

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance the Prime Minister’s Veterans Employment Program, which aims to increase employment opportunities for veterans by raising awareness of the unique skills and experience that veterans can bring to the civilian workplace. This included an investment of \$8.3 million over four years from 2018-19 to further develop, implement and promote the Program, and \$4.3 million to fund additional services such as skills translation and CV writing from 1 July 2020 through the <i>Support for Employment Program</i>. <p>The 2019-20 Budget also included a measure to further enhance the Prime Minister’s Veterans’ Employment Program. The Government committed \$16.2 million to the <i>Enhanced Employment Support for Veterans – Grants Program</i>, which will provide funding to assist not-for-profit organisations, including Soldier On, Team Rubicon and the RSL to deliver innovative veteran employment programs.</p>
15	<p>The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs develop a two-track transition program for serving members leaving the ADF. Those identified as being in 'at risk' groups or requiring additional assistance due to their circumstances should be able to access intensive transition services. These intensive transition services should include additional support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claims case management; • healthcare, mental health and wellbeing support; • employment assistance programs; • social connectedness programs; and • health and wellbeing programs. 	<p>This recommendation is substantially complete.</p> <p>See responses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 5, regarding the Special Operations Forces Pilot and the Annual Veteran Health Check; • Recommendation 8, regarding the Wellbeing and Support Program; • Recommendation 14, regarding the Veteran Payment and other 2018-19 Budget measures to assist transitioning Australian Defence Force (ADF) members. <p>DVA staff attend every Defence transition seminar nationwide and provide formal briefing, as well as one on one advice. ADF members are able to arrange follow-up interviews with staff to ensure all potential entitlements have been considered in their transition plan. Where necessary, DVA staff will liaise with other ADF representatives to resolve any issues prior to transition.</p> <p>The Productivity Commission’s (PC’s) final report of its inquiry into compensation and rehabilitation for veterans, A Better Way to Support Veterans, was submitted to Government on 27 June 2019. The report was tabled in Parliament on 4 July 2019. The report proposed fundamental reforms of the veteran support system, across structures, governance, legislation, policy, and service delivery.</p> <p>The Government is considering its response to the PC final report.</p> <p>The Client Support Framework, including the Triage and Connect function, has been implemented. This provides a single front door for all staff to escalate complex and high risk clients for assessment and tailored response to their needs.</p>

Senate Inquiry into Suicide by Veterans and Ex-service Personnel (2017) Recommendations
Progress of Implementation as at January 2020

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<p>Implementation of the Framework has been communicated to staff nationally by way of face-to-face training. This training has provided staff with an understanding of the expanded client risk indicators and how to identify these to prompt escalation of clients to Triage and Connect.</p> <p>Recruitment of additional staff with clinical qualifications in mental health and related conditions is ongoing. The employment of clinical support case managers across the Client Support Framework is assisting with the assessment and provision of support to veterans and families who are identified as complex or high risk. Introducing this capability into our existing Coordinated Client Support (CCS) teams augments the existing case coordination skills within these programs. Staff in these programs are located in most service delivery sites and provide an accessible point of referral and support for client escalations being managed by all client facing staff, regardless of their business function.</p> <p>Government has funded 10 additional Case Coordinators in the CCS program, who will be a combination of trained health clinicians and claims experts, to assist veterans through the claims process and facilitate access to the services they need.</p>
16	The committee recommends the Australian Government issue all ADF members transitioning into civilian life with a DVA White Card.	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>As per the response to Recommendation 5, the Department issues a White Card to all separating members with at least one day of continuous full time service.</p> <p>In addition, the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant is being implemented to make it easier to recognise and respect the contributions of all veterans. Legislation enabling the Covenant passed Parliament on 22 October 2019. The Covenant is supported by the Veterans' Recognition Program, which includes a redesign of existing DVA health cards, separate veteran and reservist lapel pins, and an oath to provide an additional commitment of respect to Australia's veterans.</p>
17	The committee recommends that the Career Transition Assistance Scheme include an option for veterans to undertake a period of work experience with an outside employer.	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>Defence has a comprehensive employment package for permanent ADF members consisting of housing, medical, remuneration (including superannuation), and professional development opportunities that assist with our people providing military service, often in dangerous circumstances, for Australia. The employment package also supports families who are an important factor in enabling our members to undertake their unique roles.</p> <p>When ADF members transition from undertaking permanent military service to civilian life, this can be a significant life changing event and period of uncertainty for a member and their family. Defence recognises</p>

Senate Inquiry into Suicide by Veterans and Ex-service Personnel (2017) Recommendations
Progress of Implementation as at January 2020

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<p>this and has a comprehensive program to support this period of transition. Transition services are offered to those members who have more than one day of permanent military service.</p> <p>Defence is committed to ensuring members have access to the right support, at the right time, especially those who are vulnerable or at risk. Members have access to primary and specialist mental health care, inpatient care (where required), and occupational rehabilitation. Members are assessed individually for their treatment needs.</p> <p>Transitioning Australian Defence Force (ADF) members can access up to 23 days of Approved Absence under the Defence Force Transition programs (formerly known as the Career Transition Assistance Scheme), dependent upon individual circumstances.</p>
18	<p>The committee recommends that the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) conduct a review into mechanisms to further support veteran employment in the Australian Public Service and the public sector.</p>	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>The Australian Public Service Commission is supporting veteran employment in the Australian Public Service (APS) with a toolkit for ADF Veterans. This toolkit includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information for veterans seeking employment in the APS • a table that aligns ADF rank to the APS classification structure; and • a practical guide for veterans applying for jobs in the APS.
19	<p>The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs review the support for partners of veterans to identify further avenues for assistance. This review should include services such as information and advice, counselling, peer support and options for family respite care to support partners of veterans.</p> <p>(Continued...)</p>	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>The Productivity Commission's (PC's) final report of its inquiry into compensation and rehabilitation for veterans, A Better Way to Support Veterans, was submitted to Government on 27 June 2019. The report was tabled in Parliament on 4 July 2019. The report proposed fundamental reforms of the veteran support system, including an expanded family support package (Recommendation 19.2).</p> <p>The Government is considering its response to the PC final report.</p> <p>A literature review of support to families was also completed in 2017 and DVA has undertaken a stocktake of services available to veterans' families to inform ongoing development of family support measures.</p> <p>The Family Support Package, providing \$7.1 million over four years, was implemented on 1 May 2018. The measure provides additional support for veterans eligible under the <i>Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004</i> (MRCA) who have rendered warlike service and for the partners of MRCA veterans with warlike service who may have died while rendering such service, or whose death was a death by suicide and is related to their service.</p>

Senate Inquiry into Suicide by Veterans and Ex-service Personnel (2017) Recommendations
Progress of Implementation as at January 2020

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<p>In recognition of the critical support a family can provide, and the challenging family circumstances that may impact on a veteran’s rehabilitation, veterans, and their nominated family members may access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted childcare support, when needed to reduce barriers to participation in rehabilitation (capped limit each financial year); and • practical life skills counselling for nominated family members. <p>In addition to this support, widowed partners may also access home help support, to assist with the functioning and maintenance of their primary residence. The PC report recommended an expansion to the measure with a view to access being based on need, rather than type of service a veteran had provided. DVA consulted participants of the DVA Female Veterans’ and Veteran’s Families Policy Forum in August 2019 on how support for families under this package may be maximised. DVA will use information from the PC report, the DVA Female Veterans’ and Veterans’ Families Policy Forum consultation, existing stakeholder feedback and an internal review of the first year of implementation of the Family Support Package to inform any future proposals of how to better support families.</p> <p>The 2019-20 Budget provided funding of \$6.2 million, to allow all recipients of the Partner Service Pension to maintain access for at least twelve months after separating from their veteran partner, regardless of their marital status. Where the veteran has a mental health condition recognised by DVA and there was an unsafe or abusive domestic environment to the partner or their family prior to separation, former partners will remain eligible to receive the Partner Service Pension until they enter a new relationship.</p> <p>The national rollout of the Open Arms Community and Peer Program includes a dedicated Family Community and Peer Advisor role. This Family Peer will utilise their lived experience to support families through challenges they may face during the transition process, especially those related to mental health issues. The Family Peers will also support widows, widowers and other family members of deceased veterans. Additionally, the Family Peers will provide assistance and support for the partners of current serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members in concert with the Defence Community Organisation and other Defence family support organisations. A Family Liaison Officer position is being trialled in one location in order to provide a continuity of care to veterans and their families after leaving military service.</p> <p>Open Arms remains committed to consultation with key stakeholders, through forums such as the Veterans’ Families Forum at the Invictus Games in 2018, and the annual DVA Female Veterans and Veterans’ Families Policy Forum. Ongoing consultation to identify service gaps and how services may be further tailored to better support families of current serving and ex-serving ADF members is occurring and informing service delivery.</p>

Senate Inquiry into Suicide by Veterans and Ex-service Personnel (2017) Recommendations
Progress of Implementation as at January 2020

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<p>The DVA Female Veterans and Veterans' Families Policy Forum leverages the lived experiences of female veterans and veterans' families to inform future policy and service delivery options.</p> <p>The 2019 Forum was held in Canberra in August 2019, and was attended by 83 participants from the female veterans and veterans families' communities, almost double the number of attendees at the 2018 Forum. These women represented various different cohorts, including (but not limited to): current and former serving female veterans; mothers; partners; siblings; war widows; extended families; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; LGBTIQ+; and culturally and linguistically diverse people. Work is underway to progress the implementation of a number of ideas generated at the Forum.</p> <p>On 31 July 2019, the Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel, the Hon Darren Chester MP, announced the membership of the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service (the Council). The role of the Council is to provide informed advice directly to Government, drive coherent policy outcomes and advocate on behalf of women and families united by defence service. The Council is built on the foundations of contemporary lived experience, inclusivity, collaboration, compassion and respect. Members of the Council represent the broad cross-section of the veteran community and include partners, parents, widows, current and ex-serving members, reservists and chaplaincy. These members all bring an interest and passion for supporting veterans and their families.</p> <p>The Council held its inaugural meeting in August 2019 and agreed to focus on three key issues: family support, ADF spouse/partner employment, and female veterans. The Council will meet three times per year.</p> <p>The Minister's independent National Advisory Committee (NAC) on Open Arms met in June 2019. The two-day meeting was dedicated to Open Arms' future family focus, with discussions on individual experiences as a family member, the Open Arms Community and Peer Program, the current supports available and shaping future supports for families. The Committee's discussion focused on how to position family members and deserving recipients of support, not only as a carer of a veteran, but also as an individual.</p> <p>In July 2019, the Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel endorsed amended Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Open Arms Regional Advisory Forums (formerly Regional Consultative Forums) as proposed by the NAC. The new ToR were developed to enhance the advice being provided to the Minister through the NAC, by engaging in productive local consultation that will include a focus on family issues. The ToR have been implemented and RAF meetings held nationally in October and November 2019 with discussion focusing on future family focus and wellbeing.</p>

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
20	<p>The committee recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Australian Government expand the Veterans and Community Grants program to support the provision of alternative therapies to veterans with mental health conditions; and • the Department of Veterans' Affairs consult with ex-service organisations and the veteran community regarding avenues to reform the Veterans and Community Grants program to support the provision of alternative therapies to veterans. 	<p>In the Australian Government response to the Committee's report, the Government <i>agreed in principle</i> to this recommendation:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Government agrees to examine funding options for the ex-service community to support alternative therapies and wellbeing activities through a strategic review of the Department of Veterans' Affairs grants programs. As part of this review, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will consult the ex-service community with expertise in this area and health professionals regarding avenues to support alternative therapies for veterans.</i></p> <p>This recommendation is substantially complete.</p> <p>In February 2019, DVA engaged an external consultant, Geoff Leeper Yarrabee Consulting, to provide an independent perspective on DVA's current grants operating model, and advise on possible enhancements to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's grants programs. The review examined the extent to which DVA's grant guidelines support the provision of alternative therapies for veterans with mental health conditions.</p> <p>The Department has started implementing the report's early recommendations, including: moving some grant assessment processes back in-house, simplifying grant application forms and working on decreasing the number of grant funding rounds per year. The Department is currently considering the final report of the review.</p>
21	<p>The committee recommends the Australian Government fund a trial program that would provide assistance animals for veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) stemming from their military service in order to gather research to support the eventual funding of animals for veterans with PTSD and/or other mental health conditions through the Department of Veterans' Affairs.</p>	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>DVA is funding a \$1.9 million, four year Assistance Dog Research Trial being conducted by La Trobe University in partnership with the Centre for Service and Therapy Dogs Australia (CSTDA). The Trial began in mid-2018 and is expected to conclude in 2022. The trial aims to determine the effectiveness of psychiatric assistance dogs for veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Evolution Research is undertaking an independent evaluation of the trial.</p> <p>Up to 20 veterans will take part in the Research Trial, with approximately 18 months for training and bonding before the dog is placed with a veteran on a permanent basis. DVA funding support covers all required resources, including the purchase, training, and ongoing maintenance costs for the dog as well as the data collection and evaluation. The trial has been limited to the geographical regions of Melbourne, Geelong and Bundoora.</p>

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<p>Recruitment has been completed for cohort 1, in which six veterans joined the Trial. They are currently all progressing through their therapy dog training program with CSTDA. Cohort 2 recruitment closed on 25 September 2019 with six additional veterans in this cohort. The remaining eight places will form cohort 3. Thus far, seven veterans have been accepted into cohort 3 based on the CSTDA assessment and once their on-boarding process is completed, will begin the therapy dog training program.</p> <p>DVA recognises the emerging evidence supporting the use of assistance dogs as an adjunct to treatment and management of PTSD; for example, the outcome of the trial conducted by Veterans Affairs Canada announced in October 2018. In addition to the trial, DVA has engaged a panel of assistance dog providers to provide psychiatric assistance dogs to eligible veterans with PTSD. Providing assistance dogs will allow the Department to support those veterans in need while continuing the current research and evaluation with La Trobe University, which aims to develop evidence and understanding of the opportunity that assistance dogs can provide in supporting the treatment of PTSD for veterans. A limited tender was undertaken to gain access to assistance dogs for veterans in need as early as possible, and an open tender was released on 19 November 2019 to expand the panel of providers.</p>
22	<p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government provide funding to support the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create and maintain a public database of services available to veterans; and • provide an information service to assist veterans and families connect and access appropriate services provided by ex-service organisations and others. 	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>A ‘Need Help Now’ button appears on the right hand side of the home page of the DVA website. After clicking on the button, the user is taken to a Need help now? page with links to DVA general enquiries, Counselling services (24 hour assistance), Other DVA and Open Arms contact information and External Supports for at risk clients. The External Supports for At Risk Clients page provides various phone contacts and online links to services and supports, for veterans and families, such as counselling services, emergency and crisis support contacts and health support. This resource is also available internally, for use by DVA staff in referring vulnerable clients.</p> <p>The Open Arms Community Engagement Teams work with local communities to assist veterans and their families to access a range of services and supports, including DVA’s web based information resources, and services provided by ex-service organisations and other community organisations. Through targeted engagement of key organisations, Open Arms is establishing strong links within the community to reduce barriers and ensure streamlined access to holistic care for veterans and their families. These teams will also assist rural and remote veterans to access appropriate mental health and community services in their local areas.</p> <p>Open Arms recently expanded the support to veterans and their families with the integration of the successful AT-Ease initiative. AT-Ease products include five websites, four mobile apps (The Right Mix, Op</p>

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<p>Life, High Res and PTSD Coach), a suite of booklets, brochures and other resources that can support veterans and their families to live well. Veterans and their family members can now access health and wellbeing resources unique to the military experience in one location.</p> <p>The Open Arms website provides a link to the Defence Engage portal, a further resource which current, transitioning and former ADF members and veterans; their families, and those involved in their support, can use to locate support services. Engage simplifies the process of accessing support by providing information on not-for-profit services available from a range of service providers.</p>
23	<p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government establish a Bureau of Veterans' Advocates to represent veterans, commission legal representation where required, train advocates for veterans and be responsible for advocate insurance issues.</p>	<p>In the Australian Government response to the Committee's report, the Government <i>agreed in principle</i> to this recommendation:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>The Government supports veteran advocacy and agrees with the Committee that the current advocacy system needs further review. The Government will provide \$1.7 million over two years to undertake a scoping study on the possible operational models for professionalising veterans' advocacy services. The Government agrees to consider the Committee's recommendation for a Bureau of Veterans' Advocates alongside other advocacy models, including those put forward by ex-service organisations through this scoping study, and will consult the veteran community about future directions in veteran advocacy.</i></p> <p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>In response to this Inquiry, \$1.7 million was committed to undertake a scoping study on veterans' advocacy and support services. Mr Robert Cornall AO was commissioned to undertake the study, and delivered his report to Government in late 2018. It was publically released on 13 March 2019.</p> <p>The Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping (VASSS) Study found that the current model with its reliance on volunteers is unsustainable and made 12 recommendations, including the establishment of two independent bodies, the first to manage training of advocates and the second to deliver advocacy services. Some of the Study's recommendations were subsequently considered by the Productivity Commission (PC) in its report A Better Way to Support Veterans.</p> <p>The PC submitted its report to Government on 27 June 2019. The report was tabled in Parliament on 4 July 2019. The report proposed fundamental reforms of the veteran support system, including proposals for changes in advocacy and wellbeing supports (Recommendations 12.1 to 12.7 inclusive). The Government is considering its response to the PC final report.</p>

Senate Inquiry into Suicide by Veterans and Ex-service Personnel (2017) Recommendations
Progress of Implementation as at January 2020

No	Recommendation	Actions in response to the recommendation
		<p>Recommendations of the VASSS Study will be considered by the Government alongside those of the PC report and the related Joint Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Inquiry Report into Transition from the Australian Defence Force.</p>
24	<p>The committee recommends that the Australian Government establish an independent review of the representation of veterans before the Veterans' Review Board (VRB). This review should assess whether the rights of vulnerable veterans are being adequately protected and whether further support mechanisms for veterans appearing before the Veterans' Review Board are required.</p>	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>The Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping (VASSS) Study report was publicly released on 13 March 2019. The VASSS Study considered the representation of veterans before the Veterans' Review Board (VRB) and recommended that the prohibition of lawyers be maintained. This recommendation was supported in principle by the Productivity Commission in its report <i>A Better Way to Support Veterans</i>, which also made other recommendations on the role and operation of the VRB (Chapter 12 of the report).</p> <p>Recommendations of the VASSS Study will be considered by the Government alongside those of the PC report and the related Joint Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Inquiry Report into Transition from the Australian Defence Force.</p>