**Minutes**

**Agenda Item 1 Welcome and apologies**

Apologies and attendees list is at Annexure A.

The Chaired welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for making the trip to Canberra. She acknowledged that OWP has not met in person since November 2019. The Chair noted apologies from Mr Max Ball, *Vietnam Veterans of Australia,* Ms Rona Lunney, *Partners of Veterans Association,* Mr Ray Kemp OAM, *Naval Association of Australia,* Ms Rhondda Vanzella OAM, *Australian War Widows Inc,* Mr Rod Hutchings, *Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association.*

**Agenda Item 2 Minutes & actions of previous meeting**

Members **ENDORSED** the minutes from 3 March 2022.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2022A/OWP2, 2022A/OWP3, 2022A/OWP4, 2022A/OWP5, 2022A/OWP8 and 2022A/OWP9 and **NOTED** that theaction items 02021/010, 02021/028, 02021/029, 2022A/OWP1, 2022A/OWP6, 2022A/OWP7 and 2022A/OWP10 continue to progress.

The members clarified that 2022A/OWP7 is the internal Triage & Connect form that can be used for gather information to ensure all criteria are met when constructing supporting emails of high priority cases.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2022A/OWP11** | Secretariat to circulate DVA’s Framework for Considering Requests to Fund Medicinal Cannabis. | Secretariat |
| **2022A/OWP12** | Updated information regarding latest procedures for Optional Assessment Model for Application for Increase under the VEA to be uploaded to the DVA website and Secretariat to provide members a link to this information when available. | Michael Harper |

**Agenda Item 3 ADF Firefighter Support Scheme Package**

Mr Graeme Bland ***(Air Force Association***) provided a member submission seeking to highlight delays in processing claims under the ADF Firefighter Support Scheme package, at the 3 March 2022 meeting. Mr Bland advised most of the issues highlighted in his member submission had been resolved.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2022A/OWP13** | Mr Michael Harper to contact Mr Graeme Bland directly to take details of outstanding ADF firefighter support scheme package cases and investigate. | Michael Harper |
| **2022A/OWP14** | Deputy Chair to provide advice on why it is easier to prove chemical exposure at some locations over others, under the ADF Firefighter Support Scheme Package. | Ms Natasha Cole |

The Secretary attended to welcome members and explain DVA’s priorities for the rest of the year: supporting an incoming Minister following the Election, supporting the Royal Commission and reducing the claims backlog.

**Agenda Item 4 Authority to Act Forms – Workshop Outcomes**

At the previous OWP meeting on 3 March 2022, DVA responded to a Members Submission from the ASAS Association regarding simplification of the process to nominate an authority to act. Members agreed to submit feedback on the new design of the form D9325 *Appointing a third party* to represent a DVA client.

Members **DISCUSSED** the new design of the form, providing feedback directly to Mr Alan Jones, Director, Compensation, Process and Payments.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2022A/OWP15** | Mr Alan Jones to circulate redesigned amended D9325 form to OWP members post approval from DVA legal. | Secretariat |

**Agenda Item 5 Capturing impairment Assessment Information for Claims – Workshop Outcomes**

This item was deferred from the meeting of 3 March 2022 and responds to a Member Submission from the Air Force Association calling for simplification and clarification of the Impairment Assessment Pro-formas (IAPs). The Department can confirm that the forms that Mr Bland considers to be more user friendly (3(a) & 3(b)) are the forms that are currently contained in ISH and Directors and delegates have been directed to use these forms.

Members **NOTED**  that the more user friendly (3(a) & 3(b)) are the forms that are currently contained in ISH and used by delegates.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2022A/OWP16** | DVA to revise the 3(a) and 3 (b) Impairment and Assessment Pro-formas, workshop with medical practitioners and then circulate to OWP members for feedback. | Client Benefits Division |
| **2022A/OWP17** | DVA to investigate amending Metabolic Equivalent of Tasks (METS) ratings in SOPs into military wording and descriptions. | Client Benefits Division |

**Agenda Item 6 Publishing Claims information on the DVA website – Workshop Outcomes**

Members **DISCUSSED** the format for publishing claims information on the DVA website, providing feedback about the language used, how the numbers are displayed and how often the webpage will be updated.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2022A/OWP18** | Secretariat to circulate updated version of the draft options for claims information on the DVA website for OWP members to share with their organisations, requesting further comment. | Secretariat |

**Agenda Item 7 Medical Practitioner and Veteran reimbursement contributing to decline in accepting DVA arrangements for treatment of veterans**

Mr Graeme Bland ***(Air Force Association)*** provided a submission requesting the Department investigate the decline in General Practitioners providing services for veterans due to increase in paperwork.

Members **NOTED** that there were several components to the submission: there are payment delays to medical practitioners due to the invoices backlog, and there are issues around fees and the gap between what Medicare pay and what DVA pay. Professor Jenny Firman, Chief Health Officer, explained that DVA is developing resources for medical practitioners (such as quick tip documents and guides to filling in claim forms) and expanding their support network in awareness of the current issues. Professor Firman also explained that fees are an ongoing issue, and DVA is still behind the NDIA but yearly budget increases are allowing fee parity with other providers.

Ms Karen Williams, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, spoke to the invoices backlog. She explained that DVA has had a significant increase in relation to household services, rehabilitation, medical and attendant care. Delays in payment are impacting clients and service providers. DVA has engaged resources from other business areas and increased recruitment to get through the backlog, with the aim to pay within 30 days as per normal. In the long term, the Chief Financial Officer Division are exploring automation and other mechanisms to avoid a similar backlog happening in the future.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2022A/OWP19** | Chief Health Officer to continue to investigate medical fee discrepancies, and psychiatrists and psychologists not taking on Veteran clients. Outcomes will be provided back to OWP. | CHO |
| **2022A/OWP20** | OWP members to be provided with point of contact to raise individual cases of concern. | Secretariat |
| **2022A/OWP21** | Secretariat to circulate list of key DVA personnel. | Secretariat |

**Agenda Item 8 Terms of Reference Facilitation – Outcomes from previous meeting**

At the meeting held 3 March 2022, members participated in a facilitator led session and discussed revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Operational Working Party.

Members **AGREED** to the changes in principle, noting a small number of edits will made and re-circulated with the Minutes.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2022A/OWP22** | Secretariat to circulate further amended Terms of Reference and seek endorsement from members. | Secretariat |

**Agenda Item 9 Other Business**

Members **NOTED** an update on the Multi-Act Working Group.

No other business was discussed.

Meeting closed at 3:45pm

**Annexure A**

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| **MEMBERS/ATTENDEES** | |
| Ms Vicki Rundle PSM (Chair) | Deputy Secretary, Veterans and Families Services Group |
| Ms Natasha Cole (Deputy Chair) | First Assistant Secretary, Client Benefits Division |
| Mr Graeme Bland | Air Force Association Ltd |
| Mr Michael Carlon | Australian Special Air Service Association |
| Mr John McNeill | Australian Veterans Alliance |
| Mr Robert Connor | Legacy Australia Inc |
| Ms Pat McCabe OAM | TPI Federation Australia |
| Mr Bill Roberts OAM | Vietnam Veterans’ Federation of Australia |
| Mr John King | Returned and Services League of Australia |
| **Presenters** | |
| Prof Jenny Firman | Chief Health Officer |
| Mr Michael Harper | Deputy Commissioner Victoria, |
| Ms Karen Williams | Assistant Secretary, Deputy Chief Financial Officer |
| Mr Christopher Jones | Assistant Director, Health Entitlements, Client Access and Rehabilitation Branch |
| Mr Brian Eastman | Director, New Initiatives, Policy Development Branch |
| Mr Alan Jones | Director, Compensation, Processing and Payments |
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| Ms Kylie Robinson | Assistant Director, Governance and Ministerial Events |
| Ms Morgan South | Senior Secretariat Officer, Governance and Ministerial Events |
| Ms Tahl Kean | Graduate, Governance and Ministerial Events |
| **Apologies** | |
| Mr Max Ball | Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia |
| Ms Rona Lunney | Partners of Veterans Association |
| Mr Ray Kemp OAM | Naval Association of Australia |
| Ms Rhondda Vanzella OAM | Australian War Widows Inc |
| Mr Rod Hutchings | Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association |