**Minutes**

**Agenda Item 1 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest**

The Chair opened the meeting acknowledging country, veterans, current serving Australian Defence Force Personnel and welcomed observers. Members **NOTED** apologies as listed at Annexure A and no conflicts of interest were raised.

The Chair welcomed new representatives from Returned and Services League of Australia, Legacy Australia and Partners of Veterans’ Association of Australia.

**Agenda Item 2 Action items**

Members **NOTED** the minutes from the previous meeting on 7 November 2024 were endorsed out of session on 12 December 2024 and published on the DVA Website on 18 December 2024.

Members **AGREED** to close action items 2024NACCF/A06, A08, A09, A10, A11, A12, A13 and A14.

# UPDATES ON DVA INIATIVES

**Agenda Item 3 Department of Health and Aged Care Update**

Members **NOTED** the update from the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) and **NOTED** an organisational restructure has taken place to implement the 1 July 2025 Aged Care Act reforms.

Members **NOTED** the budget is expected to meet Fair Work Commission decisions of December 2024 to increase award wages for aged care workers through indexation boosts and new grant opportunities.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** that DoHAC opened consultation on the national registration scheme in February 2025, which aims to strengthen the aged care workforce, improve quality, improve safety and enhance protections for older people. The staged process encompasses recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Members **NOTED** the consultation period would end in April 2025.

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| **Action Item and Description** | **Responsible** |
| **2025NACCF/A01 –** NACCF members to be provided with an electronic of the new Department of Health and Aged Care organisation chart. | Department of Health and Aged Care |

**Agenda Item 4 Veteran Hearing Services Framework**

Members **NOTED** the update on the new Veteran Hearing Services framework that takes wellbeing factors into consideration including health, employment, volunteer work and social support. This enables DVA to support a broader range of factors previously unidentified.

Members **NOTED** a range of communications material including Frequently Asked Question (FAQs), webinars and fact sheets are being finalised and will assist Veterans to understand the new entitlements and clarify technology available to Veterans with hearing loss concerns.

**Agenda Item 5 Simplification of the Booked Car with Driver Service**

Members **NOTED** amendments to the Booked Car with Driver Service (BCWD) to simplify and improve clarity for veterans. These changes included threshold access criteria for the BCWD service, removal of treatment location criteria for clients aged 79 years or younger and the decision to retain medical condition criteria for clients aged 79 years or younger.

Members raised concerns to the wording of the BCWD infographic brochure highlighting the exclusion of General Practitioners from treatment location eligibility. Members **NOTED** that this was the previous infographic, and the treatment location criteria has been removed. All treatment locations, including General Practitioners, are now included.

Members **DISCUSSED** the types of contracted driver services that can be booked under the BCWD and the suitability of Uber in regional areas.

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| **Action Item and Description** | **Responsible** |
| **2025NACCF/A02 –** Advice to be provided to specify which contracted driver services can be booked, including Uber, under Booked Car with Driver (BCWD). | Program Delivery |

**Agenda Item 6 Model of Care Implementation for Open Arms**

Members **NOTED** the update on the Open Arms Model of Care and **NOTED** it has been updated to prepare for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommendation for an independent review be undertaken of Open Arms in 2027. These updates aim to enhance military aware, trauma informed mental health support, ensuring it is better tailored to the needs of Veterans.

Members **NOTED** Open Arms has recently implemented several changes to the Model of Care, including revisions to the General Practitioner referral pathway, episodes of care and the introduction of engagement periods.

Members **NOTED** Open Arms is exploring the establishment of a Consumer Reference Group (CRG) to ensure that the voices and perspectives of the community are integrated into decision-making processes.

Members **DISCUSSED** support services availableto Veterans when transitioning to aged care and the feasibility of incorporating existing community based agencies in this process.

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| **Action Item and Description** | **Responsible** |
| **2025NACCF/A03 –** Program Delivery to liaise with the Wellbeing and ESO Peak Body Taskforce about better care of Veterans as they transition to aged care and the use of existing community-based agencies. | Program Delivery |

**Agenda Item 7 Women Veterans’ Strategy**

Members **NOTED** the update on the Women Veterans’ Strategy and that the strategy will consider health, suicide, leadership, identity, gender-based violence, economic equality, unpaid care and the commissioning of research into exploring women veterans’ experiences accessing service supports.

Members were **ENCOURAGED** to directany questions or input on the Strategy via email to women@dva.gov.au.

**Agenda Item 8 NACCF Communique**

Members were provided an opportunity to view the NACCF Communique and **NOTED** it will be distributed following the meeting.

**Agenda Item 9 Other Business**

Members **DISCUSSED** the eligibility of veteran widow/widowers to partner gold card benefits.

Members **DISCUSSED** delays to veteran queries on accessing home care and occupational therapist support particularly in regional areas.

Members **DISCUSSED** the increase in private companies charging Veterans for aged care placement services.

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| **Action Item and Description** | **Responsible** |
| **2025NACCF/A04 –** Program Delivery to liaise with Department of Health and Aged Care around legitimacy of service providers charging to assist Veterans in securing placement in aged care. | Program Delivery |

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION AND WERE DISCUSSED BY EXCEPTION**

**Agenda Item 10 Legislative Reform Update**

Members **NOTED** the update on legislation reform was provided for information.

**Agenda Item 11 Veterans’ Acute Housing Program Update**

Members **NOTED** the update on the Veterans’ Acute Housing Program was provided for information.

**Agenda Item 12 Claims Processing Update**

Members **NOTED** the new standard claims processing update moving forward will be as per the paper circulated to members.

**Agenda Item 13 Aged Care Update**

Members **NOTED** the update on Aged Care was provided for information.

**Meeting closed:** 10:15 am

**Annexure A**

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| **Members** |
| Andrew Kefford PSM | Chair, Deputy Secretary, Policy & Programs, Department of Veteran’s Affairs |
| Anna Colwell | Deputy Chief Health Officer, Department of Veterans’ Affairs ***(Proxy)*** |
| Terry Roe JP | Vietnam Veterans’ Association of Australia |
| Kate Hazelton | Legacy Australia |
| Mark Shen | Department of Health and Aged Care |
| CMDR RAN Rtd Ward Gainey MIEAUST JP | Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia |
| Emily Cook | Australian War Widows Inc. ***(Proxy)*** |
| Pauline Cameron | Partners of Veterans’ Association of Australia Inc |
| Keely Dreghorn | Returned and Services League of Australia |
| **Presenters** |
| Chantelle Stratford | First Assistant Secretary, Women Veterans’ Strategy |
| Brook Shearer | Senior Director, Open Arms |
| Jennifer Buckler | Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Families |
| Dylan Kurtz | Assistant Secretary, Home and Community Care |
| Adam Weiderman | Assistant Secretary, Benefit Policy |
| **Observers** |
| Michael Harper | A/g First Assistant Secretary, Program Delivery |
| Kathy Shay | Home Support Programs Section, Department of Health and Aged Care |
| Danielle Wickens | Home Support Programs Section, Department of Health and Aged Care |
| Heidi Moses | Office of the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner ***(Proxy)*** |
| Jacqueline Boyd | Director, Transport and Coordinated Veterans’ Care Programs |
| Liza Harris | Assistant Director, Strategic Hearing Act |
| Jacqueline Hair | Assistant Director, Transport and Coordinated Veterans’ Care Programs |
| **Secretariat** |
| Morgan South | Assistant Director, International & Stakeholder Relations |
| Julie Hackett | Senior Secretariat Officer, International & Stakeholder Relations |
| **Apologies** |
| Peta Langeveld | Deputy Chair, First Assistant Secretary, Program Delivery |
| Kahlil Fegan DSC AM | Repatriation Commissioner |
| Professor Jenny Firman AM | Chief Health Officer, Department of Veterans’ Affairs |
| Jenny Gregory OAM | Australian War Widows Inc. |

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| **Next Meeting** – NACCF 21 August 2025 (in person) |