

Defence/DVA Executive Committee (DDEC) - Meeting Summary – 9 September 2019

The seventh Defence/DVA Executive Committee meeting was held on 9 September 2019.

The 2019 meeting was held at the DVA office.

Meeting Attendees:

Members	
Mr Greg Moriarty	Secretary, Department of Defence
General Angus Campbell	Chief of the Defence Force
Ms Liz Cosson	Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ms Justine Greig	Deputy Secretary Defence People Group Department of Defence
MAJGEN Natasha Fox AM CSC	Head, People Capability Department of Defence
Mr Mark Cormack	Deputy Secretary Policy & Programs Department of Veterans' Affairs
Mr Charles McHardie	Deputy Secretary Transformation & Enabling Services Department of Veterans' Affairs
Secretariat	
Ms Liane Pettitt	Secretariat Department of Veterans' Affairs

Agenda Item 1 - Opening Remarks and Introductions

Ms Cosson welcomed members to the September 2019 DDEC meeting and noted the relationship between DVA and Defence is stronger than ever and DVA is very grateful for the support received from Defence, particularly in relation to a number of reviews and inquiries including the Productivity Commission and the Coronial Inquest into the death of Jesse Bird.

Members endorsed the 2018 DDEC meeting summary. Members noted both DVA and Defence have prepared TPs for today's DDEC meeting, which MAJGEN Fox had shared with DVA. Members agreed a better arrangement to facilitate discussion is to share papers prior to DDEC meetings.

Agenda Item 2 – Collaboration on implementation of Government priorities

Members noted the importance of collaborating on the implementation of the Government's priorities and election commitments, particularly given the linkages across both portfolio departments and Minister Chester's responsibility for both veterans and Defence personnel.

Ms Cosson tabled DVA's election commitment tracker document and provided an overview of the 18 election commitments including legislation impacts, metrics, key deliverables, timeframes and current status.

Members noted that these priorities will be taken forward in the upcoming MYEFO and Budget processes and agreed to explore opportunities for joint briefing to both the Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel and the Minister for Defence.

Members agreed the tracker would be shared on a regular basis and discussed as a standing item on the Defence Links Steering Committee agenda.

Agenda Item 3 – A. Strategic implications following the release of the Productivity Commission final report and Joint Standing Committee report on Transition

Members discussed the strategic implications following the release of the PC final report and the JSC report on Transition.

Members noted the JSC report on Transition would be responded to as part of the Government response to the PC final report.

Members also noted the status update from Ms Cosson regarding the process to take the Government's response to the PC final report through the upcoming MYEFO process. Mr Cormack is chairing and inter-departmental committee involving Defence, central agencies and other Government agency stakeholders to prepare a submission for Government consideration.

Members discussed findings and recommendations from both reports and in particular, findings of key interest to stakeholders or public scrutiny. Members also discussed calls for a Royal Commission into veteran suicide.

B. Veterans landscape and future directions (including data)

Ms Cosson discussed the tabled Veterans landscape and future directions documents and opportunities to utilise the new data analytics capability within DVA to better understand the veteran cohort, including the number of veterans, their location, and claims processing trends. Members also noted the value of this data and analysis to inform early engagement and intervention by DVA and Defence, and future policy settings.

Agenda Item 4 – Strategic partnership on health and wellbeing

Members noted the commitment by Minister Chester to hold a veteran mental health and suicide prevention summit with his veteran ministerial colleagues.

Members also noted the update from Mr Cormack regarding the development of a Veteran mental health strategy and opportunities to continue to work with Defence on the strategy.

Mr Cormack also noted DVA is working with Defence Health to explore opportunities to leverage off the Defence Health contract for the mefloquine health needs assessment, hearing aids etc.

Ms Cosson discussed the election commitment to establish six Veteran Wellbeing Centres, noting on the main focal areas will be transition and employment activities.

Ms Cosson also mentioned the election commitment on veteran employment involving Team Rubicon, SoliderOn and the Returned Services League of Australia.

Veteran homelessness was also discussed, including recent commissioned reports on homelessness and contributing factors to homelessness and future planning options to address trigger factors.

OBAS was also discussed, including a stepped roll out of the hub and spoke model.

Agenda Item 5 - Defence/DVA Links report back

Ms Greig provided a report back on Defence/DVA Links and the progress made since the last DDEC including a more enhanced and broader strategic focus for Links meetings including electronic data exchange and transition.

Members discussed the Government priority regarding the Veteran Recognition Program (VRP) and the Veteran Covenant and linkages to the Wellbeing Centres. The discussion included priorities raised by Minister Chester regarding use of local on base and community gymnasiums, and access to military gyms and military and local museums and the request for a domestic remembrance trail for veterans.

Ms Cosson noted an important principle of the Covenant is community building and community efforts to support veterans to settle back into their local communities and opportunities to link these initiatives through the VRP and Covenant and Wellbeing Centres. Members noted DVA and Defence would explore these linkages and work together to prepare advice back for ministerial consideration.

In closing the meeting, Ms Cosson thanked members for their valuable contribution to the strategic discussion and members noted that both departments would continue to work together to deliver on the Government's priorities as well as to progress matters of mutual importance.