



Minutes

Welcome, Minutes & Actions of previous meeting

Attendees list is at Annexure A.

The Chair welcomed the ESORT members to the meeting and noted apologies.

The following representatives were welcomed;

- Mr Ian Lindgren, Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association, representing Mr Robert Woods
- Mr Rick Moor, Australian Special Air Services Association, representing Mr Martin Hamilton-Smith
- Mr Kerry Mellor, Defence Force Welfare Association, representing Mr Kel Ryan, and
- CDRE Nicole Curtis, representing RADM Sarah Sharkey, MRCC Department of Defence
- Ms Alison Hale, representing Ms Kate Pope, Deputy President, Repatriation Commission.

The Chair also welcomed a number of observers including AIRCDRE Kaarin Kooij, Director General Joint Transition Authority.

Minister's Address

The Chair introduced the Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs. ESORT members introduced themselves.

Both Ministers thanked members for their work in representing the veteran community and families and acknowledged the complexities of the Veterans' Affairs portfolio.

Minister Keogh outlined the Government's commitments made during the election campaign to deliver a better future for veterans and families.

The Assistant Minister also addressed ESORT and both Ministers welcomed the opportunity to engage further with the ex-service organisation community.

Members then engaged with the Ministers on a number of topics and raised concern that the Department's funding is not demand driven, observing the current backlog of claims in part has been caused by what appears to be a restriction on the Department's operability. Veteran homelessness and incarceration, the transition from service life and the importance of Veterans Hubs, the Family Services Package, the transition from civilian life to MyAged Care, the importance of volunteer advocates, National Family Engagement and the need for recommendations from reviews to be dealt with quickly so that they don't lose relevancy, were also raised.

Members **ENDORSED** the minutes from the previous meetings of 10 November 2021 and 28 February 2022.

Members **AGREED** to close action items as listed below:

E2021/006	E2021/010	E2021/011	E2021/012
E2021/013	E2021/014	E2021/015	E2021/16
E2021/017	E2021/018	E2021/021	E2021/024
E2021/025	2022ESORT/A4	2022A/ESORT3	2022A/ESORT13
2022A/ESORT15	2022A/ESORT18	2022A/ESORT20	

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A21	Action item E2021/006 is to be closed and an Australian War Memorial Re-development Update is to be added to the agenda as a Standing Quarterly Update.	Secretariat
E2021/025	Members agreed to merge E2020/37 into E2021/025 seeing as they both refer to Booked Car With Driver (BCWD) - reconvening the BCWD Working Group and addressing the age limits for clients using this service.	Secretariat

Members **NOTED** that the following items remain open:

E2020/27	E2020/37	E2021/019	E2021/020
E2021/023	2022A/ESORT1	2022A/ESORT5	2022A/ESORT 6
2022A/ESORT7	2022ESORT/A8	2022A/ESORT 9	2022ESORT/A10
2022ESORT/A11	2022ESORT/A12	2022ESORT/A14	2022A/ESORT16
2022A/ESORT19	2022A/ESORT2	E2021/022	

Chair Strategic Update

Members **NOTED** the update provided by the Chair.

Report of the McKinsey Claims Diagnostic Review

Ms Traci-Ann Byrnes, First Assistant Secretary Claims Review Implementation Office, briefed members on the work undertaken by McKinsey and Company on identifying how to increase the efficiency of claims processing and address the claims backlog, to improve the compensation claims system to better serve our veterans and families.

Members identified opportunities to improve correspondence between the Department, the advocate and the client.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A22	Operational Working Party (OWP) to continue discussions on improvements to DVA communications between clients and advocates. This is to be listed for discussion at August 2022 OWP meeting. OWP members on ESORT to report back on discussions.	Deputy Secretary, Veterans and Family Services Group.

Members **NOTED** the McKinsey Review findings and **NOTED** the actions taken to date by DVA to improve claims processing.

Transparency in Claims backlog

Ms Traci-Ann Byrnes, updated members on the work undertaken to increase transparency with information regarding claims processing and to seek feedback on the proposed first iteration of new web pages that will publish claims statistics and information.

Members noted the need for analysis of claims data suggesting that the age of a claim may not reflect the potential complexity. Members were advised that all claims undergo a screening process and are triaged accordingly. In discussion, members noted that complex multi-act claims should be assessed by experienced delegates noting that there may be a need for more delegate training.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A23	ESORT members to provide further feedback on proposed first iteration of new web pages that will publish claims statistics and information as provided in meeting pack for 14 June 2022. Members to send feedback through to Secretariat to collate.	ESORT Members Secretariat

2022ESORT/A24	Ms Traci-Ann Byrnes, Mr Ian Lindgren and the Multi-Act Working Group (MAWG) to work together to identify the challenges with Multi-Act Claims processing, that will inform a Departmental brief to the Minister.	First Assistant Secretary, Claims Review Implementation Office
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Members **NOTED** the work on improving transparency in claims processing information, in particular on the DVA website.

Report Back: Multi-Act Claims Working Group (MAWG)

Mr Luke Brown, Assistant Secretary Business Improvement and Quality Assurance Branch, Client Benefits Division, led discussion on the ESORT Multi-Act Claims Working Group (MAWG) that has been meeting monthly since March 2021 with the aim of collaborating recommendations to simplify and enhance the multi-act claims process for veterans, advocates and delegates.

Mr Ian Thompson, representing MAWG gave a broader update and facilitated a discussion on issues relating to the submission of claims through MyService and how to encourage veterans to seek the support of advocates.

Members **NOTED** the work to date of the ESORT Multi-Act Claims Working Group.

Members **APPROVED** the continuation of the ESORT Multi-Act Claims Working Group for the next 12 months through to May 2023.

Members **APPROVED** Mr Lindgren's membership on the ESORT Multi-Act Claims Working Group.

The Chair **NOTED** the recommendation of the Multi-Act Claims Working Group for DVA to recommend and include an advisory note and link to advocacy services on the MyService website, however the Chair did **NOT AGREE** to deploy until further development was undertaken via a business case. The Chair was unable to provide a timeframe.

No.	DECISION
2022ESORT/D2	Members AGREED for the Multi-Act Working Group to continue to develop the Quality Assurance Program with the Advocacy Training and Development Program Working Group.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A25	Discuss the development of a corporate business case with the Multi-Act Working Group to assist in future progression of the Quality Assurance Program.	Deputy Secretary, Enabling Services & Commemorations

Report Back: Quality Assurance (QA) Program for Advocacy Training and Development Program (ADTP) Working Group – discussed 4 July 2022

ESORT received a member submission titled *"Quality assurance of government funded advocacy services provided to serving and former members of the ADF, their dependants and other eligible people"* on 28 February 2022. The submission recommended the development and introduction of a Quality Assurance (QA) program for advocacy services from members of the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ADTP) Working Group. ESORT referred the matter to the Quality Assurance for Advocates Working Group, tasking the group to develop a set of principles upon which the program should be based. The QAWG is comprised of both members of ex-service organisations and DVA staff. The QAWG met twice and agreed to a set of principles provided at Annexe A.

Members **DISCUSSED** the principles and congratulated the QAWG for the great deal of effort put into the development of the QA model thus far, however members did **AGREE** that further work is required before implementation can occur. The Deputy Secretary, Enabling Services and Commemorations **AGREED** to discuss the development of a corporate business case with the QAWG to assist with further development of the QA model

looking at a possible research project to clarify key aspects such as measuring wellbeing before development and implementation.

Members **NOTED** the report back.

No.	DECISION
2022ESORT/D3	Members AGREED for the Quality Assurance of Advocacy Services Working Group (QAWG) to continue to develop the Quality Assurance Program.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A26	Discuss the development of a corporate business case with the Quality Assurance of Advocacy Services Working Group to assist in future progression of the Quality Assurance Program.	Deputy Secretary, Enabling Services & Commemorations

Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services (Veterans' MATES) Program – discussed 4 July 2022

The Assistant Secretary, Client Programs Branch provided a presentation on the purpose, approach and achievements of Veterans' MATES - a data driven, quality use of medicines (health promotion) program which, seeks to improve health outcomes for veterans through an improved understanding and utilisation of medicines and health services. The program which has been in operation since 2004, supports the veteran community to improve their wellbeing through better use of medicines, health services and taking an active role in their health.

ESORT members were encouraged to share the presentation with their members of their organisations and were advised that The MATES program will monitor outcomes from COVID-19 and outcomes from the release of anti-virals and analyse the data once available. Members asked how veterans can participate in the program. Every veteran who is eligible for a Veterans Entitlement Card is enrolled in the program. Information is sent to veterans routinely and veterans can opt out at any time, noting the program has a high participation rate.

Members **NOTED** the presentation delivered highlights of the program's achievements in providing positive health outcomes and improved understanding and utilisation of medicines and health services to the veteran community.

DVA's Managing Challenging and Complex Behaviour Policy – discussed 4 July 2022

DVA's *Managing Challenging and Complex Behaviour Policy* replaces the Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Framework and represents a shift in the Department's approach to managing complex client interactions. This moves from a process modelled on that used by the NSW Ombudsman to manage unacceptable behavior of complainants, to a guideline based on a disability, health and trauma-informed approach, anchored in Workplace Health and Safety legislation and obligations.

Members **NOTED** DVA's Managing Challenging and Complex Behaviour Policy. Members also **NOTED** that the language and guidance included in externally facing components of the Policy, such as the Mutual Code of Conduct, could benefit from refinement. Members and DVA **AGREED** for feedback to be provided on Appendix A – Mutual Code of Conduct of the DVA's Managing Challenging and Complex Behaviour Policy be provided to the ESORT Secretariat out of session.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A27	Members to review the DVA's Managing Challenging and Complex Behaviour Policy Appendix A – Mutual Code of Conduct and provide feedback to the ESORT Secretariat out of session.	All members

Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Division Service Review and Transformation Program – discussed 4 July 2022

Members **NOTED** that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Division (MHWSD) provides a gateway for veterans and eligible family members to engage with the Department and access mental health and wellbeing services and support. MHWSD has recently commenced a Service Review and Transformation Program. The Program is undertaking a holistic analysis of the current state and future opportunities for the Division.

The Program Team is led by a senior Psychologist and a Veteran, and includes an experienced Organisational Analyst and a Service Designer. Program governance and oversight is being provided by an executive Steering Committee, which includes veteran and family lived experience representatives.

Members **AGREED** to provide ESORT Secretariat any feedback they may have on the papers provided.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A28	Review Agenda Item 4 Mental Health & Wellbeing Services Division Service Review and Transformation Program and provide any feedback to ESORT Secretariat by cob Monday 1 August 2022.	All members

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Analytical Article on the Census 2021 Australian Defence Force (ADF) Service Question – discussed 4 July 2022

Ms Alison Hale, Assistant Secretary Community Policy, led this discussion. Members noted the impending release of analytical articles based on data collected as part of the 2021 Census, including geographical data on the top 15 -20 locations for serving and ex-serving members of the Defence Force.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A29	Secretariat to distribute link to the ABS Analytical Article to ESORT members when available.	Secretariat

Members **NOTED** the upcoming analytical article on the Census 2021 Australian Defence Force Service Question being prepared by the ABS.

Other Business – discussed 4 July 2022

The Chair encouraged members to raise any other business.

One member enquired after the Coordinated Veteran Care (CVC) program and advised that veterans in rural areas are struggling to find care. The Repatriation Commissioner **AGREED** to contact the veteran through the member. The Chair recommended a presentation from the Chief Health Officer be included on the agenda at the next meeting scheduled for 14 October 2022.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A30	The Repatriation Commissioner to contact the affected veteran through the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia.	Repatriation Commissioner
2022ESORT/A31	Chief Health Officer to present to ESORT (14 October 2022) on the work being undertaken by the Department with medical and allied professionals, including the Coordinated Veteran Care Program.	Secretariat

Members were reminded that feedback on the Veteran Transition Strategy as presented by the Joint Transition Authority in March 2022, is due back to Defence by 11 July 2022 through ESORT Secretariat.

The Deputy Secretary, Enabling Services and Commemorations (DSESC) provided members with an update on household invoices payments. He advised that the backlog is being addressed as quickly as possible. Resources have been allocated to processing and the implementation of the Australian Government Policy to align with payments made within 20 days is helping. The DSESC asked members to encourage providers to use the payment portal to submit invoices rather than via email. <https://connect.dva.gov.au/provider/upload> The portal facilitates faster payment.

The ESORT Chair and Deputy Secretary, Veterans & Family Services Group (DSVFSG), advised that government has agreed to undertake an extension of incapacity payments for veterans whilst studying. There is a gap in legislation that cannot be updated until parliament resumes. The DSVFSG advised that a workaround is in place and veterans will continue to receive a payment in the meantime. If members are contacted by affected veterans, please advise the Incapacity Team on incapstudyenquiries@dva.gov.au or call 1800 VETERAN on 1800 838 372 and ask the VAN staff for extension 179167.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A32	Provide all links to members as discussed in Other Business by cob 4 July 2022.	Secretariat

A member enquired after the Government's election commitment to increase the TPI payment. The Assistant Secretary, Community Policy will provide advice directly to the member.

No.	Action	Assigned to
2022ESORT/A33	Provide advice on the Government's election commitment to increase the TPI payment directly to the TPI Federation.	Assistant Secretary, Community Policy

Annexure A

ATTENDEES – 14 June 2022 meeting	
The Hon Matt Keogh MP	Minister for Veterans' Affairs
The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP	Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Ms Vicki Rundle PSM	Deputy Secretary, Veteran and Family Services
Mr Stuart Smith AO DSC	Deputy Secretary, Enabling Services and Commemorations Group
Ms Alison Hale	Assistant Secretary Community Policy
ESORT Members	
Ms Liz Cosson AM CSC	Chair, President, Repatriation Commission and Chair, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (MRCC)
Mr Don Spinks AM	Repatriation Commissioner and MRCC Member
Ms Gwen Cherne	Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner
GPCAPT Carl Schiller OAM CSM (Retd)	Air Force Association
Ms Rhondda Vanzella OAM	Australian War Widows Inc
MAJGEN Paul Irving AM PSM RFD (Retd)	Defence Reserves Association
Mr Eric Easterbrook OAM	Legacy Australia Inc
Mr David Manolas	Naval Association of Australia
Ms Narelle Bromhead OAM	Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc
MAJGEN Greg Melick AO RFD SC	Returned and Services League of Australia
Mr Michael von Berg MC OAM	Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
Ms Pat McCabe OAM	TPI Federation Australia
Mr Max Ball	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Ex-Officio Members	
MAJGEN Wade Stothart CSC	MRCC, Department of Defence
CDRE Nicole Curtis (Proxy)	MRCC, Department of Defence
Proxies	
Mr Ian Lindgren	Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association
Mr Kerry Mellor	Defence Force Welfare Association
Mr Rick Moor	Australian Special Air Service Association
Presenters	
Ms Traci-Ann Byrnes	First Assistant Secretary Claims Review Implementation Office (Item 3)
Ms Vicki Rundle	Deputy Secretary, Veteran and Family Services (Items 4 and 5)
Mr Luke Brown	Assistant Secretary, Business Improvement and Quality Assurance Branch (Item 4 and 5)
Mr Ian Thompson	Multi-Act Working Group representative (Item 5)
Ms Sarah Kennedy	Assistant Secretary, Client Programs Branch (Item 6)

Ms Kylie Barnes	Director, Pharmacy Programs and Operations (Item 6)
Ms Leanne Cameron	First Assistant Secretary, Mental Health & Wellbeing Services (Item 7 and 8)
Ms Jennifer Veitch	Executive Director, Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Division (Item 8)
Ms Alison Hale	Assistant Secretary Community Policy (Item 9 and 10)
Mr Richard Kelloway AM OBE	Multi- Act Working Group representative (Item 10)
Mr Brian Warren OAM	Multi- Act Working Group representative (Item 10)
Observers	
Ms Liane Pettitt	Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary and Governance
Mr John King	President, Returned Services League Australia, ACT
AIRCDRE Kaarin Kooij	Director General Joint Transition Authority
Ms Lesley Minner	Partners of Veterans Association of Australia Inc
Ms Maree Weir	Director, Claims Review Implementation Office (Item 3)
Ms Kylie Bajurin	Assistant Director, Claims Review Implementation Office (Item 3)
Ms Leanne Yannopoulos	First Assistant Secretary, Client Engagement and Support Services (Item 6)
Mr Thomas Flannery	Assistant Director, Research Programs (Item 9)
Mr Michael Harper	Deputy Commissioner, Victoria (Item 10)
Secretariat	
Ms Melinda Kershaw	A/g Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Tiki Stephens	Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Kylie Robinson	Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Mr James Caulfield	Senior Secretariat Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Janet Long	Senior Secretariat Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events
Apologies	
Mr Robert Woods JP	Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association
Mr Bill Roberts OAM	Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia
Ms Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin	Defence Families Australia
The Hon Martin Hamilton-Smith	Australian Special Air Service Association
Mr Kel Ryan	Defence Force Welfare Association
Mr Aaron Hughes	MRCC, Comcare
RADM Sarah Sharkey AM CSC	MRCC, Department of Defence
Ms Kate Pope PSM	Deputy President, Repatriation Commission and MRCC Member

ATTENDEES – 4 July 2022 meeting	
Ms Vicki Rundle PSM	Deputy Secretary, Veteran and Family Services
Mr Stuart Smith AO DSC	Deputy Secretary, Enabling Services and Commemorations Group
ESORT Members	
Ms Liz Cosson AM CSC	Chair, President, Repatriation Commission and Chair, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (MRCC)
Mr Don Spinks AM	Repatriation Commissioner and MRCC Member
Ms Gwen Cherne	Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner
Ms Rhondda Vanzella OAM	Australian War Widows Inc
MAJGEN Paul Irving AM PSM RFD (Retd)	Defence Reserves Association
Mr Eric Easterbrook OAM	Legacy Australia Inc
Mr David Manolas	Naval Association of Australia
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Ms Pat McCabe OAM	TPI Federation Australia
Mr Bill Roberts OAM	Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia
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Proxies	
Mr Ian Lindgren	Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association
CMDR Nicole Curtis	MRCC, Department of Defence
MAJGEN Ian Flawith AO CSC (Retd)	Deputy National President, Defence Force Welfare Association
Kerry Mellor	Defence Force Welfare Association
Presenters	
Ms Sarah Kennedy	Assistant Secretary, Client Programs Branch (Item 6)
Ms Kylie Barnes	Director, Pharmacy Programs and Operations (Item 6)
Ms Jennifer Veitch	Executive Director, Mental Health & Wellbeing Services Division (Item 8)
Ms Alison Hale	Assistant Secretary, Community Policy (Item 9 & 10)
Mr Richard Kelloway AM OBE	Multi- Act Working Group representative (Item 10)
Mr Brian Warren OAM	Multi- Act Working Group representative (Item 10)
Observers	
Ms Liane Pettitt	Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary and Governance
Ms Leanne Yannopoulos	First Assistant Secretary, Client Engagement and Support Services (Item 6)
Mr Michael Harper	Deputy Commissioner, Victoria (Item 10)
Secretariat	
Ms Kerry Sutherland	A/g Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Mr Tim Adams	Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Kylie Robinson	Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events
Ms Karen Griffiths	Senior Secretariat Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events
Apologies	

GPCAPT Carl Schiller OAM CSM (Retd)	Air Force Association
MAJGEN Greg Melick AO RFD SC	Returned and Services League of Australia
Mr Kel Ryan	Defence Force Welfare Association
Mr Robert Woods JP	Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association
Mr Max Ball	Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
RADM Sarah Sharkey AM CSC	MRCC, Department of Defence
Mr Aaron Hughes	MRCC, ComCare
Ms Kate Pope PSM	Deputy President, Veteran Family Policy Group & MRCC members
Mr Phil Winter	Returned & Services League of Australia
Ms Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin	Defence Families Australia