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| **department of veterans’ affairs**  **Ex-Service Organisation Round Table** | |
| **Venue: Level 9 Conference Room, Lovett Tower, Canberra**  **Date: Wednesday, 5 March 2014**  **Time: 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM** | **Meeting No: 25** |

**Attendees**

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| **Attendees** | |
| Mr Simon Lewis PSM | Chair, Secretary, Department of Veterans’ Affairs President, Repatriation Commission Chairman, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| Mr Shane Carmody | Deputy President, Repatriation Commission Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| Major General Mark Kelly AO DSC | Commissioner, Repatriation Commission Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| Air Vice-Marshal Tony Needham | Head, People Capability, Department of Defence |
| Rear Admiral Robyn Walker AM RAN | Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| Mrs Narelle Bromhead | Partners of Veterans Association of Australia |
| Ms Wendy Charlton | War Widows’ Guild of Australia |
| Air Vice-Marshal Brent Espeland AM (Retd) | Royal Australian Air Force Association |
| Mr Ken Foster OAM JP | Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia |
| Colonel David Jamison AM (Retd) | Defence Force Welfare Association |
| Mr Tim McCombe OAM | Vietnam Veterans’ Federation of Australia |
| Mr Terry Nolan AM | Australian Special Air Service Association |
| Mr Russell Pettis FAIM | Naval Association Australia |
| Mr Allan Thomas JP | Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemaker Veterans’ Association |
| Mr Michael von Berg MC | Royal Australian Regiment Corporation |
| Mr David Gray | Legacy Australia Council |
| **Apologies** | |
| Mr Jason Ames-Smith | Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women |
| Rear Admiral Ken Doolan AO RAN (Retd) | Returned and Services League of Australia |
| Ms Kylie Emery | Member, Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission |
| **Proxies / Guest** | |
| Mr John Hodges | Returned and Services League of Australia |
| Mr Karnain Johnson | Department of Social Services |
| Mr William Kane OAM | National Secretary, Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women |
| Air Commodore Steve Martin AM | People Capability, Department of Defence |

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| **DVA Participants** | |
| Brigadier Chris Appleton CSC (Retd) | Director, Office of Australian War Graves |
| Ms Judy Daniel | First Assistant Secretary, Health and Community Services |
| Major General Dave Chalmers AO CSC | First Assistant Secretary, Client and Commemorations |
| Ms Narelle Dotta | First Assistant Secretary, Corporate |
| Ms Lisa Foreman | First Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Support |
| Dr Graeme Killer AO | Principal Medical Advisor |
| Ms Gayle Anderson | Assistant Secretary, Client Strategy and Defence Relations |
| Mr Mark Harrigan | Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Entitlements Policy |
| Ms Leonie Mack | Assistant Secretary, Anzac Centenary and Communications |
| Mr Richard Magor | Assistant Secretary, Income and Support Grants |
| Mr Alex Gerrick | Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary and Governance |
| Mr Tony Pianca | Program Manager, ICT Investment Delivery |
| **Secretariat** | |
| Ms Maxine Berryman | Assistant Director, Executive Committees Secretariat |
| Ms Jennifer Avery | Senior Secretariat Officer, Executive Committees Secretariat |
| **Observers** | |
| Mr Graham Brill | Health Innovation |
| Mr Christian Callisen | Acting Director, Health Innovation |
| Ms Danielle Cunningham | Director, Grants, TIP and Bursaries |
| Mr John Fely | Assistant Secretary, Hospitals and Defence Home Services |
| Mr Leo Flynn | Director, Hospital Policy |
| Ms Veronica Hancock | Assistant Secretary, Mental and Social Health |
| Mr Dylan Kurtz | Director, Aged Care Policy |
| Dr Christine McPaul | Assistant Secretary, Community and Aged Care |
| Mr Bill Clisby | Executive Officer, Repatriation Commission |
| Mr Liam Ryan | Graduate, Repatriation Commission |
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**Agenda Item 1. Opening remarks and Introductions**

Mr Carmody opened the meeting advising members that the Chair, Mr Simon Lewis PSM, would join the meeting at the morning tea break.

Mr Carmody welcomed Ms Wendy Charlton, Interim National President, War Widows' Guild of Australia, Mr David Gray, National Chairman, Legacy Australia Council and congratulated   
Mr Jason Ames-Smith on his appointment as National President, Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women (TPI).

Mr Carmody acknowledged the work of Ms Anne Bonner, the immediate Past President, War Widows' Guild of Australia, Mr Charles Wright, the immediate past National Chairman, Legacy Council Australia and Mr John (Blue) Ryan immediate past National President TPI, thanking them for their valuable contribution to this forum.

Apologies were received from Ms Robyn Ritchie, National Convenor, Defence Families Australia, Ms Kylie Emery, Comcare representative on the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, Mr Ken Doolan, National President, Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) who was represented by Mr John Hodges, National Officer, RSL and   
Mr Ames-Smith who was represented by Mr Bill Kane OAM, National Secretary TPI.

**Agenda Item 2. Minutes and Actions from Meeting 20, 9 November 2012**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. Mr Carmody highlighted concerns that minutes in their entirety are being distributed by Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) members to their membership. Mr Carmody reminded members that all ESORT meeting minutes are not for wider distribution outside the ESORT membership. Members of associations can view the summary of each meeting on the Department’s website. This link is provided to you along with the minutes of each meeting.

Members were provided an update on the remaining open action item included:

* Action Item 24/2 – Service Dog Program - *Ms Daniel and Dr McPaul to confirm with the Chair that DVA is aware of the research mentioned in relation to these types of programs impacting the health budget* -Ms Daniel provided feedback directly to the Chair out-of-session.

**Agenda Item 3. National War Cemetery Proposal and Western Front Interpretive Centre Proposal**

BRIG Appleton provided information on the National War Cemetery Proposal and Western Front Interpretive Centre Proposal. On 18 October 2013, speaking at the Legacy conference in Brisbane, the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, introduced his intention to examine the potential for a national war cemetery in Canberra and a major interpretative centre on the Western Front to provide a lasting legacy of the Centenary of Anzac. DVA discussion papers on both proposals are now with Government for consideration.

The national war cemetery proposal, if progressed, would commence with formal stakeholder engagement. Members expressed concern that community support is polarised in regards to the support of a single national war cemetery. MAJGEN Chalmers advised that Australia has an existing network of national and international War Cemeteries with a national cemetery providing a central link if that is what the Government proposes. BRIG Appleton noted that the overriding determination for the relocation of remains to a new site will remain with the families and next of kin.

The proposed interpretive centre would complement the Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front. Villers Bretonneux is considered the optimal location but the Australian Government has not made a final decision at this time.

BRIG Appleton also provided a brief update on progress for OAWG international projects including; the Australian Memorial in New Zealand, and the Vietnam Veterans Education Centre in Washington, America.

Members requested an update on the missing images of 52 Vietnam War Dead.   
BRIG Appleton advised that there were currently eight missing images and that any assistance in locating these images or the 52 next of kin/relatives would be much appreciated.

**Action**

Item 25/1 BRIG Chris Appleton, Director, Office of Australian War Graves to provide the remaining outstanding names to members to assist in completing the work on the Vietnam Veterans’ Honour Role.

**Agenda Item 4. Anzac Centenary Program Update**

MAJGEN Chalmers advised that on 12 December 2013,   
Prime Minister the Hon. Tony Abbott MP and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson officially launched the Anzac Centenary Public Fund (the Fund) with Mr Lindsay Fox AC.

The Fund has been established to enable the Australian business community and the public to donate to Anzac Centenary commemorations and has been assigned fundraising status. Mr Fox is leading fundraising efforts with corporate Australia. The organisations that have pledged funding to date include BHP Billiton, Crown, Woodside, Aurizon, National Australia Bank, Newscorp, Commonwealth Bank, Leightons, ANZ, James Packer, Telstra, LinFox and the Australian Football League.

A webpage is currently being developed to allow online donations from the general public. A process is also being established for donations to be provided in person at any National Australia Bank branch. The current balance in the Anzac Centenary Public Fund account is $16,104.00 It is anticipated that corporate donations will flow closer to the end of the financial year.

The governance and processes of the Public Fund are currently being considered. It is proposed that an Anzac Centenary Public Fund Board be established to assess projects and make recommendations to the Minister for project funding.

The Anzac Centenary Advisory Board (ACAB) provided their final report to Government in December 2013. All but three of the recommendations put forward by ACAB were accepted.

There was further discussion on the Gallipoli 2015 ballot. MAJGEN Chalmers advised that the process should be concluded by 31 March 2014 with successful applicants being notified.

The Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program was also discussed. MAJGEN Chalmers encouraged members to be as active as possible within their locations and through their associations to raise the profile of the grants available to the community, noting that two thirds of electorates have not submitted an application. Funding has been increased to $125,000 for each Federal Member of Parliament to support projects in their electorate and applications currently remain undersubscribed. Applications close on 31 May 2014.

Ms Mack provided an overview of the Anzac Centenary Touring Exhibition. The Exhibition planning is being progressed by Major General Brian Dawson AM (Ret’d) of the Australian War Memorial (AWM). The Chair joined the meeting at this point and requested the exhibition be addressed further at the next ESORT meeting with an invitation extended to   
Dr Brendan Nelson, Director AWM to attend.

Ms Mack advised that the Minister has approved the Royal Australian Mint’s commemorative coin program for the Anzac Centenary. It is expected that 80 coin designs will be released across the period of the Anzac Centenary. The first in this collection was launched on   
13 February 2014. The one dollar coin features the official logo of the Anzac Centenary. The Perth Mint’s commemorative coin program has also been supported by the Minister.

Ms Mack provided members with an overview of the Centenary merchandising. The AWM is the lead agency for the Anzac Centenary Merchandising Program; however the range of products will be developed in consultation with DVA. The AWM engaged Intandem as the preferred tenderer responsible for marketing and selling the range of merchandising products. On 10 December 2013, Minister Ronaldson agreed to the AWM's proposed merchandising product range. It is expected that other products will be proposed throughout the Centenary period in consultation with the Minister and Department.

A comprehensive Anzac Centenary communications campaign covering the period   
2014 – 2018 is currently under development. In 2014, the campaign will initially focus on Australia’s commitment to the war and the departure of Australian and New Zealand troops from Albany in Western Australia. In 2014, the campaign will also begin recognising and promoting a Century of Service and the service and sacrifice of all Australian servicemen and women. DVA will continue to keep members informed of the communications campaign as the beginning of the Centenary draws closer.

**Action**

Item 25/2 Dr Brendan Nelson, or an AWM representative to provide an update to ESORT members on the AWM Travelling Exhibition at the August 2014 meeting.

**Agenda Item 5. Albany Update**

Ms Mack advised that planning for the Albany Convoy Commemorative Event (ACCE)   
31 October 2014 – 2 November 2014 is progressing. The Western Australian Government and City of Albany are currently in the process of changing the name of the Anzac Interpretive Centre (AIC) to the National Anzac Centre.

Construction of the AIC commenced in late 2013 and is progressing well. Regular meetings have been scheduled to discuss project milestones and developments. Ms Mack encouraged members to highlight events in Albany with their associations. The Deputy Commissioners have also been asked to spread the word.

**Action**

Item 25/3 Ms Leonie Mack, Assistant Secretary, Anzac Centenary and Communications to provide a single page overview of the ACCE program for distribution.

**Agenda Item 6. Telephony Services**

Ms Anderson provided an update on telephony services. Significant changes have been made to DVA’s telephone environment culminating in the deployment of a national contact centre to resolve 75% of all calls generated via the DVA General Enquiries numbers of   
133 254 and 1800 555 254.

While online and email contact has increased considerably, telephone is still the most common method of contact by DVA clients with over 3.6 million calls made to DVA in the last financial year. The largest number of calls received concern transport bookings, followed by general enquiries handled through the Veterans’ Access Network, next are pharmaceutical matters and the fourth largest number concerns medical and allied health provider calls. These four areas account for around 60% of all calls into DVA.

DVA is in the process of transitioning to a new Telstra telephony platform managed through our relationship with the Department of Human Services with anticipated completion at the end of the 2013/14 financial year. Opportunities to employ new technology to achieve greater efficiencies will also be investigated during this phase.

**Agenda Item 7. DVA Online Services**

Mr Pianca provided members with an update on key projects in the Choice and Maintainability in Veterans’ Services (CMVS) program, and in particular MyAccount services.

MyAccount is part of the broader Australian Government commitment to improve service delivery and accessibility for clients. 20,000 clients have so far taken up the opportunity to register. Those who are registered for MyAccount will also be able to manage their affairs online with Human Services and other Government Departments with new services and enhancements being added every six months.

The following services were made available during 2013:

* Notify DVA of overseas travel
* Capacity to update DVA online about changes to income and assets
* Function to change payment destination online

In November 2013 the ability to submit travel reimbursements online was extended from VEA clients only to include MRCA and SRCA clients meaning all entitled clients can claim online. In addition, VEA claims over 100km are supported, without the need for a Doctor’s signature and claims for accommodation can now be made.

In August 2013 the ability to nominate a Representative was implemented. There have been over 7,531 requests for a representative to act on behalf of a client.

In May 2014 a pilot provider portal will be implemented. DVA anticipates this will be extended to Ex-Service Organisation’s (ESO’s) in November 2014, with access to information online through an ESO portal. Mr Pianca requested members provide their feedback on the portal design. ESO’s will need to nominate who will have access to the site during the development phase. Mr Pianca advised members that the ESO Portal PowerPoint presentation was suitable for distribution to their membership, noting that it was a draft version.

**Action**

Item 25/4 Members to provide feedback on ESO Portal Design to Mr Tony Pianca, Program Manager, ICT Investment Delivery.

**Veterans’ Affairs Network (VAN) Press Release**

Members received the “Veterans Urged to Take Part in Consultation” media release. The Chair provided members with an overview of the media release made by   
Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, Minister for Veterans’ Affairs during the ESORT morning session on the review of VAN shopfront services.

**Relocation of DVA’s National Office Press Release**

Members received the “Giving DVA a New Home for the Long-Term” media release. The Chair provided members with an overview of the media release made by   
Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, Minister for Veterans’ Affairs during the ESORT morning session regarding the relocation of DVA’s national office. This move will result in substantial savings to the Commonwealth Government through lease sharing arrangements with the ATO.

**Agenda Item 8. TIP Accreditation**

**Agenda Item 9. BEST Round 16 Funding**

Ms Foreman advised members that Items 8 and 9 would be addressed as one. The Department went to all members requesting feedback on BEST funding by email in December 2013 and letter in January 2014 respectively. Mr Magor advised that nine of the 13 respondents support the use of the BEST Round 15 calculation formula to calculate BEST Round 16 grants.

The Department will therefore open BEST Round 16 for applications shortly, using the funding formula from Round 15 to calculate BEST grants. Eight of the 13 respondents support the principle of using a portion of the restored BEST funds to assist with advocacy training. The Minister has delayed any further use of the restored BEST funding until further ESO engagement has been completed.

Members expressed concerns regarding the outcomes of this consultation.   
AVM Espeland and Ms Bromhead, following further consultation with members, will provide a paper on what the BEST principles should be. The Chair requested this feedback within 14 days of the meeting.

To identify how best to improve advocacy training the Department has recently contracted Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO (Ret'd) to undertake a review of this training. He will begin a significant consultation phase with ESO’s, Departmental and TIP communities shortly, with the review expected to be completed by the end of this financial year. An update will be provided at the ESORT meeting in August.

The findings are expected to be implemented over the next two financial years. BRIG Rolfe attended briefly to discuss the Review of Veterans’ Advocacy Training with members at the afternoon break.

**Action**

Item 25/5 AVM Brent Espeland AM (Ret’d) to provide an out-of-session paper on BEST Funding principles.

**Agenda Item 10. Change to operational area time period under Schedule 2 of the VEA (Malaysia 1966/67)**

Ms Foreman informed members of the proposed changes to the VEA to align the end date of service described in section 7 of Schedule 2 with advice received from the Department of Defence. Mr Harrigan advised that the amendments proposed will be tabled during the Autumn sitting.

Mr Thomas sought confirmation on how these changes relate to warlike and   
non-warlike determinations outlined in Clause b of the Commonwealth Gazette Declaration and Determination Under the Australian Service Medal 1945-75 Regulations dated   
8 June 2001. Mr Harrigan undertook to investigate and advise and out-of-session.

**Action**

Item 25/6 Mr Mark Harrigan, Assistant Secretary, Rehabilitation and Entitlements Policy to provide advice on warlike and non-warlike determinations   
out-of-session.

**Agenda Item 11. Member submission - Mental Health Support Programs**

COL Jamison spoke to his submission seeking an update on what support programs are currently available for the increasing number of veterans seeking assistance. COL Jamison noted that DVA’s communication strategies and coordination of recent initiatives has been very positive.

Ms Hancock informed members that following the release of the Veteran Mental Health Strategy in May 2013 DVA is maintaining focus on early intervention to ensure mental health issues are detected and treated at onset.

Ms Hancock advised that in 2014 the Department will maintain current initiatives and also focus on:

* The At Ease mental health portal including a Professional website dedicated to support health providers treating veterans with mental health issues.
* A rebuild of The Right Mix (Your Health & Alcohol).
* Mobile applications including, PTSD Coach Australia: ON TRACK with The Right Mix: A suicide prevention app and an online resilience program aligned to the Defence “SMART” – Stress Management And Resilience Training program.
* YouTube videos to promote help seeking behaviours and reduce stigma   
  (<http://at-ease.dva.gov.au/veterans/resources/videos/> ).
* The rollout of the post ADF discharge GP Health Assessment commencing July 2014.
* Develop evidence-based interactive assessment measures for health providers - Mental Health Advice Book e-Companion.
* Expand online training programs for clinicians in the areas of case formulation approach (CFA) for complex cases and Trauma Focussed Therapy (TF-CBT).

Additional key pieces of work currently underway to support veteran mental health service system include:

* Trauma Recovery Programs – PTSD
* Draft National Accreditation Standards for Trauma Recovery Programs – PTSD. The standards will come in to effect from 1 July 2015.
* Peer to Peer program being developed to support the recovery of clients with a mental health condition.

There was further discussion on family support, regional access and the impacts of domestic violence. Currently DVA spends $166 million annually on mental health, funded through special appropriation and is based on demand. DVA is also working closely with Defence to ensure those transitioning are aware of the support available to them.

**Action**

Item 25/7 Ms Veronica Hancock, Assistant Secretary, Mental and Social Health to advise if research is being conducted into the impacts of domestic violence in the veteran community out-of-session.

Item 25/8 Air Commodore Steve Martin AM, People Capability, Department of Defence to provide a sample pack of transition paperwork with all identification removed.

**Agenda Item 12. E-Health Registration**

Ms Daniel provided members with an update on the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR).

Of DVA’s treatment population (220,302 as at September 2013), approximately 77 per cent are aged over 65 and many have multiple chronic conditions and complex care needs. Contemporary veterans are also presenting with complex care needs. This is a mobile demographic less likely to have a regular general practitioner.

DVA is promoting both assisted registration via a general practitioner or at local community events, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) PCEHR Helpline 1800 723 471. At this stage it is not possible to determine the total number of veteran registrations in the system except those who have registered via the DHS PCEHR telephone channel. As at the end of January 2014, there were 269 veteran registrations via this channel.

DVA conducted a small market testing exercise in June 2013 to review veteran specific eHealth messages and communication materials. Key learnings from the focus groups informed the update of communication materials including a veteran brochure. The brochure is located with the suite of Department of Health’s consumer eHealth materials at [www.ehealth.gov.au](http://www.ehealth.gov.au). The updated brochure is available as an online resource pending the outcome of the Government’s Review of the PCEHR.

VVCS clients who wish to will be able to have summaries of their VVCS episodes of care uploaded to their PCEHR. The VVCS system has been redeveloped and is now used across its 15 centres located around Australia. The VVCS system satisfies Australian Government data security and privacy requirements.

The review of the PCEHR has been completed and is now under consideration by the Government. DVA provided a submission to the review.

**Agenda Item 13. Update on Coordinated Veterans Care (CVC) and Presentation of the Telemonitoring Equipment**

Mr Callisen updated members on the CVC Program which is now well embedded in general practice.

As at 7 February 2014, 22,655 Gold Card holders were enrolled on CVC, with over 4,700 GPs participating in the Program. Over 6,000 Practice Nurses, GPs and Practice Managers have participated in the CVC training provided by Australian Medicare Local Alliance.

In June 2013 the In-Home Telemonitoring trial commenced, as an enhancement of the CVC Program. The incoming government altered the parameters of the trial and it is no longer tied to the National Broadband Network. The trial is for approximately 300 CVC participants and is currently being rolled out in a number of regions – Armidale, Coffs Harbour and Toowoomba. To date there are 13 CVC participants on the trial with another 70 approved to participate and will run until June 2015.

The second interim CVC evaluation report from DVA’s independent monitoring provider Grosvenor Management Consulting has been received. As part of the evaluation process, surveys were conducted with both CVC participants and their health providers.

Feedback from the surveys included:

* Seventy-seven per cent believed that the coordination of their care had reduced the likelihood of unplanned hospitalisation;
* Eighty per cent reported there was improved self management of their health that had a subsequent improvement in their quality of life;
* The majority of veterans stated they were able to remain living in their own home longer and were better able to manage their conditions.

The Program continues to receive wide support from veteran and health provider stakeholders.

DVA is also focusing on increasing the uptake of CVC Social Assistance services which to date have been less than expected. Mr Brill provided a demonstration of the Telemonitoring trial equipment used by the veteran in their home.

**Agenda Item 14. Aged Care Reform**

Ms Daniel provided members with an overview of the aged care reforms. The Department of Social Services is the lead agency for these reforms and is working closely in partnership with DVA to communicate changes to the veteran community. The Aged Care reforms package commenced on 1 August 2013.

Mr Johnson provided a detailed update on the changes being introduced through these reforms.

The My Aged Care website and contact centre commenced operations on 1 July 2013. This portal will enable consumers to locate information on aged care including service providers. The Portal will be implemented in stages and currently does not include detail on the   
1 July 2014 changes.

An updated copy of Mr Johnson’s PowerPoint presentation will be provided to members following further discussion on aspects of the home care packages including the tax treatment of supplement payments, treatment of assets and superannuation and the legislation detail on policy development, principles and determinations. Mr Johnson, Department of Social Services invited members to forward any further questions they may have to him through the secretariat.

Ms Daniel advised that the National Disability Insurance Scheme will also provide an additional level of support. DVA clients will have several options available when accessing aged care support including in the home and in the community.

**Action**

Item 25/9 Mr Karnain Johnson, Department of Social Services to provide an updated PowerPoint presentation.

**Agenda Item 15. Future DVA Hospital Purchasing**

Ms Daniel provided members with an update on the Mental Health Private Hospitals tender. DVA currently has contracts for mental health hospital services with 61 private facilities nationally and spends around $30.5 million annually. The current contracts commenced in 2009 for an initial period of two years with a two year extension option. This option was exercised and the contracts are now due to expire on 30 June 2014. A Request for Tender has been released.

Significant efficiencies will be achieved for both DVA and the industry if the procurement for private hospital and mental health hospital services are combined in the future. DVA's intent is to continue to enter into a contract that ensures a wide range of access and choice of facility for clients and their treating doctors.

DVA spends approximately $3 million per annum on a variety of hospital based day programs. In addition to inpatient services, DVA is seeking to purchase through this tender outpatient day programs and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) treatment programs.

DVA has developed a new set of national accreditation standards for PTSD group treatment programs. These standards are based on the National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010 and the Australian Guidelines for the Treatment of Acute Stress and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder 2013. The draft Standards have been released with the tender for comment. The Standards will be finalised later in 2014.

Facilities will have until 1 July 2015 to be accredited against the new Standards. Transition arrangements will be put in place for those current programs which are not evidenced based. These arrangements will avoid disruption of services to current participants.

RADM Walker advised that Defence is heavily engaged with DVA on the provision of these services, currently has several contracts out for tender, and is looking to further align these programs with DVA in the future.

**Agenda Item 16. Mental Health Research - Veterans’ Mental Health in Prison**

Ms Daniel provided members with an overview of veterans’ mental health in prison noting that the health and welfare of clients is DVA’s main priority. DVA does not have specific programs to identify and/or support clients, their carers or families in the judicial/prison system. The number that are in prison is not known, but is not expected to be large.

DVA clients continue to receive disability pensions and permanent impairment payments while imprisoned but incapacity and income support payments are not payable. Dependant compensation, including war widow/er’s pension, wholly dependent partner compensation and payments to dependent children are not impacted by a DVA client’s imprisonment. Payments from ComSuper continue while a person is imprisoned. DVA clients retain their entitlement to DVA health care while in prison, however, in practical terms, most health care is provided by the state/territory system and is the same for all incarcerated persons.

VVCS can support the families of DVA clients in prisons, provide information to correctional staff regarding the unique needs of DVA clients and also provide counselling for the DVA client on his/her release.

DVA has had some initial, exploratory discussions with corrective Services NSW to identify current arrangements and seek assistance in identifying numbers of former serving personnel in the prison system. If a request for treatment is received from an imprisoned veteran and exceptional circumstances exist, DVA may consider the request, although approval is based upon a number of conditional factors being satisfied.

Members noted that the ex-service community are reluctant to inform ESO’s and or DVA when they are incarcerated. Members can provide advice to the department if their association has been advised by the veteran that they are happy to be identified, noting that entitlements may be impacted.

**Agenda Item 17. VEA / SRCA / MRCA Communication with Defence**

Ms Foreman provided members with an overview of current communication protocols between DVA and Defence. Under the SRCA and MRCA, DVA is explicitly required to advise Defence of outcomes of claims from members. DVA will now be using a broader power within the VEA to provide the same sort of information to Defence for claims determined under the VEA, for current serving members only.

**Agenda Item 18. Ministerial Arrangements**

Mr Gerrick provided an overview of portfolio arrangements following concerns highlighted by members that the Government’s decision not to integrate the Defence Personnel portfolio with Veterans’ Affairs, in terms of Ministerial oversight.

Members were advised that this is not the first occasion where the portfolios have been separated. The Government stated clearly at the establishment of the ministry that it considered Veterans’ Affairs as a critical part of an integrated and coordinated Defence portfolio. Minister Ronaldson has reinforced his commitment to work closely with his Defence counterparts to ensure that the needs of veterans are appropriately managed.

The current minister responsible for Defence Personnel matters, Mr Stuart Robert MP, represents DVA’s minister in the House of Representatives. This reflects the close level of cooperation with the respective ministers and their offices. Members advised that their concerns had been allayed following further consultation with the Minister.

The Secretary of DVA has made it one of his key priorities to ensure that the relationship with Defence is enhanced through the Defence-Links, in particular providing an opportunity for high level officers of the two departments to meet to discuss and resolve issues critical to veterans.

**Agenda Item 19. Capability Review Update**

Ms Dotta provided an overview of the Australian Public Service Commission’s (APSC) Capability Review Program currently underway. Each Commonwealth agency will be involved in an independent assessment of how its people, processes and systems enable the delivery of outcomes against future objectives and challenges.

Ms Dotta thanked those members who had participated in the Review process. Feedback received from all stakeholders during this process provided a unique and objective insight to understanding what DVA does well and those areas that can be improved. A number of reports from other agencies have been finalised and are published on the APSC website.

The Secretary of DVA received the department’s report on 5 December 2013 which is not yet available to the public. The APSC will table the final report in Parliament in late 2014. Further information will be available shortly on DVA’s website along with regular updates provided to the ESORT and state based forums.

**Agenda Item 20. Veterans’ Affairs National Consultation Framework (NCF) - Forum Updates**

MAJGEN Kelly provided an update on the NCF.

Consultation Framework Review - Terms of Reference - Members were provided copies of the terms of reference for ESORT, Younger Veterans Contemporary Needs Forum (YVF) and the National Aged and Community Care Forum (NACCF).

MAJGEN Kelly highlighted some of the important changes to the NCF including representations to ESORT. Those ESO’s that do not have representation on state/territory fora can now put forward items to the ESORT with feedback being provided to subordinate fora (YVF and NACCF). Items raised for further discussion in ESORT meetings will now be given visibility at all other NCF fora. MAJGEN Kelly also highlighted the increasing representation of younger veterans on the NCF with Victoria and Queensland establishing a younger veteran forum and many other locations looking to include younger veteran representatives on their existing fora.

Emerging Issues Forum (EIF) and National Mental Health Forum (NMHF) - MAJGEN Kelly advised that there were no outstanding items carried over from the final EIF meeting held on 5 December 2013 and the NMHF held on 7 November 2013.

Operational Working Party - MAJGEN Chalmers advised that there were no outstanding items carried over from the final OWP meeting held on 5 December 2013. Members requested clarification on which forum will now address operational focus items.   
MAJGEN Kelly advised that DVA Deputy Commissioners will look to address these items through their state and territory fora. The potential to seek subject matter expert feedback and input in the development of policy may be managed through extraordinary meetings if required. The ESORT TOR will be updated to reflect this.

Mr Carmody advised members that the National Health Aged and Community Care forum (NHACCF) last met in July 2013. Following the formal review of the Department's NCF the NHACCF will become the NACCF. All existing action items from the NHACCF will be carried over to NACCF. Mr Carmody also noted the importance of communication between the subordinate forums and ESORT.

State and Territory Forums - The Minutes of the Victorian Consultation Forum were provided to members in their meeting pack. During February 2014, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Consultative forums were held in Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr Carmody noted the challenges when fora agenda overlap and encouraged members to liaise with their organisation regarding topics discussed at ESORT. The Victorian DC Forum meeting discussed health matters, DVA’s service delivery model and the complaints and feedback scheme, mental health, MyAccount, BEST and TIP and Anzac Centenary commemorations. The NSW DC forum highlighted younger veterans, the needs of families, cross over programs with Soldier On and social media.

Mr Carmody will provide an overview of DC forum common themes at the August 2014 meeting. The upcoming dates of the remaining forums are:

* QLD - 5 Mar 2014
* NT - 5 March 2014
* TAS - 19 March 2014
* WA - 22 March 2014

**Action**

Item 25/10 Secretariat to update ESORT TOR to include expert panel reference.

**Agenda Item 21. Other business**

Members raised the Borneo and Malaya campaign nominal roll and if there had been any further progress. The Chair advised that it will cost approximately $2 million dollars to conduct verifications in order to establish the nominal roll. Mr von Berg will convene a small ESORT sub-committee to investigate costs and options to progress this further and will provide a report at the August 2014 ESORT meeting.

The Chair advised members that DVA senior leadership will be in attendance at all future ESORT meetings, wherever possible.

AVM Needham advised members of the Defence ESO Briefing Day scheduled for   
13 August 2014. A handout was given to members. COL Jamison put forward the review of military allowances as an item for discussion on the day. AVM Needham requested input from members on potential topics to be included on the day and provide to him through the secretariat team.

Mr Hodges requested an update on the Defence Medibank Private contract client satisfaction survey. RADM Walker advised that feedback to date reflected satisfaction levels had improved or were the same in some areas with no deterioration across the range of questions. The final report is not available.

Members also discussed access to CLIK for clients using a 64bit computer. Ms Dotta will provide an update on potential solutions at the August 2014 ESORT meeting

**Action**

Item 25/11 Members to provide potential topics for the Defence ESO Briefing Day to   
AVM Tony Needham, Head, People Capability, Department of Defence.

Item 25/12 Mr Michael von Berg, Royal Australian Regiment Corporation to provide a report on the Borneo and Malaya campaign nominal roll at the August 2014 ESORT meeting.

Item 25/13 Ms Narelle Dotta, First Assistant Secretary, Corporate to provide an update on access to CLIK at the August 2014 ESORT meeting.