**Department of Veterans’ Affairs**

**Defence / DVA Links Steering Committee**

**Summary of Meeting – 31 March 2014**

The 30th Defence/Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) Links Steering Committee (DLSC) was held in Canberra on 31 March 2014. The following issues were discussed at the meeting:

**Support Continuum Performance Report**

* The Committee reviewed the February 2014 Support Continuum Performance Report.
* The Committee acknowledged the completion of SWIIP Phase 2 and agreed to formally institute a further program of work to be known as SWIIP Phase 3.
* Committee members noted the requirement to report on the implementation of Recommendations 13 and 15 as set out in the Government’s response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade Report on Care of ADF Personnel Wounded and Injured on Operations.

**Health Consultative Forum**

* The Departments of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs are undertaking a significant joint research program. The research is expected to deliver the largest mental health research project ever conducted by the two Departments.
* The studies will also address physical health, including traumatic brain injury, and Defence family health.

**Defence Links Research Advisory Committee**

* The Committee on the Defence and DVA research collaboration, including the coordinated strategic research framework, aimed at improving the coordination of veteran and military research.
* An update was also provided on a study examining the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families and the impact of service on the health of ADF members; and a longitudinal study into the effects of rehabilitation arrangements within both Defence and DVA.

**Defence Familiarisation Activities**

* The Committee noted the progress of a program designed to increase DVA staff awareness of Defence activities.

**Defence Notifications to DVA**

* The Committee noted the current notification process between the two departments. In addition to receiving FATALCAS (battle and non-battle fatalities) and NOTICAS (serious incidents resulting in a classification of Serious Injury or Very Serious Injury) notifications, DVA is now also receiving notifications when a member is to separate from the ADF on medical grounds or for any reason associated with the use of prohibited substances or the misuse of alcohol.
* Members transitioning from Defence for reasons other than those noted above are also provided the opportunity to consent to Defence advising DVA of their pending separation.

**Review of DVA In Person Services**

* The Committee received an overview of the review into DVA In Person Services, noting there was considerable community engagement during the consultation period.
* The review of DVA In Person Services is not expected to impact current serving members.

**ADF Service Women Steering Committee Report**

* The Committee finalised its approach regarding the publication of the joint Defence/DVA response to the ADF Service Women Steering Committee Report.
* The joint response from DLSC is expected to be provided to the Commissioners by June 2014.

**Ongoing Business**

* The next meeting will be held on 26 June 2014.