



Royal Commission Implementation Committee

Meeting Overview

25 November 2025

Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

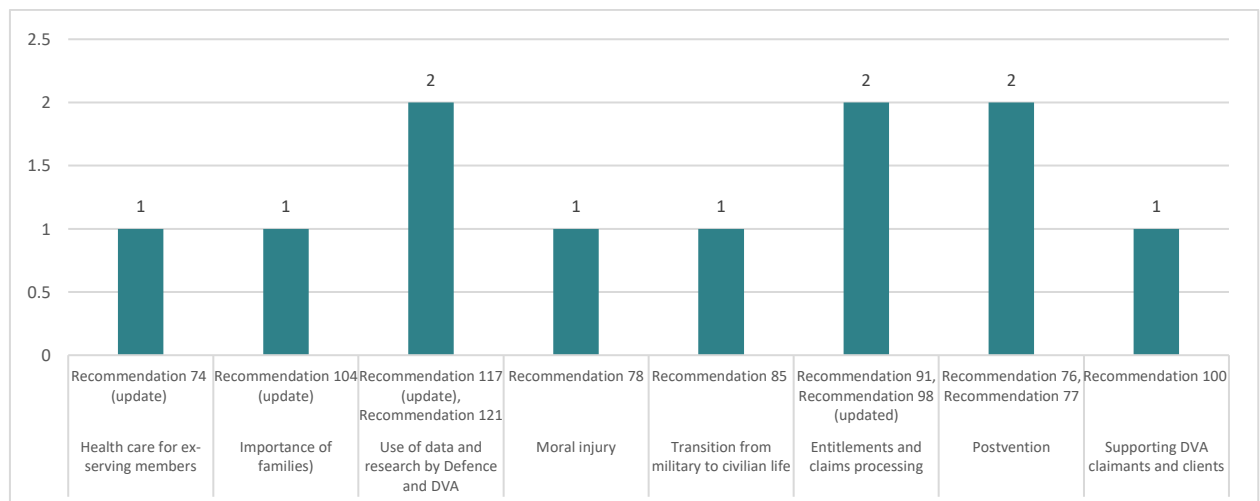
The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Royal Commission Implementation Committee (RCIC) met on 25 November 2025 to discuss activities under way to support the delivery of DVA led or joint-led Recommendations.

Forward Work Plan

RCIC members discussed the Forward Work Plan and agreed to minor amendments to better align with evolving priorities.

The RCIC noted that one recommendation has been implemented (pending closure), with a further three recommendations on track to be implemented (pending closure) by the end of 2025.

Recommendations for discussion by theme



Veterans' Ministerial Council Priorities

The RCIC noted the update on planning for the next Veterans' Ministerial Council (VMC) meeting, scheduled for 10 December 2025.

Update from Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C)

The Head of the Royal Commission Implementation Taskforce provided an update on activities underway at PM&C, noting the Taskforce is due to conclude on 19 December 2025.

Update from Defence

The RCIC noted the update from the Chief of Personnel, Department of Defence and Deputy Secretary, Defence People, including ongoing progress across Defence-led activities.

Recommendations with upcoming milestones

The RCIC noted an update on the following recommendations with milestones due for completion in 2025:

Recommendation 74: clarify the application of the Privacy Act to veterans to determine whether amendments are necessary

- RCIC members noted an update to Recommendation 74 which aims to enhance DVA's legislation in relation to information and data sharing to improve health, wellbeing and safety outcomes for veterans and their families.
- Work on this recommendation considers current legislative settings (Privacy Act 1988, DVA legislation and other relevant legislation, such as the Data Transparency and Accountability Act 2022), including existing legislative functions and powers in key areas of wellbeing, transition support, and research and data use.

The RCIC **NOTED** the update provided for Recommendation 74

Recommendation 104: improve the profile, resourcing and impact of the Defence Family Advocate

- The RCIC noted an update on activities completed and underway, to address Reaccommodation 104.
- DVA's focus on this recommendation is:
 - (a)(ii) formalising the relationship between the Defence Family Advocate and the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner; and
 - (b) appropriately staff and resource the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner and their office to improve outcomes and ensure that veteran families are represented in policy design, decision-making and advocacy.
 - (c) investigate whether shared administrative support for both office holders may further assist collaboration and support the efficiency of their operations.

The RCIC **NOTED** the update provided for Recommendation 104

Recommendation 117: establish an expert committee

- The RCIC noted an update on activities completed and underway since September 2025 to address **Recommendation 117**.
 - To ensure continued consultation between DVA and Defence in co-design and development of the key outputs identified in the endorsed Project Plan, a joint

Defence/DVA working group has been established and continues to meet on a weekly basis.

The RCIC **NOTED** the update provided for Recommendation 117.

Update on recommendations

The following recommendations were considered and discussed, with updates provided on progress to date and agreed next steps:

Recommendation 78: prevent, minimise and treat moral injury

- The RCIC noted an update on activities completed and underway to address Recommendation 78.
- DVA is working across a range of projects to identify and mitigate the risk of moral injury among current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families.
- This includes the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program (VCP), which provides continuity of chaplaincy support after separation from the ADF – particularly for at-risk veterans and families – through the direct provision of pastoral care, spiritual health, and support for veterans experiencing moral injury.
- This program is designed for transitioning members of the ADF, veterans and their families and is currently funded until 30 June 2026.

The RCIC **NOTED** the update provided for Recommendation 78 and **ENDORSED** the project plan.

Recommendation 85: develop employment pathways for ex-serving members in public sector agencies

- The RCIC an update-on activities completed and underway to address **Reaccommodation 85**.
 - A tri-agency Steering Committee and Working Group comprising DVA, Defence and APSC has been established. The Working Group meets fortnightly and the Steering Committee monthly.
 - The Working Group is developing a detailed project plan for the Steering Committee's review and endorsement by the end of November 2025.
 - VetPaths will run in 2025 and will continue to be delivered, adapted and improved in future years to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and considers any legislative amendments.

The RCIC **NOTED** the update provided for Recommendation 85 and **ENDORSED** the project plan.

Recommendation 98: Strengthen Department of Veterans' Affairs performance targets for claims processing timeframes, and improve transparency

- The RCIC noted an update on work completed to date to address Recommendation 98.
 - DVA has implemented a number of strategies to support performance; including stronger client messaging around the need for lodgment of complete claims and performance benchmarking for delegates and claim support officers.
 - Despite significant growth in the number of claims being lodged by veterans, DVA are finalising more claims and continuing to reduce processing times.

The RCIC **NOTED** the update provided for Recommendation 98

Recommendation 121: enable research into the health and wellbeing of Defence families

- DVA aims to address this recommendation by building a stronger understanding of the needs of Defence and veteran families through research, data collection and analysis.
- This includes prioritising veteran family research, coordinating Defence and DVA research strategies/priorities, Implementation and evaluation of the Joint Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030, Commissioning the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) to undertake the Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Factors Data Strengthening project, and Informing support for veteran families.

The RCIC noted the update provided for Recommendation 121 and **ENDORSED** the project plan.

Any other business

RCIC members considered an out-of-session request in lieu of the meeting scheduled for 28 October 2025, including updated project plans for:

Recommendation 76: develop a postvention framework with experts and those with lived experience of suicide bereavement

Recommendation 77: develop a suite of postvention resources in collaboration with stakeholders

- Following the September RCIC meeting, activities have been completed as outlined in the brief for Recommendation 76. Additionally, the following activities have been completed by DVA in respect of Recommendation 77:
- In conjunction with Open Arms staff, a presentation was attended by DVA staff on the SANE digital mental health platform that has been piloted as a veteran and family suicide prevention tool.
- SANE have recently acquired Grief Line and are working on enhancing postvention and grief resources for the Australian community. There is the potential to consider how these can be included into an expanded digital platform for veterans and families impacted by suicide bereavement.

Recommendation 91: implement combined benefits processing for all initial liability and permanent impairment claims

- While the CBP model as proposed suits the needs of many veterans, there will always be cases where CBP is not an appropriate fit for a veteran's circumstances. For example, some veterans may only want to seek liability for their condition so they can access medical treatment and not progress to a claim for PI compensation at that time.

- In addition, veterans may seek a reassessment of their level of PI without lodging any new IL claims, because they are experiencing a deterioration in their previous level of impairment due to their already accepted conditions.
- DVA has implemented CBP and is committed to the continuous improvement and roll-out of this processing model with the Client Benefits Division (CBD). CBD currently has two teams undertaking CBP; Team One processes MRCA combined benefits and Team Two processes DRCA combined benefits claims. •
- The continuation of CBP is subject to further decisions but is not well suited to a context where decisions are being made on a more timely basis, and there is an emphasis on treatment and stability in PI conditions before PI decision making occurs.

Recommendation 100: improve the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the Department of Veterans' Affairs rehabilitation program

- While Recommendation 100 was targeted only at performance measures, DVA has established a cross-functional team in late July 2025 to examine the program settings, to develop reform options focused on reimagining the program, while also addressing Recommendation 100 (a) and (b).
- This work is being progressed in parallel with work on enhancing treatment, including in relation to proposed alignment of medical elements of rehabilitation plans with wider enhanced care coordination proposals.
- This work has identified options to:
 - Implement a focus on purpose and recovery within rehabilitation plans through prevention, treatment and rehabilitation activities.
 - Focus the program on vocational and wellbeing outcomes
 - Increase the involvement of families in rehabilitation plans and outcomes; and
 - Enhance the delivery settings for the program – including to strengthen provider accountability, embed outcome-based performance measures, and reduce unnecessary administration.

The RCIC **ENDORSED** the out-of-session request circulated on 27 October 2025, in lieu of the scheduled meeting on 28 October 2025.

The next meeting of the RCIC is scheduled for 20 January 2026.