

Australian Association of Psychologists Inc

The Draft Strategy will improve the individual and collective mental health and wellbeing of the Defence and veteran community.

Agree

You responded with agree or strongly agree to the previous question. We would like to hear the reasons behind your response, including what you like about the Strategy?

A focus on the nine wellbeing factors that influence mental health, including housing and social support, and the focus on early intervention. All of these will hopefully positively impact the lives of veterans and those in their lives.

What are the top five (5) priority actions or initiatives you think Government should take to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the Defence and veteran community?*

*Any new activity and/or initiative will be subject to decisions of Government.

A significant investment in the psychology workforce will be needed to support the efficacy of the strategy. The Australian Association of Psychologists Incorporated (AAPi) have long been calling for systemic changes to mental health care in Australia.

To best serve ex and current defence force members, we recommend allowing provisional psychologists to work with veterans in supervised care provision within their scope of practice, under DVA funding. This would provide a significant increase in the workforce. There is approximately 8,000 provisional psychologists. This would improve access and timeliness of service delivery as more ex and serving veterans would be able to afford services, thus easing the demand for fully registered psychologists. Their families and carers would also have more access to timely support. Provisional psychologists have a minimum of 4-5 years of formal education and training and are in their final period of supervised practice. By appropriately allowing provisional psychologists to provide DVA services, there is the added benefit of early career exposure and building competence in working with the defence community.

We also have concerns about the fee schedule. DVA and Open Arms fee schedules inappropriately have 40% lower fees for psychologists without clinical endorsement for the same service to the same population. AAPi's recommended hourly rate of \$315 for all psychologists or aligning DVA with other systems, such as NDIS is essential to providing and improving access for serving members, veterans and their families.

This is the last question of the survey. Do you have any practical suggestions on how this Strategy might be implemented?*

Other comments on the Strategy and ideas for improvement are welcome here.

*Any new activity and/or initiatives will be subject to decisions of Government.

Data-sharing agreements are crucial for tracking the progress and outcomes of ex and serving Defence members. By creating secure systems that allow stakeholders to access

and contribute to real-time data, the government can enhance transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. With a collaborative, well-coordinated approach the strategy can become a sustainable health ecosystem that prioritises early prevention and addresses the diverse needs of its population.