act 1918* and the *War Graves Act 1980*.

## The Australian War Memorial

The AWM was established as a Commonwealth corporate entity under the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980*. It operates within the Veterans' Affairs portfolio as a discrete entity.

The AWM is responsible for maintaining and developing the national Memorial to Australians who have died on, or as a result of, active service or in wars or warlike operations in which Australians have been on active service. It also develops, maintains and exhibits a National Collection of historical material and conducts and fosters research into Australian military history.

## Other statutory bodies

DVA supports a range of statutory bodies:

### The Repatriation Commission

The Repatriation Commission is responsible under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) for granting pensions, allowances and other benefits, providing treatment and other services and generally administering the VEA. The functions and powers of the Repatriation Commission are set out in sections 180 and 181 of the VEA.

The members of the Repatriation Commission are:

- Ms Alison Frame, President and Commissioner
- Mr Mark Brewer AM CSC and Bar, Deputy President and Commissioner
- Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM, Repatriation Commissioner
- Ms Gwen Cherne, Veteran Family Advocate

### Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission

The Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (MRCC) is responsible for the administration of benefits and arrangements under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). The Commission also determines and manages claims relating to defence service under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA). The functions and powers of the MRCC are set out in section 362 of the MRCA and Part XI of the DRCA.

The members of MRCC are:

- Ms Alison Frame, President and Commissioner
- Mr Mark Brewer AM CSC and Bar, Deputy President and Commissioner
- Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM, Repatriation Commissioner
- Ms Gwen Cherne, Veteran Family Advocate
- Rear Admiral Sonya Bennett AM RAN, Defence Member
- Rear Admiral Letitia Van Stralen AM CSC RAN, Acting Defence Member
- Mr Michael Duke, ComCare Member

The *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025* (the VETS Act) consolidates the roles of the existing 2 commissions, the Repatriation Commission and the MRCC, into the Repatriation Commission. The date of commencement for these arrangements is 1 July 2026. You will be briefed on appointment arrangements in advance of the legislation commencing.

## The Veterans' Review Board

The Veterans' Review Board (VRB) is an independent tribunal that reviews certain decisions of the Repatriation Commission and the MRCC. The Board was established by the *Repatriation Legislation Amendment Act 1984* and began operating on 1 January 1985. The VEA and MRCA preserve the continuing role of the VRB.

- Ms Jane Anderson is the Principal Member of the Veterans' Review Board.
- Major Robert Douglass (retired) is a full-time member of the Veterans' Review Board.
- There are 39 part-time members of the Veterans' Review Board.

## Office of Australian War Graves

The Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) is an agent of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), with the Director War Graves appointed under the *War Graves Act 1980*. The OAWG manages 76 war cemeteries and war plots commemorating our war dead in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The OAWG also cares for the more than 333,553 other final resting places of post-war dead, and other eligible veterans of war, conflicts, peace and other operations to which Australia has been committed, in over 2,400 locations.

Mr Tim Bayliss AM is the Director War Graves.

## The Repatriation Medical Authority

The Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) is an independent statutory authority established under section 196A of the VEA. Its role is to determine Statements of Principles in relation to medical or scientific evidence connecting injuries, diseases or death with the circumstances of a particular veteran's service. Members of the RMA are eminent medical practitioners and medical scientists. Professor Terrence Campbell AM is the Chair of the RMA (a part-time appointment). There are 4 additional part-time members; Professor Gerard Byrne, Professor Flavia Cicuttini and Professor Jenny Doust.

## The Specialist Medical Review Council

The Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC) is an independent statutory body established under section 196V of the VEA. It has power, under section 196W of the VEA, to review determinations by the RMA. It does not review individual cases, rather it examines the evidence upon which the decisions of the RMA are based. Members of SMRC are eminent medical practitioners and medical scientists. Professor Christian Gericke is the Convenor of the SMRC (a part-time appointment). There are 15 additional members.

## Defence Housing Programs Managed by DVA

In addition to statutory bodies – DVA manages two housing programs for ADF members, veterans and their families.

### Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme

The Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme is established under the *Defence Service Homes Act 1918* and provides home building insurance and claims support tailored to all ADF members and veterans, including Reservists and widow/ers. It is self-funded through the premiums paid by policy holders, which is invested back in the Scheme.

### Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme

The Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (DHOAS) is a home loan subsidy scheme that assists current and former ADF members and their families to achieve home ownership. The scheme is available to members who served on or after 1 July 2008, completed a qualifying period of service and accrued sufficient entitlement. DHOAS is administered by DVA on behalf of the Department of Defence.

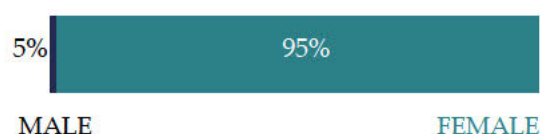
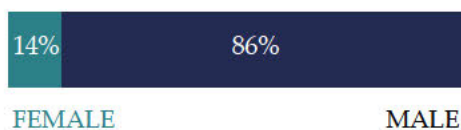
## Who we support



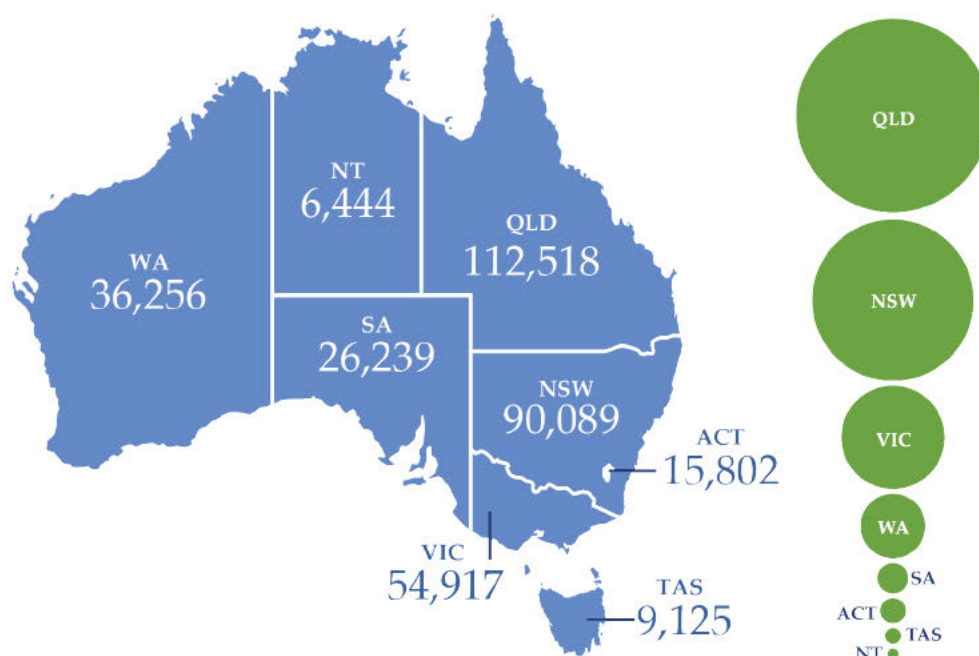
282,371  
VETERANS



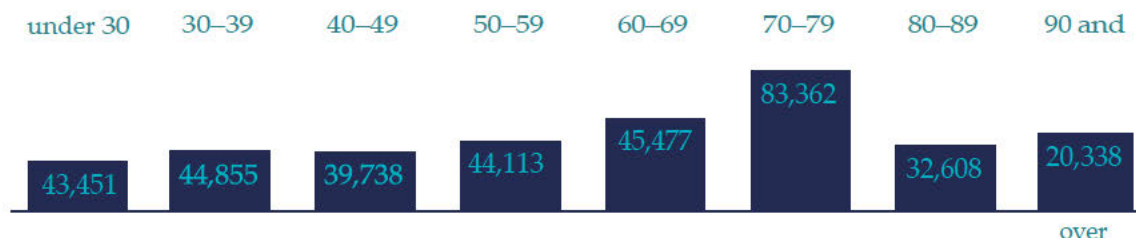
71,632  
DEPENDANTS



## Veterans and family members by location



## Veterans and family members by age



As at 31 March 2025

Total clients including veterans and dependants as at 31 December 2024 is 354,003 – some clients are eligible as both a veteran and a dependant. Clients of unknown age are included in total counts but not reported separately

## Portfolio workforce



**4,019 Headcount / 3,488 Budgeted ASL**

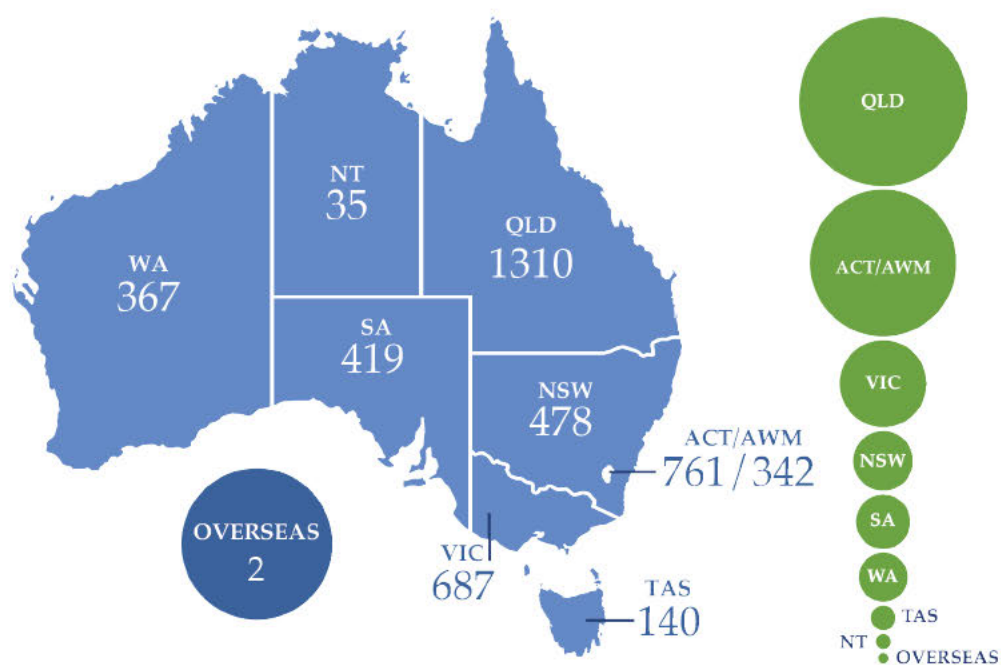
4,019    342  
DVA    AWM



**4,019 APS EMPLOYEES DVA headcount**

59    825    3,119    9    7  
SES    EL    APS    MEDICAL OFFICERS    STATUTORY APPOINTMENTS

### Workforce by location



As at 31 March 2025



# Fast facts

DVA support

282,371

71,632



242,499  
male veterans  
39,872  
female veterans

veterans

dependants

OPEN  
ARMS  
ENHANCE WELLBEING

UNDERSTAND  
AND RESPECT

225,130  
Open Arms services provided  
33,822

veterans and family members  
accessed Open Arms services

314,611

visits to the  
Open Arms website

295,382

DVA health cards

104,844

Gold Cards

192,168

White Cards

197,369  
people provided  
health services

762,385  
instances of travel  
to treatment

\$4.1b

spend on health  
and wellbeing

49,152  
homes protected under  
DSH Insurance

\$6.5b

spend on compensation  
and support

265,564  
total MyService  
registrations

19,355

Initial Liability  
claims lodged  
through MyService

95,501  
eligible veterans or  
dependants received  
income support

75,038

primary compensation  
determinations

163,613  
compensation clients  
supported

More than  
324,000  
Australians officially  
commemorated at over 2400  
sites in Australia

350,918  
official commemorations

Over 17,000  
community stakeholders  
received commemorative  
resources

132,259  
veterans received a  
Veterans' Recognition  
Package

3,160  
published offers

\$49.4m

spend on  
commemorations

4,421  
employees

One in 20 (5.3 per cent) of Australian households reported at least one person who had served or is serving in the ADF.

*'For what they have done, this we will do.'*

\*\*Overall total since launch of MyService

\*\*\*\* This is the number since start of program, and not for last calendar year



# DVA client statistics at a glance

|                              |         |
|------------------------------|---------|
| <b>VEA PENSIONERS*</b>       | 151,670 |
| <b>DISABILITY PENSIONERS</b> | 75,419  |
| Special Rate                 | 5,869   |
| Intermediate Rate            | 648     |
| EDA Rate                     | 3,142   |
| General Rate                 | 5,760   |
| <b>WAR WIDOW/ERS</b>         | 31,979  |
| Receiving ISS                | 12,341  |
| Not receiving ISS            | 10,638  |
| <b>SERVICE PENSIONERS</b>    | 69,732  |
| Veterans                     | 63,886  |
| Partners/Widows              | 2,846   |
| <b>DVA HEALTH CARDS</b>      | 241,293 |
| Gold Cards                   | 86,678  |
| White Cards                  | 154,615 |

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>DISABILITY PENSION</b>        |            |
| Special Rate                     | \$1,812.50 |
| Intermediate Rate                | \$1,201.60 |
| EDA                              | \$ 978.10  |
| General Rate (100%)              | \$ 629.20  |
| <b>WAR WIDOW PENSION</b>         | \$1,170.00 |
| <b>SERVICE PENSION</b>           |            |
| Partnered (each)                 | \$ 866.10  |
| Single                           | \$1,149.   |
| <b>INCOME SUPPORT SUPPLEMENT</b> |            |
| Ceiling rate                     | \$347.60   |
| <b>VEA EXPENDITURE (2023-24)</b> | .          |
| Compensation and Support         | \$4.48bn   |
| Health                           | \$3.85bn   |

\*includes age pensioners administered by DVA

\*\* includes energy supplement

The number of Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) pensioners has decreased by 6,658 clients in the last 12 months, largely due to declining numbers in the Second World War generation.

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>VETERANS</b>                   | 74,947   |
| Permanent Impairment Payees*      | 47,437   |
| Incapacity Payees                 | 9,281    |
| Open Rehabilitation Cases         | 2,952    |
| <b>DEPENDANTS</b>                 | 614      |
| Widow/ers                         |          |
| Children                          | 307      |
| <b>DVA HEALTH CARDS</b>           | 48,754   |
| Gold Cards                        | 16,627   |
| White Cards                       | 23,127   |
| <b>MRCA EXPENDITURE (2023-24)</b> |          |
| Compensation and Support          | \$3.30bn |
| Health                            | \$351m   |

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>VETERANS</b>                   | 66,176   |
| Permanent Impairment Payees*      | 23,069   |
| Incapacity Payees                 | 3,051    |
| Open Rehabilitation Cases         | 379      |
| <b>DVA HEALTH CARDS</b>           | 3,368    |
| White Cards                       | 3,368    |
| <b>DRCA EXPENDITURE (2023-24)</b> |          |
| Compensation and Support          | \$518.2m |
| Health                            | \$77.19m |

\*receiving either a commuted or periodic (MRCA only) permanent impairment payment

The Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) and the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) population has increased by 12,331 clients in the last 12 months.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>TOTAL DVA CLIENTS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 354,0003         |
| <b>DVA HEALTH CARDS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 297,012          |
| Gold Cards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 104,844          |
| White Cards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 192,168          |
| <b>TREATMENT CARD COST (2022-23)*</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Gold White       |
| Active Users                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 103,062 99,393   |
| Cost per Active User                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$29,585 \$3,889 |
| *In 2021, DVA adopted a new model for estimating average treatment card cost. Rather than all cards issued, this model uses Active Users, a measure of the quarterly exposure of card holders that have ever had health expenditure covered to date. Care should be taken when comparing these figures with previous years. |                  |

|                                |                                |             |             |             |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>DVA CLIENTS AGE PROFILE</b> | <b>DVA CLIENT AGE PROFILES</b> |             |             |             |
|                                |                                | <b>MRCA</b> | <b>DRCA</b> | <b>VEA1</b> |
|                                | Under 30                       | 19.7%       | 0.0%        | 1.4%        |
|                                | 30 - 34                        | 16.2%       | 0.0%        | 4.7%        |
|                                | 35 - 39                        | 17.1%       | 0.4%        | 4.3%        |
|                                | 40 - 44                        | 14.0%       | 6.1%        | 4.1%        |
|                                | 45 - 49                        | 9.4%        | 10.8%       | 4.0%        |
|                                | 50 - 54                        | 8.2%        | 15.5%       | 5.3%        |
|                                | 55 - 59                        | 6.6%        | 15.9%       | 6.2%        |
|                                | 60 - 64                        | 4.9%        | 14.9%       | 7.0%        |
|                                | 65 - 69                        | 2.6%        | 11.8%       | 7.2%        |
|                                | 70 - 74                        | 1.1%        | 10.1%       | 10.8%       |
|                                | 75 - 79                        | 0.3%        | 8.8%        | 17.1%       |
|                                | 80 - 84                        | 0.0%        | 3.0%        | 6.5%        |
|                                | 85 or over                     | 0.0%        | 2.7%        | 11.4%       |

As at 31 March 2025

## Executive



**Alison Frame**

**Secretary**

**Phone:** s 47F

**Email:** [alison.frame@dva.gov.au](mailto:alison.frame@dva.gov.au)

Alison Frame commenced as Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs in January 2023.

Prior to that Alison was Deputy Secretary – Social Policy in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet from August 2020.

Alison has led social policy initiatives and reform across both the Commonwealth and the NSW governments as a senior executive for over 14 years.

During her time in NSW Government senior leadership roles – including as Deputy Secretary in both the Department of Planning and Environment and Department of Premier and Cabinet – Alison led policy and program work in housing and property, child protection, family and domestic violence as the head of the Office for Women in NSW, and Indigenous policy.

Alison holds a Bachelor of Speech-language Pathology and a Bachelor of Political Science from the University of Queensland and a Master of Public Administration from the London School of Economics and Political Science.



**Alison McLaren**

**Deputy Secretary Veteran, Family and Stakeholder Experience Group**

**Phone:** s 47F

**Email:** [alison.mclaren@dva.gov.au](mailto:alison.mclaren@dva.gov.au)

Alison McLaren is the Deputy Secretary Veteran, Family and Stakeholder Experience Group. In her role, Alison oversees a diverse portfolio spanning strategic communication, stakeholder engagement and media, ministerial support, grant management, Open Arms, Coordinated Client Support, commemorations and the Office of Australian War Graves.

Alison also has responsibility for leading and influencing the policy direction to support veterans through transition from the military to civilian life, creating a positive experience for veterans across the Department and the whole of government.

Alison has worked in the public sector for over 20 years. Prior to joining the Department of Veterans' Affairs, she worked across multiple departments in the New South Wales Government, including in senior executive roles in the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and UrbanGrowth NSW.

Alison holds a Master of Arts (International Relations) from Deakin University and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and International Studies from the University of Technology in Sydney.

**Andrew Kefford PSM****Deputy Secretary Policy and Programs Group****Phone:** s 47F**Email:** [andrew.kefford@dva.gov.au](mailto:andrew.kefford@dva.gov.au)

Andrew Kefford PSM was appointed Deputy Secretary Policy and Programs in DVA in August 2023. In this role, he is responsible for DVA's service design and delivery functions, claims decision making, and DVA's policy functions.

Andrew joined DVA from the Department of Home Affairs following a brief secondment to the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), where he served as Deputy Secretary and was responsible for DPS's security, grounds and building services for Australian Parliament House, as well as DPS's corporate functions.

In Home Affairs, Andrew served as Deputy Secretary Social Cohesion and Citizenship, during which time he was concurrently appointed as the Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator. Before taking up those roles, he served as Deputy Secretary Immigration and Settlement Services.

Andrew is a graduate of the University of Western Australia and holds degrees in Arts with honours in history and in law. He also holds an Executive Master of Public Administration from the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.



**Brenton Philp**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

**Phone:** s 47F

**Email:** [brenton.philp@dva.gov.au](mailto:brenton.philp@dva.gov.au)

Brenton Philp is Deputy Secretary and DVA's Chief Operating Officer. Brenton leads corporate and enabling services, including legal and audit functions, ICT, finances and budget, people services, security and property, corporate reporting, and research, data and evaluation.

Brenton joined the Department on 17 March 2025 on a 6-month secondment from The Treasury, where he was Deputy Secretary for Markets Group. Before that, Brenton was Deputy Secretary Early Childhood and Youth Group at the Department of Education.

Brenton's experience spans more than 25 years in the Australian Public Service, having performed senior roles in economic policy, social policy, energy policy, digital transformation, and competition and consumer protection regulation.

He has served in the Departments of Industry, Energy and Environment, Social Services, Education, The Treasury, and the Prime Minister and Cabinet, as well as having a long career with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

Brenton is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from James Cook University.

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**Teena Blewitt PSM**

**Deputy Secretary**

**Phone:** s 47F

**Email:** [teena.blewitt@dva.gov.au](mailto:teena.blewitt@dva.gov.au)

Teena Blewitt is Deputy Secretary, Taskforce on the Wellbeing Agency and Peak Body. The taskforce is leading the development of co-designed proposals with the veteran community in relation to recommendations 87 (wellbeing agency) and 89 (a national peak body) of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. Teena has been the Department's Chief Operating Officer since March 2023.

Teena has occupied a diverse range of other Senior Executive positions across the APS, including as the Interim Commissioner for the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission, and the Deputy Coordinator General, National COVID Vaccine Taskforce. She has led Australian Government social harm reduction reforms and community connected programs to support vulnerable people, and programs to support Australian businesses to set up, grow and innovate. She has also managed the Commonwealth Budget on the expense side over several economic and fiscal updates.

She has an Executive Masters in Public Administration (Hon).





**Mark Brewer AM, CSC and Bar**  
**Deputy President**

**Phone:** s 47F

**Email:** [mark.brewer@dva.gov.au](mailto:mark.brewer@dva.gov.au)

Mark Brewer currently serves as Deputy President of the Repatriation Commission. His other responsibilities include domestic and international commemorative events; grants, which include the Veterans' and Families' Hubs program; and DVA support for the transition of veterans leaving the ADF.

Mark joined the Department in August 2022 after more than 38 years of service in the Australian Army, where he held senior command and strategic roles over a distinguished military career. His experience spans operational, command, training and development, and intergovernmental coordination. Mark has led strategic initiatives such as the US Force Posture Initiatives, Australia- Singapore Military Training Initiative and also Defence engagement with South East Asian nations. He deployed to Southern Lebanon in 1994 and to Afghanistan in 2006 and 2012–13. He also commanded Joint Task Force 629 in Sumatra, Indonesia, following an earthquake in 2009.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Arts from the Australian Defence Force Academy, a Master's degree from the Staff College Army, and a Graduate Diploma in Strategic Studies from the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies



**Dr Jonathan (Jon) Lane**

**Chief Psychiatrist**

**Phone:** s 47F

**Email:** [jonathan.lane@dva.gov.au](mailto:jonathan.lane@dva.gov.au)

Dr Jonathan (Jon) Lane is the Chief Psychiatrist for the Department – a new position established in June 2024. Jon is a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and an Army veteran. He served as a soldier from 1989, a Regimental Medical Officer from 2005 to 2014, and as an Army Reserve psychiatrist since 2014.

Jon deployed to Afghanistan and served at the NATO Multinational Medical Unit in Kandahar from July to December 2013. He brings a lived experience, clinical and academic perspective to his work within the Department.

Jon's primary duties consist of responsibility and advice for mental health policy, clinical governance, programs and other related areas across both the Department and Open Arms. He works in parallel with the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Health Officer Division, and First Assistant Secretary of Open Arms.

Jon's clinical work has revolved around mental health and trauma in military personnel, veterans and first responders. He completed his PhD at Adelaide University developing, delivering, and evaluating culturally specific, peer-led, trans-diagnostic group psycho-education and skills-based interventions for these personnel. He is a national leader in this field.

Jon sits on multiple committees within the Department and other organisations and is widely engaged in research in this field. He was also the Archery coach for the Australian Invictus Games team from 2017 to 2022 and is a passionate advocate for mental health in the defence and veteran communities.



**Khalil Fegan DSC AM**  
**Repatriation Commissioner**

Mr Kahlil Fegan DSC AM was appointed as Australia's Repatriation Commissioner on 15 September 2023. He will serve as a member of the Repatriation Commission until 6 August 2030, and as a member of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission until 30 June 2026.

Kahlil is the son of a Vietnam War veteran and his mother is a war widow supported by DVA. He followed his father into the Australian Army and served for almost 34 years, leading and managing people and supporting families. Kahlil's Australian honours include the Distinguished Service Cross for his command and leadership in warlike operations in Afghanistan in 2012; a Commendation for Distinguished Service for his command of a combat team security detachment in Iraq in 2004 and a second one for his time as Director of the Divisional Coalition Plans team also in Iraq. In 2023, Kahlil was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for exceptional service in the Australian Army.

Kahlil holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Newcastle, a Masters of Management Studies from the University of New South Wales, and a Masters of International Public Policy from Johns Hopkins University in Washington DC.

**Gwen Cherne****Veteran Family Advocate**

Gwen Cherne was appointed as the world's first Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner on the Repatriation Commission on 6 August 2020. On 2 March 2021, she was appointed a member of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. She is the partner, mother, widow, daughter, granddaughter, niece, and cousin of veterans. She has lived experience of military family life, mental health issues and recovery, family and domestic violence, and intimate partner violence.

Since the death of her husband to suicide in 2017, Gwen has dedicated herself to advocacy for Australian war widows, defence and veterans' families, suicide prevention and mental health awareness. Gwen was appointed to the Council of the Australian War Memorial in 2019, was an inaugural Member of the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service, served on the board of the Australian War Widows' NSW chapter, was an Ambassador for the Commando Welfare Trust and Gotcha4Life and was a 2018 Invictus Games Ambassador for Clubs NSW.

She worked in Afghanistan off and on for 3 years as an international development worker in the Central and South Regions, and as Regional Director in Jalalabad and Kabul. After returning to the US, Gwen worked as a Senior Trainer and Manager for Curriculum and Training for military, Foreign Service officers and other civilians preparing for deployment. More recently, she spent 7 years working at the Australian Civil-Military Centre as a Program Manager and Assistant Director for Research.

Gwen holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Women's Studies from Boston College, and holds a Master's degree in Public Administration with a concentration in International Policy from the New York University Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service. Gwen became an Australian citizen in 2015 and has 3 children.



**Jane Anderson LLB**  
**Veteran Review Board**

Ms Jane Anderson is in her second term as the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) Principal Member, a role she has held since 2018. Prior to her appointment as Principal Member, Jane served as a general member of the VRB.

Jane has 25 years' legal experience, including 15 years as a dispute resolution practitioner, decision-maker and presiding member of tribunals. Her previous appointments have been as a Senior Member of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and as a former Deputy President of the South Australian Guardianship Board (and mental health tribunal).

As well as her expertise in administrative law and tribunal management, Jane previously practised in criminal law as a senior lawyer with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

Jane obtained a Master of Law degree from Cambridge University, during which she developed her strong interest in access to justice. She is a past Chair and current Advisory Board member of the Access to Justice and Legal Aid Committee of the International Bar Association as well as the Co-Chair of the Association's Forum for Government and Public Lawyers.

Jane has extensive experience in a wide range of legal and policy areas affecting veterans and serving members of the ADF. Jane is the interim Chair of the Military Justice Committee of the Law Council of Australia s 47F

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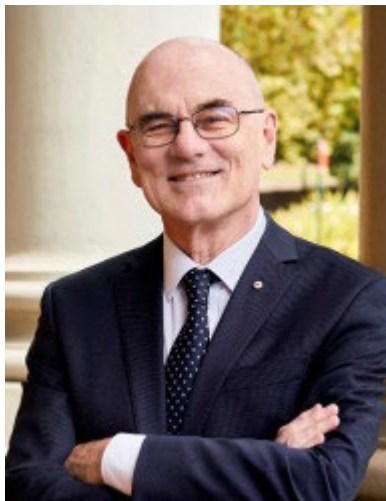
**Tim Bayliss AM**  
**Director War Graves**

Timothy Bayliss AM was appointed as the Director War Graves for the Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) on 11 October 2022 having had acted in the position since the beginning of that year.

Tim has dedicated his life to the defence of Australia and supporting the veteran community, spending more than 3 decades in leadership positions within the ADF, followed by a career in Veterans' Affairs. His extensive experience consists of significant international engagement, including playing a key role in negotiating the United States Force Posture Initiative, and successfully leading the delivery of the 2022 Anzac Day services in Villers-Bretonneux France after two years without services due to COVID.

In his role of Director of War Graves, Tim plays an important part in ensuring those who have lost their lives in the defence of our nation, are commemorated, honoured and never forgotten.





**Professor Terence Campbell**

**Repatriation Medical Authority Chairperson**

Professor Terence Campbell AM, MD (UNSW), DPhil (Oxon), FRACP is Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). He is a Fellow and Past-President of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand and is now Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), having been both Professor of Medicine at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney and Deputy Dean of Medicine at UNSW.

Professor Campbell has held senior medical, academic and management positions and is also currently a Pro-Chancellor at UNSW.

He has served on many committees and councils associated with medicine and medical research and was a Member of the Board of Directors of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute until 2020 having formerly been its Deputy Director.

Professor Campbell has made substantial contributions to research and scholarship and is widely published in his specialist field.

In 2003 Professor Campbell was awarded a Member, Order of Australia (AM) for service to medicine in the fields of clinical pharmacology and cardiology, to the development of medical and health policy, to education, and to the community.

Professor Campbell's term of appointment expires on 30 June 2026.



**Professor Christian Gericke**  
**Specialist Medical Review Council Chair**

Professor Christian Gericke, MD PhD MPH (Cantab) MSc MBA FRACP FAAN, is a Consultant Neurologist, Epileptologist and Public Health Physician. He consults privately in Brisbane and Canberra. He is Clinical Professor of Medicine at the Australian National University and Honorary Professor at the University of Queensland.

Prof Gericke's areas of expertise and research interests include:

- Epilepsy and other neurological disorders
- Medico-legal expert in neurology
- Aerospace neurology
- Safety and quality in healthcare
- Health policy and management

He is an Associate Editor for the journals *Frontiers in Neurology*, *Australian Health Review*, and *PLOS One* and a regular research and ethics panel member for the Australian NHMRC, the European Research Council, the UK Medical Research Council, the UK National Institute for Health Research, and the New Zealand HRC. He chairs the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Research Committee, the Australian and New Zealand Association of Neurologists (ANZAN) Therapeutics Committee, and the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) Ethics Section.

He has acted as an Independent Medical Expert in Neurology for the Supreme Courts in all Australian jurisdictions and the Queensland Coroners Court. He is the Convener of the Australian Government Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC), a Member of the Queensland Neurology/Neurosurgery Medical Assessment Tribunal and a Clinical Advisor to the Queensland Health Ombudsman.

He holds an Advanced Diploma in Medical Law from King's Inns School of Law in Dublin and the Cardiff University Bond Solon Civil and Criminal Expert Witness Certificates. He is a Certified Independent Medical Examiner (CIME), American Board of Independent Medical Examiners, and holds accreditation for AMA 4 and AMA 5 permanent impairment assessments in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania.

## Supporting your Ministerial Office

DVA supports you and your office and staff to effectively carry out your Ministerial duties. You are entitled to Departmental Liaison Officers (DLOs) drawn from DVA. We can also second Departmental staff to your office to support you as Ministerial advisers. We will discuss these appointments with you.

DVA works with the Department of Parliamentary Services to provide you with secure communication and storage in your Parliament House office. The Ministerial, Engagement and Communications (MEC) Division will be your principal liaison for ensuring that the support we provide to you and your office meets your expectations. At your earliest convenience, Paula Goodwin, First Assistant Secretary, MEC, will meet with you and your office to discuss your requirements.

### Departmental Liaison Officer (DLO)

The Prime Minister's Office will advise you of the number of DLOs allocated to your Office. Historically, one DLO has been allocated from DVA. DLOs perform a range of functions and are a key link between Ministers' offices and portfolio agencies, not least in providing a direct point of contact in the office for agency staff. They may also provide quality control regarding routine matters and a feedback point on agency material sent to Ministers.

In the typical situation, much of the paperwork going to Ministers and their offices flows through DLOs. Although DLOs form part of each Minister's working team, they are not formally members of Ministerial staff.

### Communications

DVA can assist you with speeches, media releases, talking points and other information to respond to media enquiries, communications and events.

The Communications Branch consists of 3 sections which handle communication products and channels your office may utilise: the Newsroom, Strategic Communications, and Digital Services and Design.

The Assistant Secretary with oversight of the Communications Branch is Ms Ingrid Nagy. She can be contacted on S 47F and is available to discuss your requirements with your Chief of Staff and Media Relations Officer.

Requests from the Minister's office for communication products or support can be sent to [media.team@dva.gov.au](mailto:media.team@dva.gov.au).

The Media Team provides on-call support on weekends, but not on weeknights, and can be contacted on 02 6289 6466.

An overview of each section and the support it provides to the Minister is outlined below

### The Newsroom overview

The Newsroom section consists of the Media Team and the Executive Communications, Speechwriting and Editorial team. They provide media and communications support to the Minister and DVA Senior Executive, as well as delivering DVA's newspaper for the veteran community – *Vetaffairs*.

#### Media Team

The Media Team manages DVA's engagement with media, including responding to media enquiries and monitoring media coverage. It also writes and fact-checks media releases and opinion pieces for the Minister and DVA, develops talking points for media engagements, and can provide support for media events.

#### Media – Ministerial support

The Media Team supports the Minister with a variety of products and services, including:

- providing talking points for media engagements
- drafting media releases
- providing responses to media enquiries
- fact-checking media statements
- drafting and providing Ministerial letters to the editor and op-eds
- providing statistics and factual information for Ministerial media engagements
- providing transcripts and media clips on the Minister's media engagements or matters relevant to the portfolio
- pitching stories to local news outlets
- following up announcements with media calls.

#### Executive Communications, Speechwriting and Editorial team

The Executive Communications, Editorial and Speechwriting Team is responsible for drafting written materials and speeches for DVA Ministers, Government representatives and members of the DVA Senior Executive. It also produces *Vetaffairs*, which is published 3 times a year and is distributed to approximately 300,000 readers nationwide.

## Digital Services and Design overview

The Digital Services and Design section consists of 3 teams: Web Services, Graphic Design, and Digital and Social Content.

### Web Services – Minister’s website

In addition to managing the Department's external website ([dva.gov.au](http://dva.gov.au)) and the Open Arms website ([openarms.gov.au](http://openarms.gov.au)), the team also manages the Ministerial website ([minister.dva.gov.au](http://minister.dva.gov.au)). All content published to this site must comply with the Digital Transformation Agency’s [guidance on Ministerial content](#), which allows for portfolio-related material that is not of a party-political nature. Out of hours publishing must be pre-arranged.

### Digital and Social Content – ministerial support

The team can assist with social media content where this directly relates to Departmental programs, policies or services. Content drafted by the Department for Ministerial channels must be apolitical. The team may also assist with video messages for portfolio-related events that clearly align with Departmental responsibilities (e.g. Anzac Day).

## Strategic Communications overview

The Strategic Communication team provides strategic solutions to DVA’s communication challenges and helps DVA business areas talk to veterans, families, stakeholders, and the broader Australian public.

### Strategic Communications – Ministerial support

The Strategic Communications team provides opportunities for the Minister to proactively promote DVA policies, programs and services in line with the Department’s communication strategies and plans.

## Security brief

The Chief Security Officer will make contact with your office and arrange a verbal security briefing within 2 weeks.

## Section 2 – Your First 100 Days

You have opportunities for early action across a range of areas where public expectation is high and where improved outcomes for veterans and their families can be achieved

### Royal Commission implementation

The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (Royal Commission) and the lived experience and expertise that were canvassed over the Royal Commission's inquiry underline the need for DVA to significantly reform its systems and processes and the way in which we engage with and support veterans and their families. It is only through undertaking a substantial program of change that DVA will be able to decisively impact veteran suicide and suicidality and the related issues highlighted by the Royal Commission.

There are high community expectations regarding the scale and urgency of the Government action required to respond to the Royal Commission. The Defence and Veterans' Services Commission (DVSC), with legislation supporting its commencement as an independent oversight body by 29 September 2025, is expected to further focus public attention on progress and outcomes.

Also noteworthy is the legislative framework establishing the DVSC in Schedule 9 of the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Harmonisation and Simplification) Act 2025* contains provisions mandating a review of the legislation by the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee prior to its commencement, with a report due by 29 August 2025. Submissions to the Inquiry close on 30 May 2025 and the Department will provide you with a brief on its submission shortly.

The Final Report recommendations relating to DVA are wide-ranging across data and research, healthcare and wellbeing supports, claims processing, transition, the veteran support ecosystem, workforce, culture and service delivery. Across these themes, there are three foundational actions that need to be prioritised to secure successful implementation:

- the establishment of a new agency focused on veteran wellbeing within DVA – This is recommendation 87 and it is pivotal to reforming the way ADF members are supported through separation and transition, how DVA engages with the health and wellbeing of veterans and families, and the rebuilding of trust between the veteran community and government. s 47C, s 47E

s 47E

## Grants

s 47C, s 47E

DVA delivers a suite of grant programs with more than \$12.5 million in annual funding to support the veteran community. The programs support:

- health and wellbeing
- the provision of advocacy services
- education, training and employment
- commemorations.

DVA's grant programs have diverse histories and vary significantly in their purpose, timing and the amount of funding offered.

s 47C, s 47E

In its Final Report, the Royal Commission recommended co-designing new prevention and early intervention wellbeing programs and services, supported by a re-designed grants program for ex-service organisations (ESOs) (Recommendation 87). The Royal Commission also recommended replacing the Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grant Program with an ongoing, demand-driven funding program for professional, paid veteran compensation advocates, with multi-year funding allocations to provide employment stability.

s 47C, s 47E



## Early opportunities

### **Veteran Wellbeing Grants for 2024–2025**

The 2024–25 Veteran Wellbeing Grants round opened in November 2024 s 47C, s 47E

The program provides funding to ESOs for community-based projects that enhance the health and wellbeing of veterans and families.

Eligible organisations can apply for small grants of up to \$50,000 and large grants of up to \$200,000.

s 47C, s 47E

### **Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program for 2024–25**

Saluting Their Service grants provide funding for one-off, commemorative projects and activities that are ready to proceed and where the funding will ensure their completion. The program aims to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australia's service personnel who served in wars, conflicts and peace operations, and their families.

s 47C, s 47E

### **Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grants for 2025–26**

The BEST Grants Program assists the veteran and Defence communities by providing support and resources to ESOs for compensation and/or wellbeing advocacy. BEST grants provide a contribution towards the annual costs incurred by ESOs in providing advocacy services.

s 47C, s 47E

### **Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning Grants for 2025–26**

The Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning Grant Program offers grant funding support to Australian tertiary education facilities to recognise the skills and experience veterans gain from

their military service and to support veterans to undertake tertiary education. The program is providing a total of \$1.65 million to Australian Universities, over three grant rounds. The 2025–26 round is the final round of this program.

s 47C, s 47E

### **Grants in Aid for 2025–26**

The Grants in Aid Program aims to support national ESOs to provide coordinating and representational support for Australia's veteran and Defence community. The program is open to invited national ESOs. It offers funding for projects and activities that assist national ESOs to support their branches, sub-branches and affiliated organisations in performing compensation and/or wellbeing advocacy, or wellbeing support work.

s 47C, s 47E

### **Veterans' and Families' Hubs Program**

Veterans' and Families' Hubs (Hubs) provide a space for veterans' services and advocacy organisations to co-exist and provide integrated support to current and ex-service personnel and families. Hubs provide access to local veteran services, which may include health and mental health services, wellbeing support, advocacy, employment and housing advice, and social connection.

Hubs either provide or facilitate access to these services, integrating support to veterans and families in partnership with ESOs, community and other organisations and state and territory governments.

s 47C, s 47E

## Commemorations

### Commemorations and our obligation to recognise and respect service

Through commemorating military service, we demonstrate to veterans and families that the nation values their service and sacrifice and we reinforce this with the broader Australian community. The source of funding for DVA's commemorative program is Outcome 3: Recognition and Respect, supporting the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and families. The DVA Commemorative Strategy 2024–2029 outlines the delivery of a program of commemorative activities to strike a careful balance of nationally broadcast domestic commemorations marking significant military anniversaries (defined as 25th, 50th, 75th or 100th) and overseas Anzac Day commemorations for which DVA is the lead agency. This year, there are two 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations planned, for the Korean War and the Malayan Emergency.

s 47C, s 47E

### Commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australian service in the Korean War

The Government has committed to marking this significant anniversary in Australia's military history.

s 47E

### Commemorating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 2

There is an opportunity for a small commemorative program to recognise the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 2, noting that for most surviving veterans it will likely be their last opportunity to commemorate a significant anniversary.

s 47C, s 47E

## Commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Australian service in the Malayan Emergency

The Government has committed to marking this significant anniversary in Australia's military history.

s 47C, s 47E

## Statutory appointments

### Statutory appointments in the Veterans' Affairs portfolio

Appointments made within the Veterans' Affairs portfolio by the Governor-General or the Minister for Veterans' Affairs include appointments to statutory positions and bodies. Statutory bodies are statutory offices established on the basis of Commonwealth legislation. Each appointment is actioned subject to the requirements of the relevant Act; therefore, each varies slightly in process, options for extensions and acting arrangements.

The processing of statutory appointments involves the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, DVA executive, business areas within the Department and external stakeholders, including the Australian Public Service Commission, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Prime Minister, Cabinet and the Governor-General. The rules governing statutory appointments are the Federal Register of Legislation, Cabinet Handbook (15th Edition), Federal Executive Council Handbook 2021 and the Merit and Transparency Policy.

Statutory appointments made by the Governor-General include the:

- Commissioners of the Repatriation Commission: President, Deputy President, the Repatriation Commissioner, and the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner
- Members of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission: the Chair and 6 members
- Director of the Office of Australian War Graves
- Director of the Australian War Memorial
- Members of the Council of the Australian War Memorial
- Principal Member of the Veterans' Review Board
- Senior Members, Service Members and Members of the Veterans' Review Board.

All appointments made by the Governor-General require Prime Ministerial or Cabinet approval, prior to proceeding to the Federal Executive Council for approval by the Governor-General.

s 47C, s 47E

## Submissions, reports and Inquiries

s 47C, s 47E

### Senate Inquiry submission into veteran advocacy services

On 13 February 2025, a motion was passed in the Parliament that *the representation of and advice provided by ex-service organisations, commercial entities, not-for-profits and individuals to veterans and families in relation to accessing compensation and income support from the Department of Veterans' Affairs* be referred to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee for inquiry and report by 5 August 2025.

s 47C, s 47E

### Senate Inquiry submission Review of Schedule 9 of the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025* (VETS Act)

Schedule 9 of the VETS Act implements recommendation 122 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide report, by establishing the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission (DVSC), to provide independent oversight and advice to improve suicide prevention and drive better outcomes for serving and ex-serving ADF personnel.

s 47C, s 47E

## DVA's Capability Review response to be published

In 2024, DVA participated in an Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Independent Capability Review. It was conducted in accordance with the APSC's statutory function to review any matter relating to the Australian Public Service under paragraph 41 (2)(j) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The departmental response to the Capability Review Report will be published by the APSC on its website. The publication of the departmental response was delayed by the caretaker period, and it is scheduled to be published on 21 May 2025.

## DEFENCE AND VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

The Draft Strategy was released with the Australian Government response to the Royal Commission on 2 December 202. Public consultation on the Draft Strategy commenced on 28 January 2025 and closed on 7 March 2025. The Strategy sets out the joint approach of DVA and the Department of Defence over the next five years to promoting and supporting wellbeing, through early intervention and prevention, timely access to care and support, and a positive and connected community, while focussing on suicide prevention, and using data to drive positive outcomes. s 47E

DVA and Defence have been co-developing two interdepartmental Strategy action plans, the first focused on actions to empower and support mental health and wellbeing and the second focused on suicide prevention initiatives. Action plans set out the initiatives, programs and services that will achieve the Strategy goals, including distinct and joint actions for DVA and Defence.

### Next Steps

s 47C, s 47E

## Engage with State and Territory Stakeholders through the Veterans' Ministerial Council (VMC)

The Veterans' Ministerial Council (VMC) is the main forum for the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers with responsibility for veterans' affairs to discuss and address national and jurisdictional issues affecting the veteran community. The Council is chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Veterans' Affairs and meets a minimum of once a year.

This forum is supported by the Commonwealth State and Territory Committee (CSTC), comprised of senior officials from relevant state and territory departments. VMC considers how Commonwealth, state and territory governments can work together to better support the wellbeing of veterans in our community.

s 47C, s 47E

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

s 47C, s 47E

[REDACTED]

Parliament passed the *Veterans' Entitlements Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2024* on 13 February. This was an important step in responding to the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which recommended the Government simplify and harmonise the framework for veteran rehabilitation, compensation and other entitlements. From 1 July 2026, all new claims received will be investigated and determined under an improved *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA).

s 47C, s 47E

- [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



## Section 3 – Implementing Your Agenda

### Building Australia's Future

#### 2025 Election Commitments

**Labor is committed to \$793 million to deliver improved healthcare access and affordability for women and girls.**

**Lead Portfolio Health and Aged Care, Related Portfolio Veterans' Affairs and Social Services.**

**Implementation:** This measure commits \$793 million to deliver more choice and lower costs for women. It includes new contraceptive pills on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), better access to long term contraceptives through increased Medicare payments, menopause support including a new health assessment item and training for health professionals plus menopausal hormone therapies being added to the PBS. It also includes 11 additional endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics.

When the Department of Health and Aged Care has implemented the addition of these new items to the PBS and the MBS, this will flow through to DVA's arrangements (the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) and the Repatriation Medical Fee Schedule (RFMS), which largely mirror the MBS and the PBS, through administrative and system updates. This will ensure that eligible veteran card holders have access to these services at the same time as other Australians. s 47C, s 47E

**Pledged \$1 billion for mental health, including new Medicare and Headspace centres, and training 1,200 mental health professionals—benefits expected to extend to veterans with complex needs.**

s 47C, s 47E

**Funding secured for Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. Labor will commit \$744,000 over four years to the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. This new four-year funding commitment is in addition to the Government's existing support for the walkway, including \$186,000 to be delivered in 2025-26.**

s 47C, s 47E

## 2022 Election Commitments - Labor Government (funding rollover beyond May 2025 election)

|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stated commitment:</b>                              | <b>Veterans' and Families' Hubs</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Date announced:</b>                                 | October 2022–23 budget                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Funding amount (if stated):</b>                     | \$46.7 million over four years from 2022–23                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Funding profile / time frame</b>                    | 1 January 2023 to 2026–27                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures:</b> | To expand the Veterans' and Families' Hubs (Hubs) Program and establish eight new Hubs across Australia, with \$5 million allocated per location. The commitment also continues the expansion of the Program into Southeast Queensland and Tasmania. |
| <b>Responsible Area</b>                                | Grants and Hubs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Contact Officer and phone</b>                       | Kirrily Magill, Assistant Secretary, Grants and Hubs Branch, s 47F                                                                                                                                                                                   |

|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stated commitment:</b>                              | <b>Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants Program</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Date announced:</b>                                 | 21 April 2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Funding amount (if stated):</b>                     | \$1.5 million over the forward estimates                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Funding profile / time frame</b>                    | 1 January 2023 to 2026–27                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures:</b> | A Labor Government will contribute to the marking of unmarked graves of First World War veterans. This program will support the Australian Community to mark the private graves of First World War veterans who died post war and are at rest in unmarked graves in Australian civil cemeteries. |
| <b>Responsible Area</b>                                | Grants and Hubs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Contact Officer and phone</b>                       | Kirrily Magill, Assistant Secretary, Grants and Hubs Branch, s 47F                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|                                                        |                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stated commitment:</b>                              | <b>Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway</b>                                             |
| <b>Date announced:</b>                                 | October 2022                                                                     |
| <b>Funding amount (if stated):</b>                     | \$186,000 in 2022–23. Up to \$186,000 per annum over three years                 |
| <b>Funding profile / time frame</b>                    | 1 January 2023 to 2026–27                                                        |
| <b>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures:</b> | Deliver funding for the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord West            |
| <b>Responsible Area</b>                                | Grants and Hubs                                                                  |
| <b>Contact Officer and phone</b>                       | Kirrily Magill, Assistant Secretary, Grants and Hubs Branch, s 47F<br>[REDACTED] |

|                                                        |                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stated commitment:</b>                              | <b>Housing for homeless veterans in Darwin (Scott Palmer Services Centre)</b>                            |
| <b>Date announced:</b>                                 | October 2022–23 budget                                                                                   |
| <b>Funding amount (if stated):</b>                     | \$3.6 million (\$3.05 million in grant funding) over two years from 2022–23                              |
| <b>Funding profile / time frame</b>                    | 1 January 2023 to 2026–27                                                                                |
| <b>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures:</b> | \$3.6 million over two years to build temporary housing in Darwin for veterans experiencing homelessness |
| <b>Responsible Area</b>                                | Grants and Hubs                                                                                          |
| <b>Contact Officer and phone</b>                       | Kirrily Magill, Assistant Secretary, Grants and Hubs Branch, s 47F<br>[REDACTED]                         |

|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stated commitment:</b>                              | <b>Veteran Wellbeing Grants One-Off Program</b>                                                                                                       |
| <b>Date announced:</b>                                 | October 2022–23 budget                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Funding amount (if stated):</b>                     | Up to \$20 million (over one year)                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Funding profile / time frame</b>                    | Grants of between \$150,001 and \$5 million from November 2023 to 30 June 2025                                                                        |
| <b>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures:</b> | To improve the infrastructure, reach and capacity of organisations providing wellbeing services, supports and opportunities to the veteran community. |
| <b>Responsible Area</b>                                | Grants and Hubs                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Contact Officer and phone</b>                       | Kirrily Magill, Assistant Secretary, Grants and Hubs Branch, s 47F<br>[REDACTED]                                                                      |

|                           |                                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Stated commitment:</b> | <b>Veterans' Acute Housing Program</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|



|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Date announced:</b>                                 | The Veterans' Acute Housing Program was announced in June 2024. Grant outcomes were announced on 7 February 2025.                                                                                            |
| <b>Funding amount (if stated):</b>                     | \$24 million over the forward estimates for capital works funded from the Housing Australia Future Fund.<br>\$6 million over the forward estimates for specialist services funded from consolidated revenue. |
| <b>Funding profile / time frame</b>                    | 2024–25 to 2028–29                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures:</b> | Increase the availability of crisis and transitional housing and fund specialist services for veterans and families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.                            |
| <b>Responsible Area</b>                                | Grants and Hubs                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Contact Officer and phone</b>                       | Kirrily Magill, Assistant Secretary, Grants and Hubs Branch, s 47F<br>[REDACTED]                                                                                                                             |

|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Stated commitment:</b>                              | <b>Greenslopes Legacy Family Hub</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Date announced:</b>                                 | 25 October 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Funding amount (if stated):</b>                     | \$2.3 million over two years from 2022–23, including \$1.5 million in grant funding.                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Funding profile / time frame</b>                    | 1 January 2023 to 2025–26                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures:</b> | Grant funding towards construction of a new headquarters for Legacy Brisbane on the old Red Cross site at Greenslopes, Brisbane, which will include a family hub for delivery of support services to families of deceased or injured veterans. |
| <b>Responsible Area</b>                                | Grants and Hubs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Contact Officer and phone</b>                       | Kirrily Magill, Assistant Secretary, Grants and Hubs Branch, s 47F<br>[REDACTED]                                                                                                                                                               |

## Impact of Legislative Reform on Veterans

### Historic aged care reform passes Parliament

Starting from 1 July 2025, the new Aged Care Act will deliver a range of improvements including a tougher regulatory model, strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards and a Statement of Rights to ensure older people and their needs are at the centre of the new aged care system. The new Act also acknowledges older people want to stay in their own homes for longer so they can remain healthy, active and socially connected – enacting a new Support at Home program.

This will flow through to veterans through:

- an increased focus on safety and trauma-aware aged care services which will benefit veterans and their families.
- the Government continuing to pay for all health-related costs and clinical care for all aged care residents, regardless of their income and assets.
- However, there will be a larger means-tested contribution for non-clinical care services from new entrants who can afford to pay. These new contributions and accommodation costs for residential aged care will start on 1 July 2025. The new arrangements will only apply to new entrants to residential aged care from 1 July 2025. Everyone in residential care on 30 June 2025 will maintain their current arrangements until they leave care.

The implementation of the new Support at Home program will not change veterans' entitlements to DVA programs, such as Veterans' Home Care, Community Nursing, Household Services and Attendant Care. s 47C, s 47E

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Section 4 - Significant issues

### Royal Commission – Government response

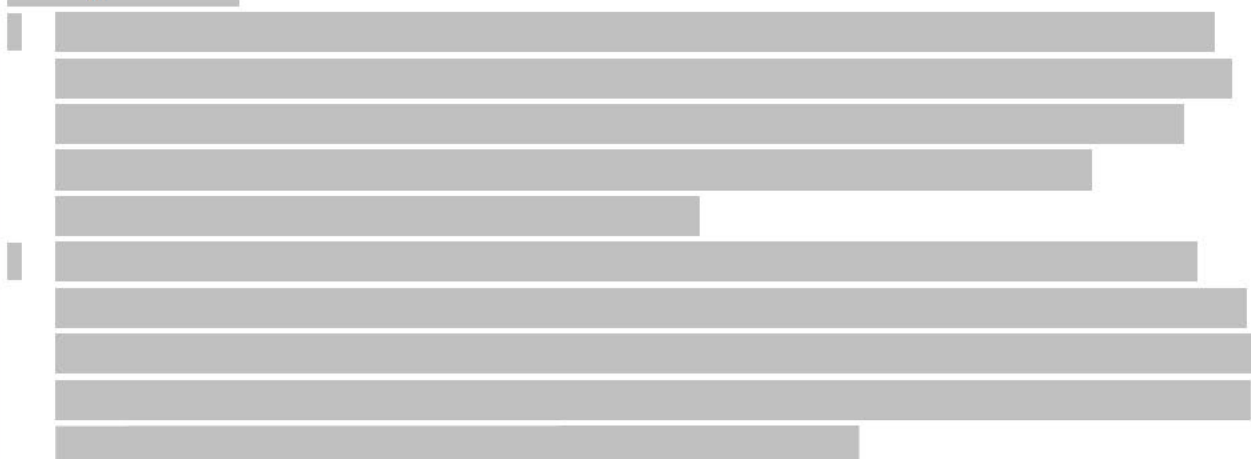
| Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (Royal Commission) was established on 8 July 2021, with the Final Report provided on 9 September 2024, making 122 recommendations.</li> <li>• On 2 December 2024, the Government tabled a full response to the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, agreeing or agreeing in principle 104 recommendations, noting 17 recommendations and not supporting one recommendation in part.</li> <li>• As part of its response, action has been taken in relation to establishing 2 new bodies, supported by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&amp;C): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The Defence and Veterans' Services Commission (DVSC), which will deliver on Recommendation 122 of the Royal Commission to establish a new entity to provide independent oversight and advice to drive system reform and improve wellbeing outcomes for serving and ex-serving ADF members.</li> <li>◦ The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Implementation Taskforce (PM&amp;C Taskforce), will provide advice to Government on the implementation of the Government's response.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Recommendations from the Royal Commission called for fundamental reform across the Defence and Veterans' Affairs ecosystem focusing on culture and leadership, sexual violence and misconduct, health care, transition supports, data and research.</li> <li>• The Department is working collaboratively with Defence and the PM&amp;C Taskforce in developing advice to Government to support the implementation of the response. There will be a series of briefings provided through the PM&amp;C Taskforce where DVA will outline its proposed policy responses for relevant recommendations to achieve the reform asked for by the Royal Commission.</li> <li>• Further briefings will be provided on key themes of the Royal Commission's report and recommendations and the Department's proposed response.</li> </ul> |                                                                                      |
| Contact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Debbie Arnold, A/g First Assistant Secretary, Royal Commission Implementation, s 47F |



## Budget 2025–26 and Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) 2024–25

### Key Points

s 47C, s 47E



### Budget 2025–26

- Additional funding was provided through the 2025–26 Budget to enable DVA to meet the increased demand.
- Through the 2025–26 Budget, DVA received an additional \$47.6 million in 2025–26 for one year, to increase support to the more than 350,000 veterans and families accessing DVA services.
- The 2025–26 Budget provided \$11.9 million in 2025–26 to support continued access to health and support programs for veterans and families.
- DVA's ASL for 2025–26 is 3,490.

### Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) 2024–25

- Through the 2024–25 MYEFO, DVA received an additional \$30.4 million in 2024–25 to increase support to veterans and families accessing services.
- The 2024–25 MYEFO also provided:
  - \$4.5 million in 2024–25 for DVA to co-design, in consultation with the veteran community, a new agency focused on veteran wellbeing and continue consultation on the development of a national ex-service organisation peak body
  - \$1.5 billion in 2024–25 and \$1.8 billion over four years to 2027–28 for compensation payments for veterans
  - \$8.1 million in 2025–26 to support the Australian War Memorial to maintain operations.

### Contact

Yvette Sims, First Assistant Secretary, Technology and Finance Division,  
s 47F



## Claims Processing

### Key Points

- As at 31 March 2025, 99 per cent of the unallocated claims backlog of 41,799 noted in the Royal Commission Interim Report has been finalised.
- Despite significant growth in the number of claims being lodged by veterans, through significant investment, we are finalising more claims than ever before and continue to reduce processing times.
- DVA received 89,530 claims in 2023–24, compared to 72,201 in 2022–23, a 24% increase year on year. In the current financial year to March 2025, 74,767 claims were received up 19.9% from 62,342 for the equivalent period last year. The complexity of claims continues to increase with the current average number of conditions per claim at 4.8, up from 2.6 in 2022, when work on the backlog commenced.
- DVA also continues to complete claims at a consistently high level. In the 2023–24 financial year, DVA made 100,697 determinations compared to 67,814 in 2022–23; a 48.5% increase on the previous year. In the current financial year to March 2025, 75,038 determinations were made, up by 1.6% from 73,845 for the equivalent period last year.
- The average time to finalise claims is decreasing, with the average MRCA IL processing time for the current financial year to date being 301 days, compared to 441 days for the 2022–23 financial year. For MRCA IL claims received in the last twelve months, these are, on average, being processed in 104 days.
- The May 2024–25 Budget provided \$186 million over four years and \$20.6 million ongoing from 2028–29 to increase DVA's workforce by 141 ongoing positions. This additional funding has allowed DVA to increase claims processing staff numbers and continue to improve services. As at 31 March 2025, 1,010.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff were supporting claims processing activities (including labour hire and seconded Services Australia staff), an increase of 466.3 FTE (up 85.7%) since 30 June 2022.
- DVA uses a Department of Finance approved Demand Driven Funding Model (DDFM) to budget resources required to clear the backlog and achieve time taken to process targets. The latest approved claims processing DDFM is based on historic (December 2023) estimates of the number of claims and conditions received, productivity and staffing levels. s 47C, s 47E
- With the additional funding DVA has cleared the unallocated backlog, but with ongoing significant growth in claims and complexity, time taken to process levels are forecast to remain well above the Government's agreed performance levels. DVA is driving continuous improvements in the efficiency and timeliness of claims processing, including through the encouragement of complete claims and front-end loading of better medical advice to guide the trajectory of claims assessment.

- A new methodology for measuring the time taken to process claims was implemented from 1 April 2025, where periods of time that a claim is outside the control of DVA will not be counted towards the overall timeframe. For example, periods of time where we are waiting on medical investigation reports, or further information from the veteran to support assessment and finalisation of a claim.
- Further opportunities could be made through investment in upgrading DVA's legacy ICT systems.

|                |                                                                              |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contact</b> | Tara Cavanagh, First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits Division,<br>s 47F |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

s 47C, s 47E

| Government          | Percentage |
|---------------------|------------|
| Current government  | 100%       |
| Previous government | 0%         |

|                |                                                                                                |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contact</b> | David Pullen, First Assistant Secretary, Service Design and Program Integrity Taskforce, s 47F |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Simplifying compensation by delivering the VETS Act

| Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The passage of the <i>Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Harmonisation and Simplification) Act 2025</i> delivers Recommendation 1 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report, to simplify and harmonise veterans' rehabilitation and compensation legislation.</li> <li>• The main elements of the VETS Act 2025 come into effect on 1 July 2026.</li> <li>• The Department is receiving \$41.4m in 2025–26 to finalise implementation of the VETS Act 2025. This includes continued communication with the veteran and Defence communities, training for advocates and required system upgrades (both processing and client facing).</li> <li>• Implementation is on track.</li> <li>• The VETS Act is expected to result in an additional \$222 million for veteran and family entitlements across the first two years of operation.</li> </ul> |                                                               |
| <b>Contact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, S 47F |



## Professionalisation of Advocacy Services

### Key Points

- The Institute of Veterans' Advocacy (the Institute) is an independent organisation (company limited by guarantee) established to be the national professional association for veterans' advocates. The Institute was a recommendation of an Ex-service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) Working Group.
- The Institute is in the process of finalising its operating and governance arrangements and is planning to start accepting membership registrations from late June 2025.
- The functions of the Institute will include:
  - establishing competency standards, a code of conduct and minimum training requirements for veteran advocates
  - accrediting veteran advocacy service providers, and monitor compliance with continuing professional development
  - providing members with access to a range of benefits and tools, including improved and nationally consistent training and professional development
  - establishing a nationally consistent complaints handling process.
- DVA is working closely with the Institute on its establishment and ongoing operational arrangements.
- To complement the establishment of the Institute, a number of initiatives have been implemented to streamline and simplify the claims process for the benefit of the veteran community, including the requirement that for-profit advocates lodge claims through MyService.
- s 47C, s 47E  
 [Redacted]  
 [Redacted]  
 [Redacted]  
 [Redacted]  
 [Redacted]  
 [Redacted]

### Contact

Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, s 47F

## Access to Health Services

### Key Points

- DVA stakeholders have expressed concerns about barriers to accessing health services under veteran card arrangements, including complex administrative requirements, outdated service offerings, and uncompetitive provider fees.
- The 2025–26 Budget Strengthening Medicare measure will provide an additional 12.5% incentive to practices that bulk bill all eligible clients. This will benefit veterans by increasing access to GP services.
- In the 2023–24 Budget, the Australian Government tripled the Bulk Billing Incentive for certain general practitioner (GP) attendances from 1 November 2023.
- As part of this measure, \$33.3 million over four years was invested to increase the Veterans' Access Payment, which is the equivalent of the Medicare Bulk Billing Incentive. Some veterans continue to experience difficulty accessing a GP who will accept a veteran card. Other areas of pressure in the veteran health care landscape reported by stakeholders include physiotherapy fees, which were the subject of a campaign led by the Australian Physiotherapy Association last year.

### Contact

Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, S 47F

## Veterans' and Families' Hubs

### Key Points

- As part of the October 2022–23 Federal Budget, the Australian Government committed \$46.7 million to expand the Hubs network to support more veterans, including current serving ADF members and reservists, and families across the country.
- Grants of \$5 million were awarded to organisations to establish hubs in all eight locations:
  - Northern Adelaide – Lives Lived Well
  - Southwest Perth – RSLWA
  - Surf Coast/Geelong – RSL Victoria
  - Queanbeyan – RSL LifeCare
  - Hawkesbury – RSL LifeCare
  - Hunter – RSL LifeCare
  - Tweed/North Coast – RSL LifeCare
  - Ipswich – RSL Queensland
- DVA is working with each of these lead organisations to establish the new hubs, which will provide important support and community connection for veterans and families both locally and in the surrounding regions.
- Completion of the eight new hubs is expected by mid-2026, with the official opening of the Queanbeyan Hub on 15 April 2025. Service delivery in some other hubs has already commenced.
- Work is underway to expand the hub network across Tasmania, with RSL Tasmania also being awarded \$5 million to develop a hub and spoke network across the state.
- The new hubs will complement the eight established hubs, which are open and delivering support to veterans and families in Perth, Townsville, Adelaide, Darwin, Wodonga, Nowra, Caboolture and Burnie.

### Contact

Mark Brewer, Deputy President, Veteran Experience and Transition Division,  
s 47F

## Medicinal Cannabis

## Key Points

- Medicinal cannabis is funded under the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) on a case-by-case basis through a prior approval process and in accordance with the DVA Medicinal Cannabis Framework, which is published on DVA's website.
- s 47C, s 47E

- s 47C, s 47E

## Contact

Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, s 47F



## Burn Pits

### Key Points

- 'Burn pits' were used to manage waste in the Middle East Area of Operations.
- Recent media coverage has suggested a possible link between exposure to burns pits and brain cancer and noted differences in Australia and the United States' compensation systems in relation to burn pits as a specific issue.
- All Australian veterans have access to both compensation and treatment entitlements for any medical conditions arising from their service, including exposure to smoke and chemicals relating to burn pits in Middle East areas of operations.
- All members of the ADF who have rendered warlike or non-warlike or equivalent service, including service in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, are able to access treatment under DVA arrangements for any malignant cancer. This treatment is available irrespective of whether the cancer is related to service.

• s 47C, s 47E

### Contact

Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, s 47F

## Terminating Measure: Provisional Access to Medical Treatment program

### Key Points

- The Provisional Access to Medical Treatment (PAMT) program provides access to DVA-funded health treatment for 20 common service-related conditions while a veteran's claim is being processed.
- If a veteran has lodged a claim for one of these commonly accepted conditions, they can access necessary treatment for the condition from DVA while liability is being investigated. If we do not accept the claim, the veteran may choose to appeal that decision.
- Treatment during the appeal period is also covered under the program. This means that a veteran does not have to wait for us to approve a claim before they can access DVA-funded treatment. If a claim is not accepted, the veteran's entitlement to treatment under the program will cease, however DVA will not ask the veteran to pay back the costs of care while we were assessing their claim.
- s 47C, s 47E

### Contact

Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, s 47F

## Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)

### Key Points

- There are increasing concerns among the veteran community about Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries (mTBI) among veterans, including the possible impacts of exposure to repetitive low-level blast over-pressure.
- Recommendation 61 of the Royal Commission was that Defence and DVA establish a brain injury program. This recommendation has been agreed in principle.
- Defence and DVA are establishing an Expert Advisory Panel to provide information, analysis and advice to support future policy development and implementation, which will be jointly Chaired by the Chief of Army and the DVA Secretary.
- DVA is also commissioning a review of international literature, with a specific focus on repetitive low-level blast (LLB) over-pressure exposure.
- Following delivery of the initial literature review, the research will be monitored on an ongoing basis, and an updated report provided every 6 months (for up to 2 years).
- Additionally, DVA's Chief Health Officer has established ongoing engagement with Australia's Five Eyes partners on world-leading research and their responses to this emerging challenge. This has also been outlined as a potential opportunity for you to engage with your Five Eye counterparts.
- The RMA has determined several Statements of Principles that could apply to mTBI. On 28 April 2025, the RMA gazetted a further investigation into blast induced mTBI.
- The RMA has concluded that there is not currently sufficient evidence to link LLB over-pressure with dementia pugilistica.
- The RMA has also previously declared that 'post-concussion syndrome' is not a kind of disease, injury or death that can be connected to service. Where the RMA makes a declaration of this type, claims for that condition cannot be accepted under the VEA or MRCA Acts. However, other diagnoses or SOPs may be applicable.

### Contact

Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, s 47F



## Veterans' Home Care Program and Community Nursing Program Issues

| Key Points                                                       |                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• s 47C, s 47E</li> </ul> | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
|                                                                  | [REDACTED]                                                                  |
| Contact                                                          | Peta Langeveld, First Assistant Secretary, Program Delivery Division, s 47F |

## Veteran Employment Program

| Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Veteran Employment Program (VEP) delivers initiatives that support Australian organisations to improve employment outcomes for veterans.</li> <li>• The VEP promotes the skills veterans bring to the civilian workforce, encourages and supports employers to recruit and retain veterans and build veteran-inclusive work environments and deliver targeted services that support the collective efforts of the veteran employment community.</li> <li>• The VEP offers a range of initiatives including the current 'ex-service people' national advertising campaign, the Veteran Employment Commitment (VEC), the Prime Minister's National Veteran Employment Awards (the Awards) and a range of grants and projects.</li> <li>• The VEP is funded under two NPPs. The 2025–26: Continuing to Support Veterans and their Families, \$1 million until 30 June 2026, (previously, the 2020–21 Broadening the Veteran Employment Program measure) includes the Awards, maintenance of the VEP website and key engagement activities. The 2022–23 Veteran Employment Program measure (until 30 June 2026) includes employer support activities, a national advertising campaign and VEP grants and projects.</li> <li>• The national advertising campaign, launched 10 April 2024, promotes the skills and attributes ADF personnel gain through their ADF experience. The campaign recognises the significant contribution ex-service people make to the civilian workforce.</li> </ul> |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
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- The VEC was renewed in April 2024 and now enables organisations to be recognised at one of three levels – ‘Veteran Employment Supporter’, ‘Veteran Friendly Employer’ or ‘Veteran Employer of Choice’. An organisation’s VEC level is determined by the veteran employment activities they have in place and actively demonstrate. New resources are available to help employers implement and improve their veteran employment policies and practices.
- The Awards recognise the achievements of Australian organisations that make significant contributions to the employment of veterans and ADF partners, as well as celebrating individual veterans and partners who are succeeding as employees and entrepreneurs. 2024 winners were announced at a formal ceremony on 26 November last year.
- The VEP grants and projects are designed to better support veterans move into employment or university education.
- The Recruitment Advisory Service for Employers of Veterans Grant Program provides support to employers to better target and recruit veterans, and support and retain them in their workplaces.
- Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning is a Tertiary Support Grant Program which provides funding to universities. These grants aim to improve veteran pathways to tertiary education by establishing or enhancing recognition of prior learning frameworks to identify the skills and knowledge veterans gain during their service.
- The Supporting Veteran Owned business Grant Program provides funding for training and activities to assist veteran and family members considering self-employment or wanting to build the competitiveness of their existing business. Delivered through the King’s Trust Australia, the program will have an increased focus on veterans under the age of 35 over the next three years.
- DVA is partnering with Future Women for a Jobs Academy project. The project aims to improve job readiness, workforce participation and economic security of women who are currently transitioning or have recently transitioned from the ADF.

s 47C, s 47E

#### Contact

Mark Brewer, Deputy President, Repatriation Commission,

s 47F

## Veteran Wellbeing Grants – One-Off Program

### Key Points

- In November 2023, the Government announced almost \$17 million in grant funding for 21 projects to benefit the wellbeing of veterans and families under the Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) One-Off Program.
- The VWG One-Off Program provides targeted funding for projects that improve the infrastructure, reach and capacity of organisations providing important wellbeing services, supports and opportunities to the veteran community.
- The VWG One-Off Program was designed to complement other national DVA grants programs which support veteran community wellbeing initiatives, such as the annual VWG Program and the Veterans' and Families' Hubs Program.
- Through the VWG One-Off Program, grants of between \$150,000 and \$5 million were made available to enhance infrastructure and services to benefit the health and social wellbeing of veterans and families.

• s 47C, s 47E

### Contact

Mark Brewer, Deputy President, Veteran Experience and Transition Division,  
s 47F



## Commemorations

### Key Points

#### Overview

- DVA delivers annual commemorative services for Anzac Day internationally at significant sites including in Türkiye and France.
- DVA supports the delivery of annual Anzac Day services internationally at Isurava in Papua New Guinea, Sandakan in Malaysia and Hellfire Pass in Thailand.
- Domestic Anzac Day Services are delivered by the Australian War Memorial, and ESOs nationally.
- DVA is also responsible for the management of official memorials overseas (not privately constructed), and official interpretive centres:
  - Sir John Monash Centre – Villers-Bretonneux, France
  - Hellfire Pass – Thailand
  - Sandakan Interpretive Park - Malaysia
  - DVA is developing the Lemnos Remembrance Trail, which includes a website and physical trail, telling the story

#### Commemorative Strategy 2025 to 2029

##### Significant Anniversary Commemorative Services

- 25 June – 75th anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Korean War
- 31 August – 75th anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Malayan Emergency

##### 2026 and beyond Significant Anniversary Commemorative Services

- 14 February 2026 – 75th anniversary of first call up notice issued for National Servicemen's scheme (NASHOS)
- October 2026 – 25th anniversary of Australian service in Afghanistan
- March 2028 – 25th anniversary of Australian service in Iraq
- July 2028 – 25th anniversary of Australian service in the Solomon Islands
- s 47C, s 47E

#### Anzac Portal

- The portal provides online resources to support education and delivery of commemorative services and activities including:
  - managing requests to use the 'Anzac' commercially
  - Anzac Day 'kit bag' - resources including orders of service, speeches and music suggestions
  - commemorative package - sent to more than 18,000 schools and community groups including RSLs each year. This includes a range of printed posters.

#### Contact

Mark Brewer, Deputy President, Repatriation Commission,  
s 47F

## DVA Grants and Governance

### Key Points

- Grants enable the Government to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of veterans, through the funding of community-based organisations, including ESOs, to provide important services to veterans and families.
- DVA delivers a suite of grant programs designed to support a broad range of veteran and veteran community needs.
- DVA grants have various purposes, including supporting veteran wellbeing, employment, the provision of advocacy services, and commemoration.
- DVA grants vary in timing and funding, with several grant programs being relatively small-value and short-term.
- DVA administers grants in accordance with the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024, to ensure transparent and fair grant processes are undertaken.
- Grant funds are expended by an applicant in accordance with the activities outlined in the grant agreement. The grant outcomes are reported on the GrantConnect website ([www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au)) and the funds are generally acquitted at the end of the activity.

### Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants (STS) program

- The STS program supports the commemoration of the service and sacrifice of Australian service personnel in wars, conflicts and peace operations.
- Two categories of grants are available:
  - community grants: up to \$10,000 for local, community-based commemorative projects and activities; and
  - major grants: between \$10,001 and \$150,000 for major commemorative projects and activities that are significant from a national/state/territory/regional perspective.

### Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants (MPG) Program

- In the October 2022 Budget, the Government announced funding of \$1.5 million to establish the Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants Program (MPG Program).
- This program supports work undertaken by the community to identify and mark the graves of veterans of the First World War not eligible for official commemoration by Government and at rest in unmarked graves.

### Veterans' and Families' Hubs (hubs)

- As part of the October 2022–23 Budget, the Government committed \$46.7 million to expand the hubs network with eight new hubs to support more veterans, current serving ADF members, reservists and families across the country.
- The eight new hubs are expected to be operational by mid-2026.

### **Support for Veterans - Scott Palmer Services Centre**

- As part of the October 2022–23 Budget, the Government committed \$3.6 million (\$3.05 million in grant funding) to support the planning, design and construction of the Scott Palmer Services Centre in Darwin.
- The Scott Palmer Services Centre is expected to provide temporary accommodation for homeless veterans, as well as linkages to culturally appropriate housing services and employment support.
- DVA is working with key stakeholders to support the next steps for the Scott Palmer Services Centre.

### **Greenslopes Legacy Family Hub**

- \$1.5 million in grant funding has been allocated to the Legacy Club of Brisbane to support the establishment of their new headquarters and a family hub on the former Red Cross site at Greenslopes, Brisbane.
- s 47C, s 47E

### **Supporting Invictus Australia**

- In 2022–2023, \$9 million over three years (with up to \$8.087 million in grant funding) was announced for Invictus Australia to support teams to participate in the 2023 Invictus Games in Dusseldorf, the 2024 Warrior Games in Orlando and the 2025 Invictus Games in Canada.
- The funding also supports the wider veteran community through Invictus Australia's community engagement programs that encourage veterans' involvement in local sporting and community clubs across all states and territories.
- The 2025 Federal Budget announced an extension of the grant for the 2025–26 financial year.

### **Kookaburra Kids Grants Program**

- Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation (Kookaburra Kids) is a not-for-profit organisation that runs recreational and educational camps, activities and events for young people.
- The 2025 Federal Budget announced an extension of the Kookaburra Kids grant for the 2025–26 financial year.
- This funding will support the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation to continue to deliver mental health support to children aged 8 to 18 years old from Defence and veteran families through the Defence Kids Program.

### **Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grant Program**

- The BEST grant program aims to assist the veteran and Australian Defence Force communities by providing support and resources to ESOs to undertake compensation and/or wellbeing advocacy work. It assists ESOs by providing a contribution to the work of ESOs. It does not fully fund an organisation.



**Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) program (annual)**

- The annual VWG program offers funding for eligible ESOs to deliver community-based projects and activities that support safe, accessible environments for veterans and families, or enable social connection and engagement.
- The VWG program offers small grants of up to \$50,000 and large grants from \$50,001 to \$200,000 for projects and activities that deliver wellbeing support services and activities of broad-scale benefit to the veteran community.

**Grants in Aid program**

- The Grants in Aid program is an annual grant offered to invited national ESOs to fund discrete projects or activities that address a specific problem or issue and deliver a clear benefit to the ex-service community.

**Veteran Recognition of Prior Learning – Tertiary Support (RPL) Grant Program**

- The RPL Grant Program is a three-year grant program that commenced in 2023–24 and offers support to invited Australian tertiary education facilities to recognise the skills and experience veterans gain from their military service. It also supports veterans to undertake tertiary education.
- The grant supports tertiary education facilities to adapt and apply existing credit mapping frameworks (including micro-credentialling), and establish or adapt direct or assisted entry, or recognition of prior learning pathways.
- The final round of the grant program is being offered in 2025–26.

**Veterans' Acute Housing Program**

- The Veterans' Acute Housing Program is providing \$30 million under two grant streams to support veterans who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.
  - \$24 million in capital work funding to build crisis and transitional housing
  - \$6 million to fund organisations to deliver specialist services to address the risk factors of homelessness.
- 13 grants were awarded to 10 organisations in 2025 across the two grant streams.

**Contact**

Mark Brewer, Deputy President, Repatriation Commission,  
S 47F

## Psychedelic Assisted Psychotherapy using MDMA and/or Psilocybin for the treatment of resistant depression

### Key Points

- In mid-2024, Commissions agreed to fund this treatment for eligible DVA clients following a TGA decision in 2023 to allow authorised psychiatrists to prescribe medicines containing MDMA for treatment of PTSD and psilocybin.
- s 47C, s 47E  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

### Contact

Professor Jenny Firman, Chief Health Officer, s 47F [Redacted]



## Open Arms

### Key Points

#### Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling (Open Arms)

##### – 1800 011 046

- Free and confidential support is available 24/7 for current and former serving ADF personnel and their families.
- Open Arms is Australia's leading provider of mental health support and clinical counselling services for Australian veterans and their families.
- Open Arms offers face-to-face, telephone and online counselling, group programs and self-help tools on the website to enable clients to have timely access to high quality mental health care.
- Open Arms is part of DVA and its services are confidential.

#### Safe Zone Support – 1800 142 072

- Safe Zone Support is a 24-hour free and anonymous counselling line for veterans and their families.
- Safe Zone Support offers help, without needing to know who you are.
- It is an **anonymous** and confidential service provided by professional clinicians with an understanding of military culture and experience.
- When you call Safe Zone Support, it is up to you how much or how little personal information you share. Calls to Safe Zone Support are not recorded.
- Current members of the ADF, veterans and families can access Safe Zone Support, anytime, day or night.
- The Royal Commission Recommendation 75 **recommended** a review of Open Arms) to commence in 2027—the review should cover functions, compliance with clinical standards, access availability and delivery model. The Government agreed this recommendation and the Department will be undertaking the review within the timeframes set out by the Royal Commission.

#### Contact

Leonie Nowland First Assistant Secretary, Open Arms - Veterans and Families Counselling, S 47F

## External Scrutiny

## Litigation matters

## Key Points

s 47C, s 47E

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## Contact

Petra Gartmann, First Assistant Secretary, Legal and Audit, Portfolio Chief Counsel, s 47F

## Australian National Audits Office (ANAO) Audits

## Key Points

## Audits Underway

There are 2 ANAO audits underway with DVA

## 1. ANAO Financial Statements Audit 2024-2025

s 47C, s 47E

## Potential Audits

- The ANAO has a list of possible performance audit topics for 2025/2026 which includes a proposed performance audit on [Managing the veteran compensation claim backlog](#). At this stage we do not know if/when it will commence.
- The audit objective is to assess the effectiveness of DVA in managing its backlog of compensation claims under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*, the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

## 2. ANAO Performance Statements Audit 2024-25

s 47C, s 47E

**Open Performance Audit Recommendations**

- DVA currently has 4 open performance audit recommendations relating to 1 Performance Audit: *Evaluation of Australian Government Pilot Programs*
- *Evaluation of Australian Government Pilot Programs* (cross-entity performance audit – published 17 June 2024).
- There are 4 recommendations (recommendations 2,4,5 and 6 of the report) provided to DVA, aimed at strengthening evaluation policies and improving advice to the Australian Government on the outcomes of evaluations.
- DVA is working to enhance guidance related to the evaluation of pilot programs following consultation with the Australian Centre for Evaluation and review of the evaluation component of the DVA Program Management Framework (PMF).

**Contact**

Petra Gartmann, First Assistant Secretary, Legal and Audit, Portfolio Chief Counsel, s 47F

## Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

| Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The former Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Service (Veterans' MATES) program was established in 2004 to support veterans and their families by providing them and their treating health practitioners with information and resources.</li> <li>On 5 February 2024, the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC) withdrew its approval for the Veterans' MATES program.</li> <li>On 9 February 2024, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs directed DVA to close MATES and examine options for possible future programs that provide health benefits to the veteran community while meeting community and stakeholder expectations around ethical and data use requirements.</li> <li>s 47C, s 47E</li> </ul> |                                                                                            |
| <b>Contact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Petra Gartmann, First Assistant Secretary, Legal and Audit, Portfolio Chief Counsel, s 47F |

## Ombudsman

| Key Points                                                     |                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>s 47C, s 47E</li> </ul> |                                                                                            |
| <b>Contact</b>                                                 | Petra Gartmann, First Assistant Secretary, Legal and Audit, Portfolio Chief Counsel, s 47F |



## Parliamentary Committee Inquiries

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inquiry Name</b>                 | The operation and appropriateness of the superannuation and pension schemes for current and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF)                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>DVA submission</b>               | DVA's submission was made on the 28 March 2025 and is publicly available on the APH website. DVA does not administer military superannuation arrangements. DVA's submission notes issues relating to interactions between DVA payments and superannuation payments, which are often points of contention within the veteran community. Submissions closed 28 March 2025. |
| <b>State of Government response</b> | The Finance and Public Administration References Committee will table a report by 5 August 2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Contact</b>                      | Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division,<br>s 47F                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inquiry Name</b>                 | Review of Schedule 9 of the <i>Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025</i>                                                                |
| <b>Lead Department</b>              | DVA                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>State of Government response</b> | Submissions are due to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee by 30 May 2025 and the Committee will report its findings to the Senate by 29 August 2025. s 47C, s 47E |
| <b>Contact</b>                      | Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division,<br>s 47F                                                                                                                            |

|                                     |                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inquiry Name</b>                 | Compensation and income support for veterans                                                                                   |
| <b>Lead Department</b>              | DVA                                                                                                                            |
| <b>State of Government response</b> | Submissions are due to the Committee by 16 May 2025 and the Committee will report its findings to the Senate by 5 August 2025. |
| <b>Contact</b>                      | Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division,<br>s 47F                                                               |



## Fair Work Commission - Gender-based Undervaluation Priority Awards Review

### Key Points

- The Fair Work Commission is reviewing modern award classifications and minimum wage rates on work value grounds, to remedy potential gender-based undervaluation. The review is starting with 5 priority awards:
  - *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Award 2020*
  - *Children's Services Award 2010*
  - *Health Professionals and Support Services (HPSS) Award 2020*
  - *Pharmacy Industry Award 2020*
  - *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Award 2010.*
- These awards cover a wide range of health professionals including counsellors, psychologists, dental therapists and hygienists, dietitians, exercise physiologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, pharmacists, podiatrists, social workers and Aboriginal Health Workers. The awards also cover early childhood educators, workers in the crisis assistance and supported housing sector, social and community services sector and home care sector.
- Review hearings concluded in December 2024, with the Commission reserving its decision on all matters. The Commission released its decision on 16 April 2025, which includes further conferences on some awards. s 47C, s 47E

### Contact

Luke Brown, First Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, s 47F

## Delegations

## Key Points

- The Secretary, the Repatriation Commission, and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, exercise a range of statutory functions and powers under DVA portfolio legislation.
- As the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, you exercise powers under:
  - DVA portfolio legislation (as listed above in the Administrative Arrangements Order (AAO)); and
  - other Commonwealth Legislation.
- Generally, portfolio Ministers delegate to, or authorise, officials to perform functions or exercise certain powers for reasons of efficacy. We will separately brief you regarding the remaking of instruments to enable the delegation and authorisation of powers under the following legislation, to Departmental officials:
  - Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration
  - *Protection of Word 'Anzac' Regulations* and the *Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956*
  - Granting of leave of absence to the Director of War Graves under the *War Graves Act 1980*
  - Item 430.017 of Schedule 1AA of the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* relating to payments to eligible F111 Deseal/Reseal participants
  - *Defence Service Homes Act 1918* (DSH Act) to determine Statement of Conditions in relation to the Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme
  - *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) to approve pharmaceutical benefits determinations and treatment determinations as determined by the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commissions
  - *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) regarding various matters
  - *Long Service Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1976* to grant long service leave and other forms of leave to certain members of the Repatriation Commission, the Veterans' Review Board and the Director of War Graves
  - Paragraph 12(2)(c) of the *Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971* authorising a person to direct another person to leave Commonwealth premises, making failure to leave a criminal offence
  - Section 63 of the *Housing Australia Future Fund Act 2023*, delegating your powers or functions relating to a grant of financial assistance to certain senior officials in the Department.

## Contact

Petra Gartmann, First Assistant Secretary, Legal and Audit, Portfolio Chief Counsel, s 47F

# Legislation

## Administrative Arrangements Order

(dated 13 October 2022 - as amended on 29 July 2024)

### Matters dealt with by DVA

- Repatriation income support, compensation and health programmes for veterans, members of the Defence Force, certain mariners and their dependants
- Commemorations
- War graves
- Defence Service Homes Insurance.

### Legislation administered by the Minister

*Anzac Day Act 1995*

*Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006*

*Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and Their Families First) Act 2019*

*Australian War Memorial Act 1980*

*Compensation (Japanese Internment) Act 2001*

*Defence Act 1903*, in relation to paragraph 124(1)(qba)

*Defence Service Homes Act 1918*

*Defence Service Homes Amendment (Insurance) Act 2025* (Note: the current Order has not been updated to include this Act)

*Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation (2006 Budget and Other Measures) Act 2006*, Item 33 of Schedule 7

*Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (2006 Budget Measures) Act 2006*, Items 44 and 45 of Schedule 1

*Household Stimulus Package Act (No. 2) 2009*, Schedule 4 insofar as it relates to legislation administered by the Minister responsible for Veterans' Affairs

*Military Memorials of National Significance Act 2008*

*Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*, except to the extent administered by the Minister responsible for Defence

*Military Rehabilitation and Compensation (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 2004*

*Papua New Guinea (Members of the Forces Benefits) Act 1957*

*Protection of Word "Anzac" Act 1920*

*Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*

*Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Economic Security Strategy) Act 2008*, Schedule 4 insofar as it relates to legislation administered by the Minister responsible for Veterans' Affairs

*Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Supporting Retirement Incomes) Act 2019*, Schedules, 1, 2 and 3, insofar as it relates to legislation administered by the Minister responsible for Veterans' Affairs

*Social Services Legislation Amendment (Energy Assistance Payment) Act 2019*, Part 2 of Schedule 1

*Treatment Benefits (Special Access) Act 2019*

*Treatment Benefits (Special Access) (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2019*



*Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*

*Veterans' Entitlements (Clarke Review) Act 2004*

*Veterans' Entitlements (Rewrite) Transition Act 1991*

*War Graves Act 1980.*

## Constitutional risk and new government spending

All new and existing spending activities must be supported by the Australian Constitution (and, in many cases, by legislation). There are constitutional limits on the scope of the Commonwealth's power to spend.

Delivering election commitments within your portfolio will require new policy proposals (NPPs) to be developed for consideration and approval by the Cabinet or Prime Minister.

Under existing requirements, the constitutional risk of expenditure proposed in NPPs is assessed by the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS). Under those arrangements, AGS uses four risk ratings (low; medium; high; high (particularly vulnerable)) to categorise the constitutional risk of spending proposals.

Under existing requirements, NPPs with the highest constitutional risk rating of 'high (particularly vulnerable)' cannot be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet. This is because that rating indicates that AGS has identified no constitutional support for such spending.

NPPs with a 'high' constitutional risk can only be brought forward if there is a strong case for not further mitigating that risk. This is because in such cases, while AGS will have identified some reasonable arguments in favour of validity of the spending, it does not think those arguments would be successful.

Where AGS assesses spending proposals as having a 'high' or 'high (particularly vulnerable)' constitutional risk rating, lowering this risk and bringing the policy within the Commonwealth's constitutional powers may require significant modifications to the scope or proposed method of implementing an election commitment.

s 47C, s 47E

