|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Venue*: Level 9 Conference Room** **Lovett Tower, Canberra*****Date:* Tuesday 8 May 2012** | **Meeting No. 18** |

**ESO Round Table Budget Briefing**

**Record of Meeting**

**Meeting Attendees**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Commission Members** |  |
| Mr Ian Campbell PSM | Secretary, Department of Veterans’ AffairsPresident, Repatriation CommissionChairman, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| Mr Shane Carmody | Deputy President, Repatriation CommissionMember, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| MAJGEN Gerard Fogarty AM | Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| **ESO Round Table Members** |  |
| Mrs Audrey Blood OAM | War Widows’ Guild of Australia |
| Mrs Narelle Bromhead (Item 6) | Partners of Veterans Association of Australia |
| LTCOL David Catterall | Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women |
| Mr Ron Coxon OAM | Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia |
| COL David Jamison AM (Retd) | Defence Force Welfare Association |
| Mr Tim McCombe OAM | Vietnam Veterans’ Federation of AustraliaNaval Association of Australia |
| AVM Roxley McLennan AO (Retd) (Items 1-5) | Royal Australian Air Force Association |
| Mr Terry Nolan | Australian Special Air Service Association |
| Mr Russell Pettis FAIM | Naval Association of Australia |
| LTCOL Michael von Berg MC (Retd) | Royal Australian Regiment Corporation |
| Mr Charles Wright | Legacy Australia Council |
| **Apologies** |  |
| MAJGEN Mark Kelly AO DSC | Commissioner, Repatriation CommissionMember, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| Mr Gordon Blake | Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council |
| RADM Ken Doolan AO RAN (Retd) | Returned and Services League of AustraliaRoyal Australian Regiment Corporation |
| Mr Paul O’Connor | Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| Mr Allan Thomas JP | Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans’ Association |
| **Proxies** |  |
| Mr Mickey Michaelis | Returned and Services League of Australia |
| Mr Kevin Ryan JP | Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans’ Association |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Guests** |  |
| Mr Tony Hyams (Item 2) | Chairman, Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation |
| Mr Peter Carrigy-Ryan (Item 2) | Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation |
| Mr Mick Callan (Item 4) | Defence Community Organisation – PMAC Representative |
| **DVA Participants** |  |
| MAJGEN Liz Cosson AM CSC | First Assistant Secretary, Client and Commemorations  |
| Mr Sean Farrelly | First Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Support  |
| Ms Judy Daniel | First Assistant Secretary, Health and Community Services  |
| Mr Myles Hannah (Item 1) | Assistant Director, Overseas Projects, Office of Australian War Graves |
| Ms Joy Russo (Item 3) | A/g Assistant Secretary, Research and Development |
| Mr Kel Pearce (Item 5) | Deputy Director Operations, Office of Australian War Graves |
| Mr Neil Bayles (Item 6) | Assistant Secretary, Case Escalation and MRCA Review |
| Ms Jenni Stephenson (Item 6) | A/g Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Entitlements Policy |
| Mr Luke Brown (Item 6) | Director, New Initiatives |
| **National Consultation Secretariat** |  |
| Mr David Hollaway | Director |
| Ms Donna Janssen | Assistant Director |
| Ms Jane Penders | Secretariat Officer |

**Meeting Open**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members. Apologies were noted and changes to the forum’s membership discussed, in particular the recent appointments of LTCOL Catterall as National President of the TPI Association, replacing Mr Blyth, and Mr Nolan as the new Chairman of the ASASA, replacing LTCOL Lewis. The Chair also welcomed Mr Ryan attending on behalf of Mr Thomas, and Mr Michaelis attending on behalf of RADM Doolan. The Chair noted that Ms Bromhead would attend the meeting for the Budget briefing, and that AVM McLennan AO would attend the meeting for most of the afternoon, but not for the Budget briefing.

**Item 1: Vietnam Veterans Education Centre (VVEC) and ‘The Wall’**

Members noted the presentation by Mr Hannah outlining the VVEC and ‘The Wall’, particularly that the OAWG is currently establishing contact details for the next of kin for the 521 war dead from the Vietnam War, to request permission to display the name and image of the family member in the VVEC. Families will be asked if they would prefer to provide an image of the family member, rather than utilise the service photograph held on file by the Australian War Memorial. Where necessary, OAWG will seek the assistance of the ESOs to establish contact with the next of kin. This will take place during the second half of 2012. Members were invited to submit any further queries on the VVEC Project to vvec@dva.gov.au. Mr Hannah agreed to distribute his PowerPoint presentation to members as it contained links to relevant websites.

Mr Hannah also undertook to find out what happens to the articles left at the Anzac Parade memorial and whether some of those could be included in the Washington memorial.

Action Item 1: Secretariat to email a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to members.

Action Item 2: Mr Hannah to investigate what happens with articles left at the Vietnam Veterans memorial on Anzac Parade, Canberra, and whether some would be suitable for ‘The Wall’ memorial in Washington.

**Item 2: Military and Public Service Superannuation**

Mr Hyams and Mr Carrigy-Ryan from the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation joined the meeting. They advised members that the Board does not have a remit to advise the Government on indexation parameters.

Mr Hyams provided an explanation on the background of the merger between the Military Superannuation and Benefits Fund with the ARIA civilian fund which has now been completed. He also briefed members on the governance arrangements, membership appointments and enhancements made possible through the merger. These enhancements included access to better and larger investments, top quality staff, economies of scale, and better fees negotiated with investment managers. Members agreed with the Board’s approach to operate with the right balance – within a sound range to protect investments and diversity, and better risk management skills brought to investments. Members agreed that clear messages need to go to superannuation members.

**Item 3: Telemonitoring Trial**

Ms Daniel and Ms Russo outlined the telemonitoring trial which will build on the Coordinated Veterans Care Initiative. The trial is being conducted at six sites (Armidale and Coffs Harbour in NSW; Mandurah and Geraldton in WA; Kingston in TAS; and Toowoomba in QLD) and involves the placement of telemonitoring equipment into veterans’ homes along with training and education. The particular sites were chosen because of the number of veterans with complex needs in those locations.

Once the equipment is in place, the GP and practice nurse will monitor the veteran’s condition from the time of surgery. The program is aimed at veterans whose needs are complex and will assist veterans to stay in their home longer. It will not preclude the need for a face-to-face consultation but will reduce the need for extended travel.

There has been very strong and positive feedback received from the Clinical Reference Group.

An Expression of Interest was released to the market last week for technology providers to put forward their ideas about technology services.

The trial will include a comprehensive evaluation and careful monitoring. Ms Daniel confirmed that as part of the trial DVA will pay for the cost of internet access, but in the long term this will be a decision for Government.

Ms Russo explained that the equipment will measure blood pressure, glucose levels, lung capacity, temperature/possibility of infection; and weight.

It was agreed that a copy of the DVD presentation would be provided to members.

Action Item 3: Secretariat to provide a copy of the DVD presentation to members.

**Item 4: Politicians’ Attendance at Military Funerals – PMAC referral**

Mr Callan briefed members of the ESORT about PMAC’s plans to write to the Minister and through him to the Prime Minister, about politicians’ attendance at funerals. Members provided their views on the matter and were requested not to disclose the information shared during the discussion.

**Item 5: Understanding Military Culture Overview**

Mr Pearce outlined DVA’s presentation on “Understanding Military Culture and Mental Health”. He advised members that the program has been presented to more than 700 DVA staff. Members endorsed the training and congratulated the Department on its endeavour to educate staff on these matters. A copy of Mr Pearce’s presentation was tabled at the meeting.

Members noted that mental health issues can be stimulated by alcohol and “self medication”. MAJGEN Fogarty spoke about the ADF Review on use of alcohol and work being done in Defence to move the culture away from having alcohol as part of any rituals.

In addition, members also agreed that there is a need for support systems to be available to war widows, and about the difficulties in remaining connected to reservists who do not operate in a day-to-day operational unit. Members also spoke about the impacts on serving members of multiple deployments.

The Chair spoke about further staff training being conducted later in the year where clients of DVA will be asked to tell us how their cases were handled.

**Item 6: Budget Briefing**

Members received a copy of the Budget Pack (PowerPoint presentation and media releases) and the Government response to the MRCA Review (members were advised that the response is on the DVA website).

Members received an overview of the 2012-13 Budget from the Secretary. Key initiatives/themes were the MRCA Review; funding for the Centenary of Anzac commemorations; veterans’ mental health issues being managed in aged care facilities; the Department’s reduced operational funding (whilst having no impact on service delivery to veterans); and additional funding to the Australian War Memorial.

Members then received a detailed briefing from Mr Bayles on the Government’s response to the MRCA Review, in particular confirmation that of the 108 recommendations made, 96 are being progressed, 3 have been deferred to enable further work to be done and 9 were rejected as they retain the status quo. Members were invited to make enquiries at any time via the email address: milcomp.review@dva.gov.au.

Mr Farrelly briefed members about the measure that will result in the reclassification of service for ADF personnel deployed to Tonga during the 2006 Operation Quickstep from peacetime to non‑warlike. Mr Farrelly also briefed members on a cross-portfolio measure with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to reduce the portability overseas of some supplement payments from 13 to 6 weeks - an estimated 1,000 veterans will be affected; as well as a permanent exemption of the WA Country Age Pension Fuel Card from the income test (will affect 6,000 people); and the Education Tax Refund payment and Schoolkids Bonus.

MAJGEN Cosson briefed members on the Anzac Centenary package which will enable refurbishment of the First World War galleries at the Australian War Memorial and war graves in Australia and overseas, as well as commemorative activities overseas during the Centenary commemorations. Funding was also provided for a local community grants program, a multimedia education program, a scoping study for a travelling exhibition or similar, an Arts and Culture Fund, and to support the work of the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board and its Working Groups (albeit with reduced frequency/revised structures). Funding has also been provided to establish the Anzac Interpretive Centre at Albany, and for a scoping study for a restaging of the convoys that left from Albany in November 1914. A National Collecting Institution Supplement has been provided to the Australian War Memorial as well as a range of cultural institutions.

Ms Daniel briefed members on mental health initiatives (continuation of Operation Life suicide awareness and prevention workshops); aged care reforms (Living Longer: Living Better). Ms Daniel also briefed members on a cross-portfolio measure with the Department of Health and Ageing around Personally Controlled Electronic Health Records, new and revised listing on the Medicare Benefits Schedule and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and a change to the Department of Health and Ageing Telehealth initiative to have a minimum distance of 15 km between patient and GP. This measure will not affect DVA’s Telemonitoring Trial. Finally, Ms Daniel briefly mentioned a small backpayment for federally funded Queensland community workers.

It was agreed that a copy of the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) would be provided to members.

The Secretary also briefed the ESORT about the Government’s decision that BCOF will remain as operational service following Peter Sutherland’s report and the Department of Defence, Chief of Defence Force and the Secretary of DVA agreeing that BCOF should not be reclassified. This was communicated to the BCOF Association on 8 May 2012, and a communication strategy will now be undertaken including letters to those affected and the Sutherland Report will be uploaded to the website today.

Following the Budget Briefing by DVA, members were transported to Parliament House to meet with the Minister and watch the live telecast of the Budget Speech.

Action Item 4: Secretariat to provide a copy of the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) to members.

**Next Meeting/s**

The ESO Round Table did not discuss potential dates for the next meeting.

However, post meeting, the Chair has advised that the next meeting will be 2 August 2012.

**Action Items – 8 May 2012**

*(Status updated as at 22.06.12)*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Item** | **Agenda Item** | **Subject** | **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Status** |
| **1** | **1** | **Vietnam Veterans Education Centre and ‘The Wall’** | Secretariat to email a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to members. | Secretariat | **Completed**. Presentation emailed to members on 31.5.12. |
| **2** | **1** | **Vietnam Veterans Education Centre and ‘The Wall’** | Mr Hannah to investigate what happens with articles left at the Anzac Parade Vietnam Veterans memorial in Canberra, and whether some would be suitable for ‘The Wall’ memorial in Washington | Mr HannahSecretariat | Reply from the National Capital Authority (NCA) regarding the Vietnam memorial on Anzac Parade: Articles such as wreaths that are laid/left at the memorial until such time as they become dilapidated are then removed. Unaware of any personal items such as photographs or other articles that are left at the memorial being kept by the NCA. Reply from the Australian War Memorial: The AWM is unaware of any material or items left at the Vietnam Memorial and subsequently do not have any items from the Memorial. |
| **3** | **3** | **Telemonitoring Trial** | Secretariat to provide a copy of the Department of Broadband, Communication and the Digital Economy’s DVD to members | Ms Russo (liaise with DBCDE)Secretariat | **Completed**. DVD posted to members on 18.6.12. |
| **4** | **6** | **Budget Briefing** | Secretariat to provide a copy of the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) to members | Secretariat | **Completed**. Booklet posted to members on 31.5.12. |