



## MINUTES

### Agenda Item 1. Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies from Mr Milton Kirk. The Chair welcomed Deputy Chair Ms Leanne Cameron, A/g First Assistant Secretary, Client Engagement and Support Services Division.

### Agenda Item 2. Minutes & Actions Arising

The minutes of the 17 July 2019 NACCF meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Members agreed to close all action items, except for action item 103, which is to remain open.

### Agenda Item 3. Member Submission: Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia

#### Identification of Veterans with DVA TPI Gold Card in Aged Care Facilities

Mr Mark Garrity, Assistant Secretary, Client Programs Branch acknowledged the existing model of self-identification as a veteran during the transition into residential aged care (admission) requires increased focus as does the educational needs of residential aged care staff to ensure adequate knowledge of veterans' entitlements. DVA understands that it is important for residential aged care facilities to know and understand the services that DVA TPI/Gold and White Card holders are entitled to receive while in care.

While the Department of Health has policy and funding responsibility for residential aged care facilities, DVA is working collaboratively with the Department of Health to improve the understanding and awareness of services that DVA Gold and White Card holders are entitled to while in residential aged care.

- To improve understanding and awareness, DVA is:
  - collaborating with the Department of Health to help educate residential aged care facilities on identifying DVA Gold and White Card holders and the DVA services that they are entitled to while in care;
  - liaising with the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Council On The Ageing (COTA) to develop and deliver information about DVA services through the Aged Care Navigators Trial to the aged care and health providers across Australia; and
  - developing improved communication materials for DVA clients and their families to better inform them of the DVA services they can access while in residential aged care. This includes two booklets designed to provide veterans and their families information on the services DVA provides to veterans while in their own home or in residential aged care. These are being finalised and are expected to be published early in 2020. This will be supported by improved DVA factsheets and web-content currently being updated.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
2019/109	Provide members with a draft copy of the booklets on veterans accessing residential aged care.	Mark Garrity



**Agenda Item 4. Member Submission: TPI Federation of Australia**

**DVA Policy on Hearing Aids**

The Chair addressed the member submission by acknowledging DVA has been working on a number of communication products to articulate and promote the hearing services and devices available to veterans with hearing loss and tinnitus. This is a multi-faceted approach, targeting both veterans and assisting veterans and their families to better understand and fully explore all options available to manage hearing loss.

The Chair reminded members that Veterans with hearing loss have access to over 210 hearing devices through the Australian Government Hearing Services Program, at no cost. As well as this, veterans can access Assistive Listening Devices through DVA. These devices are provided to eligible veterans at no cost, unlike the general community who do need to pay for these.

While the vast majority of DVA clients are satisfied with devices and services provided through the Hearing Services Program and DVA, over the last twelve months, DVA has received a number of concerns from the veteran community about the adequacy of hearing services for veterans.

This has, in part, resulted from some hearing providers who choose to promote expensive hearing aids over the services and devices available at no cost to veterans. To help veterans and providers better understand the range of services and devices available to veterans with hearing loss, DVA has implemented an education and communications strategy, including a hearing specific brochure, updated DVA web presence and a social media campaign.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/110	Provide members with a one page summary of the Community Service Obligation.	Mark Garrity

**Agenda Item 5. Member Submission: TPI Australia**

**DVA Secretary's Royal Commission into Aged Care Submission - Exhibit #10-13**

The Chair thanked Ms McCabe for bringing this matter to the attention of NACCF on behalf of the TPI Federation of Australia. Government policy is that veterans and their families can access care and support through DVA as well as the broader aged care system. When DVA clients require a level of services beyond those DVA can provide, they can access mainstream aged care services administered by Department of Health. DVA clients can continue to access programs provided by DVA as long as services are not duplicated.

The Royal Commission is likely to make recommendations that will significantly reform the aged care system in Australia and DVA will work with the Department of Health to ensure veterans receive the appropriate care they need in the aged care system.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/111	Provide members with a copy of the DVA Secretary Aged Care Royal Commission Submission.	Secretariat



**Agenda Item 6. Member Submission: Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia WA Branch  
Royal Commission into Aged Care – DVA submission**

Mr Graeme Anderson accepted the response provided noting the Department has not made a submission to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. However, the Secretary provided a Statement to the Royal Commission on behalf of the Department. The Secretary appeared as a witness before the Commission on 8 October 2019 and the Secretary's Statement and a transcript of her evidence are publicly available on the Royal Commission's website.

**Agenda Item 7. Department of Health Update**

The Department of Health representative advised members of the release of additional home care packages and measures taken to ensure aged care providers are up to capacity and performing to the highest standards. The Department of Health is reviewing the locations of clients who have been waiting long periods for packages and implementing a triage system to identify those clients with immediate needs.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/112	Members to be updated on the post implementation of the Aged Care Navigators Trial and what program will be in place.	Department of Health

**Agenda Item 8. Chief Health Officer Update to include update on work of Open Arms**

Dr Trish Batchelor updated members on two emerging medical treatments that are being increasingly requested by veterans – medicinal cannabis and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). Medicinal cannabis was prescribed for 18 veterans in 2018 and 145 veterans in 2019. Unfortunately the evidence is lagging behind the demand in the community. TMS has been approved for approximately 200 requests and may be added to the Medicare schedule. This is a non-invasive procedure which includes magnetic coils to stimulate the brain for mood issues, mental health, and depression. This is a safe treatment and is useful for those who have not responded to other treatments such a psychotherapy.

Dr Batchelor also updated members on the activities and expansion of Open Arms services over the past year. Open Arms provides programs for veterans and families through the National Community Engagement and Peer Program, the Mending Military Minds Acquired Brain Injury Pilot and a continuation of mental health training being delivered through the Australian Returned and Services League.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/113	Open Arms to provide data analytics on people visiting the Open Arms website and the main pages that are searched.	Dr Stephanie Hodson

**Agenda Item 9. Royal Commission into Aged Care and Disability Update**

Ms Carly Partridge, Assistant Secretary, External Scrutiny and Policy Performance Branch advised members of the extension of the timetable for the final report of the Aged Care Royal Commission and the formal commencement of the Disability Royal Commission, both Commissions are accepting submissions. DVA is fully committed to supporting the work of the Commissions and responding to any



requests for information or to give evidence. DVA looks forward to exploring future findings and recommendations of both the Aged Care and Disability Royal Commissions.

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

On 13 September 2019, an extension was formally granted to the Aged Care Royal Commission to enable it to conduct further hearings and inquiry work to address the matters in its Terms of Reference. As a result of the extension, the Royal Commission has moved its final reporting date from 30 April 2020, to 12 November 2020. The Royal Commission released its interim report on 31 October 2019.

Three immediate recommendations identified include an increase in home care, immediate attention to use of restraints in residential aged care and more focus on moving younger people out of aged care.

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

The first public hearing officially opening the Disability Royal Commission took place on 16 September 2019 in Brisbane.

The Disability Royal Commission's Terms of Reference cover what should be done to:

- Prevent, and better protect, people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- Achieve best practice in reporting and investigation of, and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation; and
- Promote a more inclusive society that supports the independence of people with disability and their right to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Disability Royal Commission is required to provide an interim report no later than 30 October 2020, and a final report by no later than 29 April 2022. The Disability Royal Commission has sought information from the Department within its Terms of Reference.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/114	Hard copies of witness statement to be provided to members.	Carly Partridge
2019/115	Media response to be provided to those recommendations to members.	Carly Partridge
2019/116	Matrix to be provided on high level and low level assessment.	Carly Partridge

**Agenda item 10. Improved Dental and Allied Health 2018-19 Budget Measure**

Ms Moira Campbell, Assistant Secretary, Wellbeing Policy Branch advised members that under the treatment cycle arrangements, referrals to allied health services for DVA clients will be valid for up to 12 sessions or a year, whichever ends first. Importantly, DVA clients will continue to have access to the care they need. Clients may have, as many treatment cycles as their GP determines are clinically necessary. They can also get treatment from different types of provider at the same time.

Veterans who have a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Gold Card are excluded from the treatment cycle for exercise physiology and physiotherapy services, although the treatment cycle is applied for all other allied health services.



DVA took a number of steps to ensure clients and providers were aware of the changes before they commenced. DVA dispatched 165,229 letters to DVA clients who had accessed allied health services in 2019, GPs and allied health providers. DVA also worked with health provider associations to disseminate detailed information about the changes to GPs and allied health providers.

#### Transition arrangements

To ensure there is no disruption to clinically needed treatment, transition arrangements allow clients to continue to see their allied health provider after 1 October 2019 under their existing referral. This means that clients with an existing annual allied health referral will be able to receive up to 12 sessions of allied health treatment after 1 October 2019, or until their annual referral expires (if that occurs first).

For clients with an existing indefinite allied health referral will be able to receive up to 12 sessions or one year access (whichever ends first) of allied health treatment after 1 October 2019 before requiring a new GP referral. All new referrals from 1 October onwards will be part of the new treatment cycle arrangements, excluding referrals to exercise physiology and physiotherapy for TPI Gold Card holders.

#### At Risk Client Framework

The At Risk Client Framework has been developed for GPs to assess and decide whether tailored arrangements outside of the treatment cycle may be required in exceptional circumstances. The Framework aims to provide tailored referral and care arrangements for the small percentage of clients for whom the treatment cycle would detrimentally impact upon their health, wellbeing or treatment; and/or place on them an unreasonable burden or imposition.

The Framework arrangements are consistent with the role of the GP as care coordinator in Australian health care, with the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and allied health provider associations involved in the co-design of the Framework.

#### Further elements of the *Improved Dental and Allied Health* measure

There are two more elements of *Improved Dental and Allied Health* budget measure that will commence in 2021, subject to savings realised by the treatment cycle. Up to four funding trials will test alternative funding approaches for selected allied health provider groups to see if outcomes can be improved for clients. They will explore approaches, such as a more case based approach that takes into account the type of treatment provided.

At this stage, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychology services have been identified to trial new funding approaches. Consultation with the relevant industry association on the design of the trials will commence in early 2020.

#### **Agenda item 11. Update on the development of the Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Chair advised the Repatriation Commissioner is visiting veterans around the country to consult on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Minister has also held some drop in sessions and is supporting a lot of work being undertaken across Government in consulting on the themes. The Strategy may be finalised by the end of the year or early in the new year.



**Agenda item 12. DVA communications on Hearing Services**

Mr Mark Garrity, Assistant Secretary, Client Programs Branch presented the communication tools DVA has been working on to articulate and promote the hearing services and devices available to veterans with hearing loss and tinnitus. This is a multi-faceted approach, targeting both veterans and the hearing community, assisting veterans and their families to better understand and fully explore all options available to manage hearing loss.

A hearing brochure has been developed to help veteran and providers explore hearing services available to DVA clients. The brochure focusses on the range of hearing services and products DVA clients can access through the Hearing Services Program, Assistive Listening Devices available through the Rehabilitation Appliances Program and treatment for tinnitus.

The brochure sets out expectations on the services DVA will fund, such as tests to determine if hearing loss or tinnitus is service related, replacement batteries and hearing aid maintenance, assistive listening devices such as head phones to watch TV and microphones and FM listening systems and wireless streaming devices and tinnitus treatment. The brochure will be distributed electronically to ex-service organisations and the hearing industry.

Ms McCabe requested a review of the brochure and removal of any reference to partially subsidised hearing aids.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/117	DVA to review hearing brochure content to ensure no reference to partially subsidised hearing aids.	Mark Garrity

**Agenda item 13. DVA involvement in the Aged Care System Navigator Trial**

Mr Mark Garrity, Assistant Secretary, Client Programs Branch advised members DVA is currently liaising with the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Council On The Ageing (COTA) to develop content for Aged Care Navigators Trial communication activities. Veterans can access services through both DVA and My Aged Care depending on their need and preference. Some services that can be provided through the DVA Veterans' Home Care Program can be complimented by services provided through the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

DVA's involvement in the Navigators Trial will ensure navigator sites, the aged care sector and health providers across Australia are well informed of the services DVA provides to veterans and in turn better link veterans to the services they need. There are currently three trial programs underway to test ways to more effectively deliver information and support to aged care. There are a number of different approaches and evaluations being used to identify the approach that is the most effective. There are currently 32 aged care information hubs, with 21 community hubs available for veterans to visit. Webinars is the third trial being undertaken.



**Agenda item 14. Transformation update including the Veterans Recognition Project**

Ms Lyndall Moore, Assistant Secretary, Portfolio Management Branch advised members that DVA is now in the third year of transformation, and continuing to transform DVA into a proactive, responsive agency that supports the wellbeing and success of veterans and their families.

This next stage of transformation is focusing on bettering experiences for veterans and their families, staff, provider community and is about building increased capability to support how DVA does business through enabling services and data.

There are now over 100,000 registered users on MyService who have submitted over 69,000 claims. The MyService team are currently working on their second lighthouse discovery project, which is looking at ways to make MyService better for both DVA clients and staff. They are also looking at how processes can be further streamlined through automation.

The telephone system is also becoming simpler and more intuitive. DVA is continuing to refine the use of the 'Open Speech' voice recognition technology, and is directing more and more calls automatically as we collect and program phrases from callers. Following extensive user engagement, DVA is designing a website that is easy to navigate and provides easy to understand information. The beta website allows DVA to test and validate new content and functionality, and features include custom search results and a virtual assistant – called Pat.

The Government's *Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019* has passed Federal Parliament on the 22 October 2019, with the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant benefits program being launched by the Minister on 3 November 2019. DVA is working with Australian Partners of Defence (APOD) to give Veteran Card holders access to thousands of offers from businesses around Australia, both over the counter and online.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/118	More information on the Australian Partners of Defence (APOD) to be provided to members.	Lyndall Moore

**Agenda item 15. Productivity Commission Update**

Mr Neil Bayles, Special Advisor, Productivity Commission updated members on the Productivity Commission's (PCs) final report of its inquiry into compensation and rehabilitation for veterans, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*.

This is a significant report examining an important and complex system. The Government has agreed it will work with Government agencies, other key agencies and the veteran community to develop a response to the report. The Government response will also include the responses to the Veterans' Advocacy and Support Scoping Study and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into transition from the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The Productivity Commission's report, recommends a broad reform agenda for services and support to veterans over a 5-6 year timeframe. The findings and recommendations of the report call for a substantial and enduring program of reform to better meet the needs of veterans and their families.



The Government is aware that some recommendations of the Productivity Commission, such as changes to Gold Card entitlements, have caused concern amongst the veteran community, but continues to listen to the views of veterans and their families about this and other important issues arising from the recent reviews. The timing of a responses is a matter for Government.

**Agenda item 16. Other Business**

Ms Pat McCabe raised the issue of carers staying with clients in hospital and asked that there be a consideration of payment of travel and accommodation for carers.

Mr Graeme Anderson questioned the insurance for people with accepted disabilities when travelling overseas and what conditions are accepted.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
2019/119	Investigation of payment of travel and accommodation for carers of clients who attend hospital.	To be advised
2019/120	Provide DVA policy on insurance for people with accepted disabilities when travelling overseas and determine what conditions are accepted.	To be advised

**Meeting close**

The Chair thanked all members for their attendance and participation. The meeting closed at 12.30pm. The first meeting of the new year is scheduled for Tuesday 21 April 2020.