



Ex-Service Organisation Round Table

Venue: Level 9 Conference Room, Lovett Tower, Canberra

Date: Thursday, 15 August 2013

Time: 10:00am – 4:20pm

Meeting No: 23

Attendees

Mr Simon Lewis PSM	Chair, Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs, President, Repatriation Commission Chairman, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission
Mr Shane Carmody	Deputy President, Repatriation Commission Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission
Major General Mark Kelly AO DSC	Commissioner, Repatriation Commission Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission
Major General Gerard Fogarty AO	Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission
Mr Gordon Blake	Australian Veterans and Defence Services
Ms Anne Bonner	War Widows' Guild of Australia
Mrs Narelle Bromhead	Partners of Veterans Association of Australia
Lieutenant Colonel David Catterall (Retd)	Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women
Rear Admiral Ken Doolan AO RAN (Retd)	Returned and Services League of Australia
Mr Ken Foster OAM JP	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Colonel David Jamison AM (Retd)	Defence Force Welfare Association
Mr Tim McCombe OAM	Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia
Mr Terry Nolan	Australian Special Air Service Association
Mr Russell Pettis FAIM	Naval Association Australia
Mr Allan Thomas JP	Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemaker Veterans' Association
Mr Michael von Berg	Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
Mr Charles Wright	Legacy Australia Council

Proxies / Guest

Group Captain Richard Kelloway OBE (Retd)	Royal Australian Air Force Association
Ms Karlie Brand	Soldier On
The Honorable Len Roberts-Smith RFD QC	Defence Abuse Response Taskforce
Mr John Hodges	Returned and Services League of Australia

DVA Participants

Ms Judy Daniel	First Assistant Secretary, Health and Community Services
Mr Neil Bayles	Acting First Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Support
Ms Narelle Dotta	First Assistant Secretary, Corporate
Dr Graeme Killer AO	Principal Medical Advisor
Ms Leonie Mack	Assistant Secretary, Client and Communications Branch
Ms Gayle Anderson	Assistant Secretary, Service Development and Defence Relations



Dr Christine McPaul	Assistant Secretary, Community Aged Care and Transport
Mr Richard Magor	Assistant Secretary, Income and Support Grants
Ms Michelle Glanville	Acting Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Entitlements Policy
Brigadier Chris Appleton CSC (Retd)	Director, Office of Australian War Graves
Ms Danielle Cunningham	Director, Grants, TIP and Bursaries

Apologies

Major General Dave Chalmers AO CSC	First Assistant Secretary, Client and Commemorations
Ms Carolyn Spiers	Principal Legal Adviser
Air Vice-Marshal Brent Espeland AM (Retd)	Royal Australian Air Force Association
Ms Kylie Emery	Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission

Secretariat

Ms Brooke Ellis	Acting Director, Stakeholder and Centenary Liaison
Mrs Annie Sutton	Assistant Director, Stakeholder and Centenary Liaison
Ms Amanda Jordan	Senior Secretariat Officer

Observers

Ms Melanie Brocklehurst	Executive Adviser, Defence Abuse Response Taskforce
Mr Bill Clisby	Executive Officer, Repatriation Commission
Mr Lindsay Cuthbertson	Graduate, Repatriation Commission
Mr Brian Eastman	Director, Rehabilitation & Entitlements

Agenda Item 1. Opening Remarks and Introductions

Mr Shane Carmody, acting Chair, opened the meeting and advised members the following changes:

- the Chair, Mr Simon Lewis PSM, was required to attend a Secretary's meeting at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and would be joining the meeting upon its completion;
- Rear Admiral Ken Doolan AO RAN (Retd) would be joining the meeting mid-morning, Mr John Hodges was representing the Returned and Services League;
- Mr Richard Kelloway was welcomed as a proxy for Air Vice-Marshal Brent Espeland AM (Retd), Royal Australian Air Force Association; and
- Mr Ken Foster OAM JP representing the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA) was welcomed to his first ESO Round Table meeting as National President.

Apologies were received from Ms Kylie Emery, Member Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, Major General Dave Chalmers AO CSC, First Assistant Secretary, Client and Commemorations and Ms Carolyn Spiers, Principal Legal Adviser.

The acting Chair advised the Living Longer Living Better agenda item has been postponed due to the caretaker period and that an update on this topic would be provided at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 2. Minutes and Action Items from Meeting 21; 27 March 2013 and Meeting 22; 14 May 2013

Mr Bayles requested an amendment on page five of the 27 March 2013 minutes as follows:



Item 6 - MRCA review and Consultation update:

Mr Bayles acknowledged the consultation to date and advised further consultation on the MRCA Review recommendations will occur in April 2013 with individual ESOs prior to consideration by the Government as part of the 2013 Budget process.

It should read... *as part of the 2014 budget process.* With the exception of this amendment, the minutes of both 27 March 2013 and 14 May 2013 were accepted as true records of the meetings held.

An update on the following two open action items included:

- Action Item 21/4 – Mr Magor to develop and circulate a paper on *Long Tan Bursary Eligibility Options* to members' out-of-session.

Mr Bayles advised the *Long Tan Bursary Eligibility Options* paper was yet to go to the Military and Rehabilitation Compensation Commission (MRCC) for consideration; once this has occurred the paper would then be circulated to members. Mr Bayles advised there were three options to extend the scheme. Current funding level allows 50 bursaries per year – any extension will require further funding by the Department or various existing funds. DVA are focused on supporting individuals and families on a case by case basis. He advised one option included in the paper was to extend the scheme to grandchildren of Vietnam veterans.

- Action Item 21/2 – National Broadband Network and Personal Response Units
The Chair advised this would be discussed under agenda item 17.

Agenda Item 3. Discussion Papers on Refining the Appeal Process to a Single Pathway; and the Future of Veterans' Advocacy

Mr Bayles advised the two discussion papers for consultation were circulated on 18 June 2013 and were drafted to be controversial to generate robust discussion.

Mr Bayles informed members the Single Appeal Pathway would be included in the Government's 2014 Budget and the Government will be briefed upon completion of the consultation period to ensure proposals are within the budget context.

Members supported the opening of the Alternative Dispute Resolution in principle, noting the delegate and advocate are primary level based and would continue to liaise with the claimant directly, particularly in times of dispute resolution.

The generational change in veterans was discussed broadly, members noted that younger veterans preferred to seek advice from qualified people and to have the option to access online courses and e-learning modules rather than face to face.

There was discussion around the need to improve training standards, the revitalisation of the TIP program and its partnership between the department and ESOs and on views regarding advocacy. Mr Hodges advised the RSL National Veterans' Affairs committee was reconvening to formulate RSLs views on advocacy next week.

Mr Bayles reminded members the consultation process will remain open until 30 September 2013, members advised their respective organisations were considering the papers and would provide comments by the due date.

Agenda Item 4. Training and Information Program (TIP) Accreditation Working Party

Mr Kelloway provided an overview of the paper provided to members on the report from the Working Party on TIP accreditation. Mr Kelloway advised that TIP have implemented a 10 year plan which included moving accreditation from an information exchange style to a competency based style of learning. The joint objective is to ensure all veterans receive all of their entitlements.



Discussions addressed the topic of ESO representatives, most of who are volunteers, and the concern that should the process become more complicated it may result in a decline of volunteers. Advocates need appropriate training and tools to ensure they are providing clients with an accurate, timely and professional response.

Agenda Item 5. BEST Funding – Round 15 outcomes and future steps for Round 16

Funding outcomes for BEST Round 15 is \$2.788 million (GST exclusive), compared to \$2.673 million (GST exclusive) in BEST Round 14 (2012-2013). There were 141 applications received, compared to 194 in BEST Round 14. 135 successful applications were approved by the Minister on 7 July 2013. BEST Round 15 included 15 new applications that did not apply for BEST Round 14.

General observations regarding outcomes from the Round 15 framework noted the change of the funding mechanism created a redistribution of funding. 97 organisations received increased funding since Round 14. The Round 15 framework outcomes have been available on the departments website since 7 July 2013.

The workload funding formula developed in consultation with the ESO RT members for BEST Round 14 (2012-2013) was acknowledged as a transparent and equitable way to calculate grants and this would be continued for BEST Round 15.

There may be scope for further improvements in BEST Round 16, discussions will commence post election.

Agenda Item 6. Soldier Recovery Centre

Mr Wright provided an overview on his submission regarding Reservists and their access to Soldier Recovery Centres.

Major General Fogarty AO responded advising that Reservists injured in any way due to their service are entitled to have their treatment funded by the Commonwealth Government. Prior to 1 July 2013, DVA were responsible for rehabilitation, post 1 July 2013 the Australian Defence Force are responsible.

General Fogarty explained that the Commander Joint Health Command, Rear Admiral Robyn Walker, is responsible for the integrated recovery teams. The Soldier Recovery Centre was introduced to provide ongoing care and management for long term needs, and it is not a treatment facility. The Soldier Recovery Centre is only Army specific, and provides a place for members to undertake meaningful work whilst they are undergoing a long rehabilitation process.

General Fogarty advised Reservists are encouraged to attend an on base medical centre for any medical issue whether it is mental or physical. Should this option not be available, they are advised to call 1800 I AM SICK (1800 426 7485).

Agenda Item 7. Soldier On

The Chair welcomed, Ms Karlie Brand, Chief Operations Officer of Soldier On, who provided members with a PowerPoint presentation explaining its role.

Ms Brand advised Soldier On's vision is to give wounded Australians access to the world's best standard of care and support achieved by:

- Enhancing Australia's ability to care;
- Inspiring wounded soldiers and their communities; and
- Empowering our wounded to achieve their goals.



Ms Brand spoke about Soldier On's Patron in Chief – Corporal Mark Donaldson VC, and identified a number of high-profile Australian ambassadors who will provide support and will endeavor to expand awareness of Soldier On's role.

Action 23/1 A copy of the Soldier On PowerPoint presentation be circulated to members.

Agenda Item 8. Defence Abuse Response Taskforce

The Chair welcomed The Honorable Len Roberts-Smith RFD QC, Chair of the Defence Abuse Response Team (DART) to provide an update on the Taskforce.

Mr Roberts-Smith advised the Taskforce are independent from the Australian Defence Force and are located within the Attorney General's Department. However, all monies paid out by the Taskforce are paid from the Australian Defence Force budget. The Taskforce has been operational for approximately nine months and has received around 2,400 complaints.

Mr Roberts-Smith was asked how the reparation payment is assessed and the impact on the claimant if they already have a claim with the department. He responded that individuals must meet specific criteria assessed by an Independent Reparations Assessor to be eligible to receive a reparation payment, and that the payment is for acknowledgement of the abuse and is not a compensation payment therefore there is no impact on the claimant if they are an existing DVA client.

Complexities relating to income test exemptions and asset test exemptions were discussed, including the amendment to the income assessment act to ensure the reparation payments are not counted as income noting it may be an issue if they are counted as assets. The department and DART have a mechanism in place to ensure no one falls through the cracks.

Agenda Item 9. Establishment of a regulation under the MRCA to support the provision of information from DVA to the DART

Ms Glanville informed members that DVA is committed to assisting DART by providing a specialised service to clients submitting claims for abuse and facilitating a process for sharing information with the Taskforce. DVA implemented a dedicated Melbourne based team and in August 2012 appointed social workers to receive and manage all new claims for abuse.

Ms Glanville advised the DART Scheme is independent to DVA therefore any compensation claim from DVA is considered separately from any DART investigation.

A Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared to allow information sharing between the DART and the department. In all cases, consent from the client to share their personal information will be sought. Regular meetings between DVA and DART will continue to ensure the processes and support for applicants remains relevant and aligned.

Agenda Item 10. MRCA Terminology

Mrs Bonner spoke to her submission regarding the terminology used to describe widowers and partners who are compensated for the death of a veteran or member of the Australian Defence Force.

Ms Glanville advised consultation was undertaken with the War Widows' Guild, Legacy and selected contemporary widows seeking their views on alternative options for the terms 'wholly dependent partner' and 'war widow/er'. Feedback obtained from the consultation process was not compelling therefore a legislative change to the terminology was not supported.

The consultation process identified the term "death benefit" would be replaced with "compensation following death".

Action 23/2 Resend a copy of the letter sent to the War Widows' Guild Australia, dated 26 July 2013 regarding the Commission's decision on terminology.



Agenda Item 11. VEA Offsetting

Mr Blake spoke to his submission regarding the request for an update on the implementation of the new methodology used to calculate permanent impairment compensation; and requested an update on the progress of the retrospective recalculations.

Mr Bayles advised the new methodology recommended by the Review of the Military Compensation Arrangements was implemented as of 1 July 2013. Recalculation of compensation assessments made between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2013 using the new methodology will commence in January 2014.

Mr Bayles confirmed that if the new calculated rate is less than the current rate, then the current rate will continue for retrospective payments.

Action 23/3 Provide members with a copy of the revised calculations in the new methodology.

Agenda Item 12. Impact of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on existing support arrangements

Colonel Jamison spoke to his submission regarding the impact of the NDIS on existing support arrangements for veterans provided by DVA, specifically how the NDIS is to be implemented, including a time frame, what will be covered under the scheme and will there be any changes to current arrangements for veterans.

Dr McPaul advised the scheme has been renamed DisabilityCare Australia. DisabilityCare Australia will launch six sites over the next three years with the ACT and NT joining the first stage in July 2014.

DisabilityCare Australia will work with people who have a permanent disability that significantly affects their communication, mobility, self-care or self-management to ensure they receive the required support that is reasonable and necessary for their needs.

DVA has been working closely with the Department of Families, Health, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to ensure that the needs of the veteran community are considered in the development of DisabilityCare policies and that there will be no reduction in benefits or services to eligible veterans and war widows/widowers are entitled to receive through DVA.

Anecdotal evidence of homeless veterans and serving members living on the streets or in their cars was raised. Mr Carmody reminded members this issue was raised approximately four years ago at an ESO Round Table meeting and advised the paper on Homelessness would be re-circulated to members.

Agenda Item 13. Anzac Centenary update and Managing Attendance 2015

Mr Evans provided an update on the Anzac Centenary Program and the Gallipoli Ballot 2015.

Anzac Centenary Program

- In parallel with establishing an implementation framework, DVA is implementing the Anzac Centenary Program;
- the Anzac Centenary Public Fund is now open and receiving funds, monies raised through the Public Fund will help to implement a variety of commemorative events with focus on the travelling exhibition and major State / Territory projects;
- the Anzac Interpretive Centre in Albany is on track to be opened before 1 November 2014; and
- a Request for Tender for a specialist planning and delivery contractor for the Albany convoy commemorative event is in the marketplace.

Mr Evans advised the guidelines for the use of the logo are available on the website, and that applications for the use of the word 'Anzac' are approved by the Minister.



Gallipoli Ballot 2015

On 10 May 2013, the Minister assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Honorable Warren Snowdon MP, announced ballot arrangements for Australians planning on attending the Anzac Day commemorations at Gallipoli on 25 April 2015. The ballot arrangements represent a fair, equitable and transparent approach to the allocation of attendance passes. The ballot is expected to be opened for registrations on 1 November 2013 and will close on 31 January 2014. Advice will be provided to individuals on the ballot outcome in March 2014. There will be a ballot waitlist so if any ballot offers are declined, the next candidate on the waitlist will be offered the position. Ballot recipients will be provided a minimum of six months to make appropriate travel arrangements.

Official representatives at Gallipoli 2015 are likely to be state heads, heads of government and defence force chiefs, or their nominated representatives. Some of the places available to Australians will be reserved for special representatives including Widows of Australian First World War veterans, direct descendants of veterans of the Gallipoli campaign, Australian veterans who have qualifying service or who have deployed on any operations outside Australia and for representative secondary school children and their chaperones.

Ticketek were the successful tenderer for providing the ballot and ticketing services, KPMG are the independent auditors.

Agenda Item 14. Office of Australian War Graves update

Brigadier Appleton presented a PowerPoint presentation providing updates on the following;

a) Australian Remembrance Trail (ART)

- The ART is currently undergoing a four year redevelopment with the last element to be completed in 2016;
- Passchendaele Memorial Museum opened a new gallery in July 2013;
- Ploegsteert Interpretive Centre is almost complete and will be opened in November 2103;
- Fromelles Visitor Centre and Museum is currently under construction and due to be opened in July 2014;
- roadworks at Villers-Bretonneux for improved access and parking is due for completion before Anzac Day 2014; and
- a Virtual Visitors Centre will be developed for people that are unable to attend the ART in person.

b) Australian National Memorial, New Zealand

- The site for the memorial is in Wellington directly across from the NZ National War Memorial;
- the back drop to the monument will be Australian Eucalypt trees, the monument itself will be built on a floating platform to withstand earthquakes; and
- the memorial will be opened before Anzac Day 2015.

c) Vietnam Veterans Education Centre

- The Vietnam Veterans Education Centre in Washington USA will be completed in 2016;
- 'The Wall' is an underground development and the design is well advanced;
- Australian Government has contributed \$3.3 million; the US has contributed \$92 million;
- locating and contacting family members of the 521 families whose names will be in the memorial has commenced;
- 390 have already been contacted, with a further 70 families pending.



d) Honoring Our War Dead

- \$8.1 million will be spent over two years to rebuild over 500 WWI war graves.
- a range of activities including replacement headstones, plaque refurbishments, upgrades to memorials and assessments on Gardens of Remembrance and War Cemeteries are well underway.

e) Bengahzi War Cemetery

- 248 headstones were damaged during January 2012;
- the Libyan government have paid for the restoration of all damaged memorials; and
- this work was completed in May 2013.

Agenda Item 15. Consultation Framework Review updates

National Consultation Framework Review

Major General Kelly AO DSC advised the survey on the National Consultation Framework had concluded and thanked members for their contribution. The survey results have been analysed and a draft report has been compiled for consideration by the Steering Committee, with recommendations provided to the Secretary for consideration. Forum members will be advised of the outcomes once the process is finalised.

National Consultation Forums

Mr Carmody provided members with an overview of the Deputy Commissioners' Consultation Forums that had occurred since the last ESORT meeting. Some of the items discussed included:

- VVCS eligibility;
- TIP;
- BEST funding and the role of advocates; and
- Single Appeal Pathway and Future of Veterans' Advocacy.

Agenda Item 17. National Broadband Network and Personal Response Units (PRS)

Dr McPaul advised members of the outcomes from the meeting between DVA and the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) on 22 July 2013. DBCDE advised that at least one major Telco will be developing a fixed line service as a part of the NBN rollout. DVA has been invited to be a part of a Telecommunications Alliance Working Group which will involve all key parties in the NBN rollout. Ongoing discussions are being held with all key NBN and PRS parties.

Dr Killer advised the Personal Response Units with the new NBN technology is being trialled in Armidale and Coffs Harbour. Dr Killer and Ms Daniel will provide updates on the trial as appropriate.

Agenda Item 18. Changes to Application Forms for Qualifying Service and Education Assistance

Ms Glanville advised members that the Education Schemes and Qualifying Service Forms have been approved by the Repatriation Commission and are in the process of publication for distribution. The form had minor amendments made to allow the sharing of data with other departments and also has the ability to improve communication with our clients by requesting their mobile number and email addresses. The changes consolidated the various Qualifying Service forms into four primary forms and three supplementary forms.



Agenda Item 19. Report on the Care of ADF Personnel Wounded and Injured on Operations

Ms Anderson advised members that the Joint Steering Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade tabled its report in Parliament entitled 'Care of the ADF Personnel Wounded and Injured on Operations' on 24 June 2013.

The report and the 25 recommendations for Defence and DVA are being examined in order for the Government to provide a full and considered response. Recommendations for DVA broadly address issues such as working with Defence to coordinate members' care, ongoing health care for veterans including mental health and simplifying access to DVA arrangements. DVA and Defence are continuing to work closely to provide advice to Government about the recommendations. Briefings will be provided to Government post election.

Agenda Item 20. Other Business

Mr von Berg raised a previous discussion from the ESO Round Table relating to the Borneo and Malaya Campaign Nominal Roll. Mr Carmody advised that verifying a nominal roll was not a simple process, it would need to be cross referenced with the Government service records, and the process would be costly. It was agreed that Mr von Berg, Rear Admiral Doolan and Mr Carmody would discuss this matter in further detail out of session.

WoG Agency Multicultural Plan

Ms Anderson advised members of the Whole-of-Government Multicultural Plan. An inquiry was conducted recently into how Access and Equity is implemented across government and to recommend how government could improve its responsiveness to Australia's diverse population. The inquiry panel made 20 recommendations in its final report to government in June 2012. One of the key recommendations was to develop an Agency Multicultural Plan. DVA has published its plan on the website www.dva.gov.au/aboutdva/amp/Pages/index

Agency Multicultural Plans will be renewed every two years and the key focus of the Department's first plan is to lay foundation of data collection, planning and policy which can be built on in subsequent plans.

The Chair thanked members for their contribution and advised the next meeting is scheduled for 14 November 2013. The meeting closed at 4:20pm.