



MINUTES

Agenda Item 1. Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting of the Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum (YVF) and noted apologies from Ms Coralee Goedhart, CMDR Mark Fullick RAN, LT Natalie Huntsman and Ms Talissa Papamau.

Agenda Item 2. Minutes & Actions Arising

The minutes of the 25 July 2018 YVF meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Members noted that the minutes of meetings will now be placed on the [DVA website](#).

Members agreed to close action items 80, 83, 84, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102 and 103. Members noted action item 104 remained open and would be placed on the agenda for the meeting in April 2019.

Agenda Item 3. Open Arms (VVCS) Update

Members were briefed on the re-branding of the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) to [Open Arms](#) – Veterans & Families Counselling. Open Arms still provides the same service through clinicians that are trained in the unique nature of military service and have an understanding of military culture. The rebranding ensures it remains relevant with younger veterans and their families. Following the launch of the new name during the Invictus Games, the organisation’s social media channels indicated a positive response to the change.

Open Arms played a key role in providing mental health support to competitors, family and friends at the Invictus Games in Sydney during October 2018. Open Arms will also “reach out” to all the Australian competitors a few months after the games to check on how they are tracking.

Members discussed the DVA supported Townsville peer network, where two lived experience peer advisors and one social worker are in place to connect and build relationships with local ex-service organisations and community groups. The network facilitates clients moving outside of their clinical support and accessing community engagement opportunities.

Members noted the Open Arms update.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
105	Members to provide feedback to the YVF when peer networks are established in their location.	Members



Agenda Item 4. Veterans' Services Design Division Update:

Catastrophic Injuries

Members received an update on the amendments made to the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) to include provisions for payments above the statutory rate for household and attendant care services for people with a "catastrophic injury".

The amendments mean that veterans who meet the definition of catastrophic injury under the MRCA and DRCA are no longer subject to the statutory limits for the provision of attendant care and household services. Satisfying the definition of catastrophic injury does not guarantee that a person will receive higher levels of household and attendant care services. Such requirements will still be assessed on an individual needs basis.

Members noted the conditions that satisfy the definitions of a catastrophic injury or disease and that there is no cap on the weekly compensation payable for household or attendant care services.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
106	Provide members with the fact sheet when it is drafted.	Secretariat

Incapacity Stepdown for Veterans Studying

Members were briefed on the pilot, which commenced on 1 November 2018 that provides eligible veterans participating in a DVA rehabilitation plan, and studying full-time as part of their rehabilitation plan, with incapacity payments at 100 percent of their normal earnings. Previously veteran's incapacity payments were "step(ped) down" to 75 per cent (or a higher percentage depending on weekly hours worked) of their normal earnings after a period of 45 weeks in receipt of incapacity payment. The step down no longer applies to those who are undertaking full time study as part of their DVA approved rehabilitation plan.

Supporting incapacity payment recipients through their studies will help facilitate ongoing meaningful employment for veterans resulting in better financial outcomes for veterans and their families.

Members noted the recent changes to incapacity payments under the DRCA and MRCA for veterans studying full time as part of their DVA approved rehabilitation plan.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
107	Provide members with the revised <i>Stepdown for Incapacity Payments – Increased Payments For Veterans Studying</i> fact sheet when it becomes available.	Secretariat



Agenda Item 5. Presentation: Mindframe

Members received a presentation on the work of the [Mindframe](#) organisation, which collaborates with the Australian media and other sectors to encourage responsible, accurate and sensitive portrayal of mental illness and suicide. The presentation included: statistics regarding suicide with regard to the general population and defence members/veterans; the need to be mindful of mass communications about a suicide; and links to the military context. Members were provided with information on what was safe and risk averse communications, and ways to generate behaviour change.

Members noted the issues discussed in the presentation.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
108	Provide members with the self-care slide in the <i>Mindframe</i> PowerPoint presentation.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 6. Transformation Showcase

The Showcase highlighted achievements to date, the ongoing development of MyService and the latest release which continue to improve the functionality of the online claims platform. Provision of a white card after applying for non-liability health care was also discussed.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
109	Provide members with the list of conditions which are now determined via a streamlined decision making process.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 7. Presentation: RSL Queensland Employment Program

A representative from RSL Queensland provided an overview of the Veteran Employment Program, which is part of the RSL 2020 Transformation Program. The program commenced in June 2017 and is in place to provide meaningful, sustainable career opportunities for ex-ADF members and their partners.

Mates4Mates offered a similar employment program in 2017. At the commencement of the RSL Queensland program, Mates4Mates shared its resources and continues to offer services through joint referral both into and out of the RSL Queensland program.

The Chair applauded this collaboration between members and encouraged it to continue.

Agenda Item 8. Member submission: DVA non liability health process

The Air Force Association queried the delay in the provision of a white card when a person registers for non-liability health care via the app or MyService. This issue was discussed under item 6, Transformation Showcase, however the information provided did not fully address the query and a response will be provided to members out of session.



Item	Action	Assigned to
110	Provide members with a response to the Air Force Association member submission regarding the DVA non-liability health process out of session.	Secretariat

Agenda Item 9. Veterans' Services Design Division Update:

Mental Health Update

Members received an update on the progress of various mental health programs.

Assistance Dogs trial

DVA is working with La Trobe University to design the trial. A workshop was held on 24 September 2018. Details on how veterans can participate in the trial will be available in the near future.

Veterans Suicide Prevention Pilot

The Veterans Suicide Prevention Pilot is a partnership between *beyondblue* and DVA. The aim is to test a coordinated approach for providing intensive support to those who have been admitted to hospital following an attempted suicide or a suicidal crisis, or who may be at risk of suicide following their discharge from hospital. The service went live on 31 July. The Pilot will conclude in mid-2020.

The Senate Inquiry into Use of the Quinoline anti-malarial drugs Mefloquine and Tafenoquine in the Australian Defence Force

DVA made a submission to the inquiry, and appeared at the public hearing in Canberra on 11 October 2018. DVA and Open Arms — Veterans and Families Counselling Service attended the public hearings and provided support to witnesses.

Since September DVA has hosted Mefloquine and Tafenoquine Consultation Forums in Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville, Perth, Melbourne and Darwin. The forums provided the opportunity to hear from current and former serving members about their health concerns, and outline the treatment, services and supports available. This will help DVA to better understand the needs of those who have concerns about these medications and to direct them quickly to available treatment options.

DVA is analysing the key themes from the forums and developing actions to address concerns raised. Further information on the outcomes of these forums will be published on the DVA [mefloquine](#) information webpage in the coming weeks.

Members were asked to encourage all current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel who believe their health has been affected by the use of mefloquine or tafenoquine to contact DVA. DVA has a designated phone line – 1800 MEFLOQUINE (1800 633 567) for veterans with enquires. The Inquiry submitted its report on 29 November 2018.



Rehabilitation

Members were provided with a copy of the recently released Rehabilitation for DVA Clients [booklet](#), which promotes the services and support available as part of a DVA rehabilitation program. Members were asked to ensure their organisation was aware of the booklet and encourage those who are participating in a rehabilitation program to be informed on what they are able to access.

Agenda Item 10. External Stakeholder and Government Relations Division Update: Transition and Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme

Members were updated on the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into Transition from the ADF. The Committee’s [Terms of Reference](#) are available on the inquiry website.

Public hearings have been held in each state. Defence and DVA gave evidence to the Committee in Canberra on 16 November 2018. The Committee has shown an interest in exploring the gaps in the current approach to transition service delivery with a view to maximising health and wellbeing outcomes for ADF members and their families. DVA will use the findings and recommendations of the inquiry to improve the support services available to transitioning members and their families.

Members were provided with an update on the Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme, which examines the impact of military service on the mental, physical and social health of serving and ex-serving ADF members including those who have been deployed in contemporary conflicts and their families. The Programme has resulted in the release of four reports, with a further four to be released progressively during 2019.

Members noted the update

<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned to</i>
111	Members to be provided with links to all Programme reports.	Secretariat

Agenda item 11. Other business

The Chair thanked CDRE Paul Kinghorne for his engagement in the Forum and welcomed COL Jim Burns as the Defence representative.

Meeting close

The Chair thanked all members for their attendance and participation.

The meeting closed at 3:45pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, 15 March 2019.