



Australian Government

Updated Australian Government Response to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

September 2026

Updated Government Response

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Volume 1: Recommendations and the fundamentals		
Recommendation 1: Improve the capacity of future Royal Commissions to undertake their inquiries	Note	Note
Volume 2: Serving the nation, and Defence culture and leadership		
Recommendation 2: Improve outcomes and access to support for recruits in ab initio training	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 3: Build the capability of career managers	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 4: Mitigate the adverse impacts of the posting cycle	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 5: Support all serving members to decompress, rest and reintegrate, especially after high-risk experiences	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 6: Improve the procedural fairness of the military employment classification system	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 7: Increase employment opportunities within the Australian Defence Force for members who cannot be deployed	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 8: Maximise workforce retention by addressing factors that contribute to voluntary separation	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 9: Improve organisational culture and leadership accountability to increase member wellbeing and safety	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 10: Develop service-specific action plans to implement the Defence Respect@Work Framework	Agree-in-principle	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 10 from agrees-in-principle to agree. Defence has continued to strengthen the implementation of the Respect@Work Framework through the development of initial action plans for the three services and an Enterprise level action plan for all Groups. These action plans establish a roadmap for enterprise-wide implementation. Defence has also developed a Defence-wide Respect@Work Positive Duty Policy which is scheduled to be implemented in the second half of 2026.</i> <i>The Australian Human Rights Commission is undertaking further research that will inform updates to these initial Respect@Work Action Plans. Updated Action Plans are expected in early 2027. The Action Plans will be subject to ongoing monitoring, with updates and further assessment undertaken as required.</i>		
Recommendation 11: Assess ADF leaders based on upward feedback and performance against culture, health and wellbeing targets	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 12: Consider emotional intelligence and performance against wellbeing targets in selecting leaders to promote	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 13: Co-design a new doctrine recognising that operational readiness depends on a healthy workforce	Agree	Agree

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Volume 3: Military sexual violence, unacceptable behaviour and military justice		
Recommendation 14: Understand the prevalence and effects of military sexual trauma and improve responses to support victims	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 15: Clarify definitions and processes related to sexual offences	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 16: Evaluate training on managing sexual misconduct and make it mandatory for all leaders	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 17: Prioritise the prevention of sexual misconduct in the ADF	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 18: Strengthen workplace protections during sexual misconduct investigations	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 19: Protect victims of sexual misconduct from disadvantage over the course of their careers	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 20: Amend the legislation related to sentencing perpetrators of military sexual offences	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 21: Implement a 'presumption' of discharge for ADF members found to have engaged in certain forms of sexual misconduct	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 22: Adopt a policy of mandatory discharge for ADF members convicted of sexual and related offences	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 23: Record convictions of sexual offences in ADF records and civilian criminal records	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 24: Annually publish anonymised data on outcomes of all incidents of sexual misconduct	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 25: Conduct a formal inquiry into military sexual violence in the ADF	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 26: Foster a strong culture of reporting unacceptable behaviour	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 27: Evaluate outcomes to ensure that Defence has addressed the intent behind recommendations	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 28: Coordinate governance, assurance and policy functions of the military justice system	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 29: Establish a new role to improve training and communication on conducting inquiries	Agree	Agree

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 30: Prioritise the Inspector-General's inquiry into the weaponisation of the administrative system	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 31: Consider how mental health may contribute to poor conduct before recommending administrative termination	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 32: Conduct a merits review when a member's service is terminated for the reason 'retention-not-in-service-interest'	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 33: Seek to understand whether/how involvement in military justice processes contributes to adverse outcomes	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 34: Prioritise the review into the regulations governing court martial panels	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 35: Determine whether support mechanisms for members involved with military justice processes are effective	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 36: Trial a model outside the chain of command for supporting members involved in military justice processes	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 37: Develop a charter of minimum standards for all members involved in military justice processes	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 38: Improve governance processes related to accountability and continuous improvement	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 39: Address risk factors for suicide and suicidality and report on progress as part of enterprise-level risk management	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 40: Improve governance mechanisms from the unit level to the enterprise level	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 41: Build project-management capability so that reform initiatives are successful	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 42: Ensure that future Inspectors-General of the ADF will not have served in the ADF	Note	Note
Recommendation 43: Allow the IGADF to make recruitment decisions for the staffing of their office	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 44: Ensure that staff of the office of the IGADF have the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 45: Improve transparency and accountability of the IGADF by increasing their reporting requirements	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 46: Ensure staff of the IGADF are trained in trauma-informed practice	Agree	Agree

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 47: The IGADF to inquire into all deaths of serving members unless suicide can be excluded as the cause of death	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 48: When a member dies by suicide, appoint a legal officer to represent the interests of the deceased and support the next of kin	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 49: Minimise disclosure restrictions of IGADF inquiry reports and ensure they are fair and understood by the next of kin	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 50: Amend the scope of the IGADF's role to inquire into suicide deaths of former ADF members	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 51: The IGADF to regularly review inquiries into suicide deaths to determine common themes	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 52: Conduct a merits review when a member's service is involuntarily terminated and they submit a redress of grievance complaint	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 53: Give members 21 days to make a complaint after being notified of a decision to terminate their service	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 54: Improve the frequency of military justice-related audits conducted by the IGADF	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 55: Conduct an audit into Defence workplace health and safety risk management	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 56: Improve guidance and understanding of Defence's 'if in doubt, notify' policy	Note	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 56 from notes to agree.</i> <i>A single regulatory program has been established to address Recommendations 56, 57, 59 and 60. Defence is strengthening its approach to notifiable incident reporting to ensure incidents meeting statutory requirements are identified and reported promptly, while embedding a culture of proactive compliance through an "if in doubt, notify" approach. Defence has also developed a Service Nexus definition in consultation with Comcare and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, providing greater clarity for determining work-related connections and supporting timely reporting of notifiable incidents.</i>		
Recommendation 57: Comcare to regularly review ADF determinations of 'service nexus' for suicide attempts and suspected deaths by suicide	Note	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 57 from notes to agree.</i> <i>Comcare, in collaboration with Defence, is developing guidance and resources to clarify Comcare's expectation of Defence regarding 'notifiable' incidents of suicidal behaviour or self-harm.</i> <i>Comcare will also undertake periodic reviews to improve the quality of Australian Defence Force 'service nexus' determinations.</i>		

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 58: Give Comcare access to the National Veterans' Data Asset	Note	Agree-in-principle
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 58 from notes to agrees-in-principle.</i> <i>This recommendation is contingent on the implementation of Recommendation 107 which will establish the National Veterans' Data Asset. The Government expects that once the National Veterans' Data Asset has been established, certain data will be provided to Comcare to facilitate a more proactive approach to regulation.</i>		
Recommendation 59: Defence to participate in Comcare's Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program	Note	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 59 from notes to agree.</i> <i>Defence contributed to Comcare's Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program by participating in a pilot at 23 Squadron, RAAF Amberley which concluded at the end of June 2026. Comcare commenced a three-year inspection program from 1 July 2026. The pilot and program will assist Defence to identify workplace psychosocial hazards, assess effectiveness of existing controls and adopt best-practice approaches to prevention and early intervention, consistent with national Work Health and Safety regulatory expectations.</i>		
Recommendation 60: Improve strategies for harm prevention and early intervention by sharing quality data with Comcare	Agree	Agree
Volume 4: Health care for serving and ex-serving members		
Recommendation 61: Establish a brain injury program	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 62: Establish a research translation centre for Defence and veteran health care	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 63: Reduce stigma and remove structural and cultural barriers to help seeking	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 64: Establish an enterprise wide program to monitor and prevent physical and psychological injury	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 65: Improve access to, timeliness and quality of mental health screening and use the data effectively	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 66: Where possible, support injured members to be rehabilitated at work, within their home unit	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 67: Align Defence's clinical governance framework with the national model framework	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 68: Strike the right balance between upholding confidentiality and disclosing information when a member is in distress	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 69: Improve suicide-prevention training so it is practical, tailored, informed by lived experience and delivered in person	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 70: Revise protocols for responding to suicidal crisis to be in line with clinical best practice	Agree	Agree

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 71: Increase DVA fee schedule so it is aligned with that of the National Disability Insurance Scheme	Note	Note
Recommendation 72: Expand and strengthen healthcare services for veterans	Note	Agree-in-principle
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 72 from notes to agrees-in-principle.</i> <i>The Government acknowledges that coordinated, multidisciplinary and military-informed care is needed to support the health and wellbeing of veterans. The Government will continue to take significant steps to strengthen access to healthcare services. DVA will continue to work across the Commonwealth and with the states and territories on opportunities to improve health services for veterans.</i>		
Recommendation 73: Improve military cultural competency in health professions working with veterans	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 74: Clarify the application of the Privacy Act to veterans to determine whether amendments are necessary	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 75: Conduct an independent review of Open Arms and publish the report	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 76: Develop a postvention framework with experts and those with lived experience of suicide bereavement	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 77: Develop a suite of postvention resources in collaboration with stakeholders	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 78: Prevent, minimise and treat moral injury	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Volume 5: Transition, DVA and support for ex-serving members		
Recommendation 79: Ensure that respect for and recognition of service are embedded throughout Defence and DVA	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 80: DVA to take responsibility for supporting members to transition out of the ADF	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 81: DVA to fund a program to support members' wellbeing during transition to civilian life	Agree-in-principle	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 81 from agrees-in-principle to agree.</i> <i>The Government remains committed to supporting serving members to transition successfully from military to civilian life and recognises the importance of wellbeing, connection and purpose throughout the transition journey. The establishment of the Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency provides the platform for the coordinated delivery of transition and wellbeing initiatives, including a more integrated suite of programs that support members and families before, during and after transition from the Australian Defence Force. This work will include piloting and evaluating different options to support cultural transition across locations and building on existing transition supports to help ensure veterans are connected with the services and assistance they need to thrive after service.</i>		
Recommendation 82: Establish a consistent, locally responsive policy on ex-serving members' access to bases	Agree	Agree

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 83 (a) and (b): Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 83 (c): 'fill the gap' between Defence and civilian training	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 84: Issue separating members with a reference that states their skills, experience and capabilities	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 85: Develop employment pathways for ex-serving members in public sector agencies	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 86: Ongoing funding for Veterans' and Families' Hubs	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 87: Establish a new agency to focus on veteran wellbeing	Agree-in-principle	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 87 from agrees-in-principle to agree.</i> <i>The Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency (the Agency) commenced operations on 1 July 2026 as a distinct function administratively nested within DVA. The Agency is focussed on improving wellbeing outcomes for veterans and families through more integrated and connected support services for veterans and families. The Agency offers tiered services dependent on need including a dedicated website and service directory, Veteran and Family support officers embedded on Defence bases and case management for more complex needs.</i> <i>The establishment of the Agency responds to the need for a dedicated and coordinated focus on veteran and family wellbeing. The Agency currently operates as a Group within DVA while the legislative, staffing, governance, shared services and program-transition arrangements necessary for an Executive Agency status are progressing. The Agency will work across the veteran support ecosystem to improve service integration, strengthen engagement with veterans and families, and support earlier intervention and prevention initiatives, with an immediate focus on transitioning members. The Government will continue to build the capability of the Agency to ensure veterans and their families can access the support they need more easily and effectively.</i>		
Recommendation 88: Develop a national funding agreement on veterans' wellbeing	Note	Note
Recommendation 89: Establish a national peak body for ex-service organisations	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 90 (a): Remove the service differential for permanent impairment compensation	Does not support	Does not support
Recommendation 90 (b): Expand mental health support to all reserve personnel	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 91: Implement combined benefits processing for all initial liability and permanent impairment claims	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 92: Review claims to DVA associated with physical and sexual abuse	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 93: Fund the Transition Medical Assessment Pilot Program on an ongoing and national basis	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 94: Improve timeliness and reporting on information-sharing between Defence and DVA for claims processing	Agree	Agree

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 95: Support the expanded application of 'presumptive liability'	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 96: Ongoing funding for Provisional Access to Medical Treatment	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 97: Consider giving the Veteran Payment to more veterans with physical health conditions	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 98: Strengthen DVA performance targets for claims processing timeframes, and improve transparency	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 99: Improve compensation advocacy by funding professional, paid advocates	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 100: Improve the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the Department of Veterans' Affairs rehabilitation program	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 101 (a): Enable veterans to choose their rehabilitation provider and to self-manage their budget for approved household assistance on an opt-in basis	Note	Agree-in-principle
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 101 (a) from notes to agrees-in-principle.</i> <i>The Government has delivered significant reforms to improve veterans' choice, autonomy and access to services. In response to Recommendation 101(a)(i), since March 2025, veterans accessing rehabilitation services and support through DVA's Rehabilitation Program are provided with the details of all contracted rehabilitation providers and can choose their provider. The Government has addressed the intent of Recommendation 101(a)(ii) and the underlying issue of delays in provider payments through administrative and ICT improvements, resulting in significantly faster processing of provider invoices.</i>		
Recommendation 101 (b): Reimburse veterans for travel costs to see their preferred healthcare providers	Agree	Agree
Volume 6: Families, data and research, and establishing a new entity		
Recommendation 102: Implement and improve upon the Defence Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Family and Domestic Violence	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 103: Improve the support, communication and services provided to Defence families	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 104: Improve the profile, resourcing and impact of the Defence Family Advocate	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 105: Improve coordination with coroners and the National Coronial Information System	Note	Note
Recommendation 106: Establish a suicide database of serving and ex-serving members	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 107: Establish the National Veterans' Data Asset	Note	Agree-in-principle
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 107 from notes to agrees-in-principle.</i> <i>The Government recognises the importance of comprehensive and high-quality data to improve the understanding of veteran wellbeing, suicidality and health, and to support evidence-based policy, research and service delivery. Following Government investment in the 2026-27 Budget, implementation activities for a National Veterans' Data Asset commenced from 1 July 2026. Defence, DVA, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the National Suicide Prevention Office will continue to work together to improve the sharing, integration and use of data to better support the wellbeing of veterans and the families of veterans.</i>		
Recommendation 108: Ensure that all relevant jurisdictions and entities regularly provide data to the National Veterans' Data Asset	Note	Note
Recommendation 109: Defence to report annually on its progress towards data maturity	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 110: Review Defence's data assets and address issues with their quality, management, integration and use	Note	Agree-in-principle
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 110 from notes to agrees-in-principle.</i> <i>Defence is applying more practical and measurable standards to its One Defence Data (1DD) Platform including minimum metadata requirements and stringent attribute-based access controls to ensure data consistency, management and quality. Direction to Defence data custodians regarding accountabilities for data quality and management of priority data sets, including the development of high quality data, will achieve and maintain the highest standard of data management and achieve the intent of the Royal Commission's recommendation.</i> <i>Defence has strengthened its management of Priority People Data through the establishment of an integrated Data Management and Assurance Framework, providing clear governance, accountability and oversight arrangements for key data assets. To support continuous improvement, Defence has implemented a Data Quality Issue Register and established performance metrics, ensuring data quality issues and program performance are regularly monitored and reviewed. In addition, Defence has undertaken a review of its enterprise data frameworks and released an updated Defence Data Quality Framework, enhancing the consistency, quality and reliability of people data across the organisation and supporting more informed decision-making.</i>		
Recommendation 111: Achieve a 'gold standard' rating for Defence datasets related to suicidality and suicide	Note	Agree-in-principle
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 111 from notes to agrees-in-principle.</i> <i>Defence has strengthened governance and assurance of Priority People Data through the establishment of an integrated Data Management and Assurance Framework, providing clear accountability and oversight for critical data assets. Supporting tools, guidance and reporting arrangements have been embedded through the RCDVS Data Management Assurance Program, including a Data Quality Roadmap and Reporting Framework. Since June 2026, Defence has also commenced regular reporting on Priority People Data quality outcomes, enhancing oversight and driving continuous improvement in data quality.</i>		
Recommendation 112: Include data on suicide and suicidality in the enterprise-wide Defence data catalogue	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 113: Ensure commanding officers access and use quality data for continuous improvement of wellbeing metrics	Note	Agree-in-principle
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 113 from notes to agrees-in-principle.</i> <i>Defence is uplifting its data and research capability. It is developing a number of research dissemination and data visualisation solutions that will inform Commanding Officer's decision-making.</i>		
Recommendation 114: Defence and DVA to prioritise research into veteran health and wellbeing, and publish their work plans	Agree	Agree

Recommendation	Initial Government Response	Updated Government Response
Recommendation 115: Defence and DVA to publish their research into veteran health and wellbeing	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 116: Improve the quality, evaluation, translation and sharing of research findings	Agree-in-principle	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 116 from agrees-in-principle to agree.</i> <i>Defence and DVA are continuing to centralise the research and evaluation functions in both departments to deliver an enhanced Defence-DVA research agenda. Defence and DVA have strengthened arrangements to improve the quality, coordination and impact of research into current and ex-serving ADF member wellbeing. Defence established the Defence People Research and Evaluation Hub in January 2026 and the Defence Human Research and Evaluation Governance Board in February 2026 to oversee governance, prioritisation, evaluation and translation of people-focused research.</i> <i>Complementing these reforms, DVA is implementing five-year Research and Evaluation Strategies, and has established a strategic research and evaluation consortium through VF-LINK. Research translation will be strongly emphasised in these strategies and through VF-Link arrangements. Together, these initiatives are strengthening research governance, improving collaboration across Defence and DVA, and enhancing the evidence base used to inform policy, programs and services for current and ex-serving ADF members.</i>		
Recommendation 117: Establish an expert committee on veteran research	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 118 (a): Continue the existing Census question on ADF service in 2026 and in future censuses	Agree	Agree
Recommendation 118 (b): Direct the ABS to include an additional question on year of separation for ex-serving members in the Census	Note	Note
Recommendation 119: Improve understanding of veteran health by adding questions to Australian Bureau of Statistics surveys	Agree-in-principle	Agree-in-principle
Recommendation 120: Increase funding for research into veteran health and wellbeing	Note	Agree
<i>The Government has amended its response to Recommendation 120 from notes to agree.</i> <i>The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is providing \$10 million for research into veteran health and wellbeing, and funding opportunities are also available through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), including the Traumatic Brain Injury Mission.</i> <i>Additionally, the NHMRC has created an Expert Advisory Panel with representatives from Defence, DVA, the National Suicide Prevention Office and the university sector to advise on a grant opportunity into veteran health and wellbeing.</i>		
Recommendation 121: Enable research into the health and wellbeing of Defence families	Note	Note
Recommendation 122: Establish a new statutory entity to oversee system reform across the whole Defence ecosystem	Agree	Agree

