

Update to Government Response to the Productivity Commission Report, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*

On 8 October 2020, the *Interim Government Response to the Report of the Productivity Commission, "A Better Way to Support Veterans"* was tabled as part of the 2020-21 Budget process. The interim response delivered a package of \$211.1 million in targeted measures with a focus on mental health and increased transition support.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the Government is building on this response and is investing a further \$175.3 million for additional measures to support the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families.

To-date, the Government has invested more than \$386 million in addressing 35 of the report's 69 recommendations and supporting the more immediate needs of the veteran community.

The remaining recommendations primarily relate to structural and legislative reform, including harmonisation of entitlements across the existing three veteran Acts.

Through engagement with defence force personnel, veterans, their families and ex-service organisations, it is clear that there are still considerable differences on the best approach to this legislative reform.

The Government will continue to consult with the veteran community to reduce the complexity of the legislative framework.

The Government recognises that the most recent legislation, the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*, will be the primary veterans' legislation going forward and there will be a "long tail" of the two earlier Acts, the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*.

The Government will finalise any outstanding matters from the Productivity Commission report at the completion of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

The Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs will continue to progress administrative recommendations that improve operations between the Departments and deliver better outcomes for veterans.

**Update to Government Response to Recommendations of the Productivity Commission report,
“A Better Way to Support Veterans”**

Recommendation	Status	Next Steps
<i>Recommendations addressed in the Interim Response</i>		
Rec 5.1 – Improve Reporting of Work Health and Safety Incidents	Implemented	N/A
Rec 5.3 – Publish Annual Notional Premium Estimates	Implemented	N/A
Rec 5.4 – Formalise Defence Responsibility to Support ADF Member	Implemented	N/A
Rec 6.1 – Public Reporting on ADF Rehabilitation	Implemented	N/A
Rec 6.2 – Evaluation and Reporting of DVA Rehabilitation	Progressing	The implementation of this recommendation will involve on-going improvements.
Rec 6.3 – Commissioning and Integration of Rehabilitation Services	Progressing – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 which addresses a specific element of the recommendation	Implementation of the Budget decision which is subject to legislation passage and will also involve ongoing improvements.
Rec 7.1 – Establish a Joint Transition Authority (JTA)	Implemented – announced measure in Budget 2020-21	Continue to implement the announced Budget 2020-21 measure.
Rec 7.2 – Career Planning and Family Engagement for Transition	Progressing second and third components of the recommendation	The implementation of this recommendation will see on-going improvements made by Career Management Agencies and the JTA.
Rec 9.1 – Public Progress Reports on Recent Reviews	Implemented	N/A
Rec 9.2 – Appropriately Train Staff	Implemented	N/A

Rec 11.2 – Levy a Premium on Defence (Alternative measure – Defence/DVA data sharing and analytics solution)	Progressing – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 building on measure from Budget 2020-21	Implementation of the announced 2021-22 Budget measure.
Rec 12.4 – Accreditation of Advocates	Progressing	The implementation of this recommendation will involve on-going improvements.
Rec 12.6 – Program for Funding Wellbeing Supports	Progressing – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 building on election commitment and interim response	Continue implementation of the announced 2020-21 measure and deliver the Budget 2021-22 measure.
Rec 15.1 – Simplify DFISA	Progressing – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 building on the announced measure to abolish DFISA in Budget 2020-21	Implementation of the announced Budget measures which is subject to legislation passage
Rec 16.1 – Eligibility for Coordinated Veterans' Care	Progressing – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 building on Budget 2020-21	Continue to implement the announced 2020-21 Budget measure to commence on 1 July 2021 and implementation of the announced Budget 2021-22 measure.
Rec 16.3 – Independent Review of Fee-Setting Arrangements	Implemented – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 building on Budget 2020-21	Implementation of the announced Budget 2021-22 measure.
Rec 16.4 – Better targeted eligibility for the Gold Card	Rejected	N/A
Rec 16.5 – No further extension of Gold Card eligibility	Rejected	N/A
Rec 17.1 – Improve Awareness of DVA Mental Health Services	Implemented	N/A

Rec 17.2 – Monitor and Report on Open Arms’ Outcomes	Progressing – announced measure in Budget 2020-21	Complete implementation of 2020-21 Budget measure.
Rec 17.4 – A New Veteran Mental Health Strategy	Implemented	N/A
Rec 18.1 – Outcomes and Performance Frameworks	Progressing – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 building on work being progressed from Budget 2020-21	Implementation of the announced 2021-22 Budget measure and will involve on-going improvements.
Rec 18.2 – More High Quality Trials and Reviews	Implemented – announced measure in Budget 2021-22 building on interim response	The implementation of this recommendation will involve on-going improvements.
Rec 18.3 – Develop and Publish a Veteran Research Plan	Implemented	N/A
Rec 18.4 – Expert Committee on Veteran Research	Progressing	The implementation of this recommendation will involve on-going improvements.
<i>Recommendations remaining following the Interim Response</i>		
Rec 4.1 – Objectives and principles for the veteran support system	Progressing	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 5.2 – Supporting A New Approach to Injury Prevention	Progressing	The recommendation will be subject to the outcomes of, and analysis of the data from, the current trial.
Rec 7.3 – Trial A Veteran Education Allowance	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.

Rec 8.1 – Harmonise the initial liability process	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 8.2 – Improve the RMA’s resourcing and transparency	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change.
Rec 8.3 – Abolish the Special Medical Review Council	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 8.4 – Move MRCA to a single standard of proof	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 9.3 – Ensure Quality of Claims Processing	Progressing	The implementation of this recommendation will involve on-going improvements.
Rec 10.1 – Improve and use feedback from administrative reviews	Progressing	The implementation of this recommendation will involve on-going improvements.
Rec 10.2 – Single review pathway	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 10.3 – Veterans’ Review Board as a review and resolution body	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change. The recommendation will also be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed.

		The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 10.4 – Review of ongoing role of the Veterans’ Review Board	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change. The recommendation will also be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 11.1 Establish a Veteran Services Commission	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change; however, Government is committed to a standalone DVA.
Rec 11.3 – Improve Policy Outcomes	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change; however, Government is committed to a standalone DVA.
Rec 11.4 – Create a Ministerial Advisory Council	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change.
Rec 11.5 – Move War Grave Functions into the War Memorial	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change.
Rec 12.1 – Reframe Support for Veterans’ Organisations	Progressing – announced measure (in part) in Budget 2021-22	Implementation of the announced Budget measure.
Rec 12.2 – DVA should Provide Assistance with Primary Claims	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require policy reform and administrative change.
Rec 12.3 – Fund a Claims Advocacy Program	Progressing – announced measure (in part) in Budget 2021-22	Implementation of the announced Budget measure.

Rec 12.5 – Fund Legal Assistance at the AAT	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change. The recommendation will also be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 12.7 – Funding Policy Advice From Veterans' Organisations	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will require structural change.
Rec 13.1 – Harmonise the DRCA with the MRCA	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 13.2 – Simplify the administration of invalidity pensions	Progressing	The recommendation will require administrative change. The recommendation will also be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 13.3 – Replace invalidity pensions with incapacity payments	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 13.4 – Rehabilitation for invalidity payment recipients	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.

Rec 14.1 – A single rate of permanent impairment compensation	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.2 – Interim compensation to be taken as a periodic payment	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.3 – Interim compensation to be finalised after two years	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.4 – Eligible young person permanent impairment payment	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.5 – Improve lifestyle ratings	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.6 – Target incapacity payments at economic loss	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.

Rec 14.7 – Remove the MRCA Special Rate Disability Pension	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.8 – Remove automatic eligibility for MRCA dependant benefits	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.9 – Combine MRCA dependant benefits into one payment	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 14.10 – Harmonise the funeral allowance	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 15.2 – Simplify and harmonise education payments	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 15.3 – Consolidate supplements into underlying payments	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.

Rec 15.4 – Remove and pay out smaller payments	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 15.5 – Harmonise attendant and household services	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 15.6 – Harmonise vehicle assistance	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 16.2 – Public Reporting on Accessibility of Health Services	Progressing	The recommendation will require administrative change.
Rec 17.3 – Evidence-based Treatment for Veterans Mental Health	Progressing	The recommendation will require policy and administrative change.
Rec 19.1 – Two schemes for veteran support	Pending further consideration	The recommendation will now be subject to a legislation reform roadmap that will be developed. The legislative reform will be carefully considered and require broad consultation with the veteran community.
Rec 19.2 – An Expanded Family Support Package	Progressing – announced measure (in full) in Budget 2021-22	Implementation of the announced Budget measure which is subject to legislation passage.