



Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum July 2025

Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum Meeting

The Younger Veterans - Contemporary Needs Forum (YVF) met on Wednesday, 23 July 2025.

DVA Strategic Update

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Secretary, Alison Frame provided a Strategic Update, including:

- DVA's work to progress the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide;
- the work DVA is doing with the Ex-Service Organisation (ESO) community to enhance veterans' advocacy through the establishment of the independent Institute of Veterans Advocacy;
- the most recent claims processing data;
- plans to increase the number of veteran and veteran family members in the Anzac Day delivery teams next year; and
- commemorations to mark the 75th anniversaries of the Korean War and the Malayan Emergency and the 80th anniversary of the Second World War.

YVF Member Submissions

Department for Correctional Services (DCS) Veteran Strategy Consultation (The Royal Australian Regiment)

The member submission from the Royal Australian Regiment is to provide YVF members with an update on the Department for Correctional Services (DSC) Veteran Strategy, including the outcomes of a recent external review conducted by Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESHA). The review highlighted significant progress made by DSC in recognising and supporting veterans within the correctional system.

The review also recommended that future iterations of the Strategy expand to include veteran families, incorporate a sustained Veteran Services Framework, and address the needs of veterans in community corrections and minority groups. Members noted that this work is informed by a range of key external documents released in recent years, including the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and research into the experiences of ex-serving ADF personnel in correctional settings.

DCS Veteran Services will continue engaging with stakeholders to support strategic development. Members noted the update and were invited to provide feedback.

DVA Fee Schedules: Request for Government Implementation Plan in Response to Royal Commission Recommendation 71 and 72 (Returned and Services League of Australia)

The Forum noted that recommendation 71 and 72 from the Royal Commission Final Report have been referred to the Taskforce established in the Department

of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) for further consideration. Members noted DVA is working closely with PM&C to support further advice to government about the Royal Commission recommendations including recommendations 71 and 72 and that any changes to fees paid for health services, or an expansion of services provided to Veteran Card holders will require Government consideration in the Budget context.

Members also noted that issues raised in relation to Recommendation 71 and 72 extend beyond financial matters, and include administrative efficiency, time taken to process forms, and the usability of systems for both providers and veterans. The forum noted that various aspects, such as payment arrangement, form design, governance with Services Australia and broader service provision, are being considered as part of ongoing work.

DVA Claim Submission Strategy: Request for Update on MYORG Advocate Portal and Future System Enhancements (Returned and Services League of Australia)

In April 2025, the Department made amendments to the process for nominated representatives to submit claims on behalf of veterans. The changes initiated a transition away from submitting claims via email and paper forms, as well as the ESO portal. The purpose built MyOrg platform allows nominated representatives to submit and manage veteran claims via MyService.

The provision of training sessions and individual support with MyOrg is being delivered by the Claims Lodgement Assistance team. All requests can be sent to <mailto:CLA.WA@dva.gov.au>. Information and training resources relating to DVA

online platforms are available at [MyService Advocate Guide | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#).

DVA Critical Initiatives

Update on DVA Actions for mTBI and Blast Overpressure Exposure

YVF acknowledged and expressed strong support for the Australian Defence Force and DVA leadership in progressing an Australian veteran-centric approach to the prevention, identification and treatment of mTBI. DVA is continuing to make progress on understanding mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) including identifying causes of onset and treatment for these conditions. To support this work:

- A Defence and DVA Brain Injury Panel has been established to help inform future policy development.
- DVA is commissioning a literature review to ensure it remains informed of developments in research on low-level blast overpressure exposure and mTBI.
- The Repatriation Medical Authority has also commenced an investigation into 'Blast-Induced Mild Traumatic Brain Injury' which was gazetted 28 April 2025. The closing date for submissions is 15 July 2025.

Future of CLIK Database

The forum noted the advice on the Consolidated Library of Information and Knowledge (CLIK) in response to Action Item 2024YVF/A16.

Veteran and Family – Learning and Innovation Network of Knowledge (VF-Link)

DVA is implementing the Veteran and Family Learning and Innovation Network of Knowledge (VF-LINK), a new research and evaluation model. The objective of this model is to increase the production, use and sharing of evidence to support decision-making and policy, program and service design.

Wandering Warrior Education Proposal

Wandering Warriors provided members with a presentation on their proposal to provide a range of training and education opportunities to Defence members and their families. Members noted the potential benefits that could come from the initiative, and will consider writing a letter of endorsement for the proposal.

Grants Overview of DVA programs

The Department of Veterans' Affairs offers four annual grant opportunities, all of which are listed on the DVA website and advertised on the Australian Government's GrantConnect website at <http://www.grants.gov.au>. These include:

- Saluting Their Service Commemorative (STS) Grants Program
- Veteran Wellbeing Grants (VWG) Program
- Building Excellence in Support and Training Grants (BEST) Program
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Grant Program

GrantConnect includes all relevant eligibility and application information, and interested people can register on the site to receive notifications of grant opportunities that may become available.

Veterans' and Families' Hubs Expansion Update

Veterans' and Families' Hubs (Hubs) provide integrated support to veterans and families and access to local services which may include wellbeing support, advocacy, employment and housing advice, social connection and physical and mental health services.

There are now nine established hubs delivering support to veterans and families in Perth, Townsville, Adelaide, Darwin, Wodonga, Nowra, Caboolture, Burnie and most recently in Queanbeyan NSW.

In addition to the work already underway to establish an additional hub and spoke model in Tasmania, work is underway to deliver seven new hubs in Southwest Perth, Northern Adelaide, Ipswich, the Hawkesbury region, the Hunter region, the Tweed/North Coast region, and the Surf Coast/Geelong region.

Defence and Veterans Services Commission (DVSC)

The Interim Head of the Defence and Veterans Services Commission (DVSC), Mr Michael Manthorpe PSM, briefed YVF on work that is underway to establish the new entity proposed by Recommendation 122 of the Royal Commission. Mr Manthorpe particularly focused on his proposal for amendments to the foundational legislation for the new entity and invited ongoing engagement with the entity to help inform its work.

Update on the Wellbeing Agency and Peak Body Taskforce

Members were provided with an update on the work of the Taskforce on Wellbeing Agency and Peak Body including the outcomes of the Taskforce's co-design processes for the establishment of an agency focused on veteran and family wellbeing, and a peak body for ex-service organisations, in response to Recommendations 87 and 89 of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

Other Business

The following items were discussed under Other Business:

- Ex-Service Organisation Round Table Update
- Institute of Advocates

Items below the line

Open Arms Digital Health Strategy

Open Arms is developing a Digital Mental Health Strategy to ensure veterans, and their families can access support when and where they need it. The strategy will enhance the way mental health care is delivered by complementing face-to-face services with flexible, secure, and easy-to-use digital options. Informed by consultation with veterans, families, staff, and service providers, the strategy will prioritise accessibility, safety, and user experience—particularly for younger veterans and those in regional and remote areas. This modernised approach will help Open Arms reach more people, reduce barriers to care, and offer greater choice in how support is accessed.

Advocacy Update

Members were provided with an update on the progress of the Institute of Veterans Advocacy, and noted that DVA has provided the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee with a submission in support of their inquiry into income and compensation support for veterans.

Compensation Claims Processing Update and Time Taken to Process

The most recent claims reporting data can be accessed through the DVA Claims Processing Webpage: <https://www.dva.gov.au/claim-processing>, which encompasses all key metrics relating to the claims process.

Should you encounter any difficulties in viewing or downloading the data, please do not hesitate to reach out to DVA for assistance.

YVF Members in attendance:
Department of Defence
Australian Special Air Service Association
Australian Veterans Alliance
Defence Families Australia
Naval Association of Australia (<i>proxy</i>)
Returned and Services League of Australia
Royal Australian Regiment Corporation
The Warrior's Return
Apologies:
Air Force Association
Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans' Association
Legacy Australia Inc
Mates4Mates
Naval Association of Australia
Soldier On