**Minutes**

**Agenda Item 1 Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest**

Chair welcomed members, noted apologies from Dr Ruth Vine and Caitlin Langford and asked for any conflicts of interest. No conflicts raised from members.

**Agenda Item 2 Minutes & actions of previous meeting**

Members endorsed the minutes from the previous meeting.

Chair addressed action items.

The one page description of Open Arms’ services is to be recirculated to members.

**Agenda Item 3 Assistant Minister Remarks**

The Assistant Minister thanked members for their attendance and acknowledged Mr Ben Farinazzo, Ms Libby Cremen and Ms Gwen Cherne as new members of the Committee. He also noted Mr Andrew Kefford, Deputy Secretary Policy and Programs Group, DVA was in attendance.

The Assistant Minister stated that the Committee was established to advise on the effectiveness of Open Arms’ operation and delivery of outcomes to clients. He invited frank and honest advice from members. The Assistant Minister acknowledged the ambitious agenda for improving the wellbeing of veterans and their families.

The Assistant Minister noted that the number of claims awaiting processing by DVA had reduced from 43,855 at 30 June 2022 to 16,723 at 31 October 2023. This is testament to the success of DVA in increasing its staffing numbers and reforming business processes to improve efficiency in claims processing. While there is still more work to be done, this is a very positive step forward.

The Assistant Minister acknowledged the launch of the Open Arms Model of Care on 1 November 2023, providing a ready reckoner of Open Arms’ services and putting the veteran at the centre of the care model. Further work will be needed to evaluate service quality and resourcing against services described in the Model of Care.

The Assistant Minister announced the following dates for NAC meetings in 2024:  
13 – 14 March in Perth  
1 – 2 August in Adelaide  
29 – 30 October in Sydney

Member remarks

Mr Max Ball noted that he was very pleased with structural changes made to Open Arms and its more elevated position, noting that it was now led by a First Assistant Secretary and closer to visibility of the Secretary of DVA.

**Agenda Item 4 Advocacy**Mr Max Ball raised a discussion on advocacyand the role of advocates within Open Arms and DVA.

**Agenda Item 5 First Assistant Secretary Update**

**Agenda Item 6 Peer Program**

Acting FAS Open Arms provided update. See attached presentation.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2023 – 14** | Investigate how third party referral form on website can be completed electronically and alternate ways to submit to Open Arms | A/g AS Clinical Operations |
| **2023 – 15** | FAS to provide update on PTSD community based TRP in Tasmania | A/g FAS OA |

**Agenda Item 7 Regional Update**Acting Assistant Secretary (AS) provided a regional update for Victoria. See attached presentation.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2023 – 16** | Investigate ability to add ‘deployed’ to Open Arms RAMP document | A/g AS Clinical Operations |
| **2023 – 17** | Provide members with copy of report from Flinders University ‘Mapping Service and Transition to Self-Harm and Suicidality’ | Secretariat |

**Agenda Item 8 Younger Veterans Forum Update**

**Agenda Item 9 Aged Care and Service Provision to Older Cohort**

Discussions were held regarding age specific elements of the Open Arms model of Care.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2023 – 18** | Member Mr Farrell to establish a survey and source data regarding veteran transition and provide data to members next meeting | Mr Farrell |

**Agenda Item 10 Open Arms Communication Update**Assistant Director Strategic Communications presented members with an update on Open Arms communications.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2023 – 19** | Provide members details and roles in the next newsletter. Draft edition to be sent to members for review prior to sending. | AD – Strategic Communications |
| **2023 – 20** | Members to provide constructive feedback on draft newsletter and forward to relevant stakeholders once approved. | All members and Ex-Officios |

**DAY 2.**

**Agenda Item 1 Next Meeting Agenda items**

Chair Dr Khoo welcomed members to day 2 and recap was provided, topics included:

1. **Model of Care**
2. **Advocacy**
3. **Families**
4. **Peer Program**
5. **Age related cohorts**
6. **Transition Issues**

**Agenda Item 2 GP Project**

DVA Chief Health Officer and Ag Assistant Secretary CHO division presented to members on the GP Engagement.

**Agenda Item 3 Emergency Response to a Crisis Situation**Member Ms Hall presented to members on emergency response to a crisis situation. See attached presentation.

**Agenda Item 4 Referral Support**

Member Dr Murphy discussed with members referral supports and current limitations. Identified opportunities to educate referrers.

**Agenda Item 5 Summary, Feedback from members.**

Member Ms Hall provided feedback from a client reporting the model of care was lengthy and could be difficult to comprehend if not clinically trained or during a crisis.   
Ms Nowland advised a summary of the model can be produced and uploaded to website

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2023 – 21** | Summary of the Open Arms Model of Care to be created and published to website. | AD – Strategic Communications |

Member Dr Murphy provided feedback regarding the hold music when calling DVA.   
Ms Nowland advised that she will report the feedback to the appropriate area and provide any response to Dr Murphy.

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| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to*** |
| **2023 – 22** | Provide feedback to appropriate area regarding hold music when calling DVA | A/g FAS OA |

Dr Khoo thanked members for their contributions and wished everyone a safe holiday season.

**Meeting closed: 12:39pm**.

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| **Members/Attendees** | |
| The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite | Assistant Minister for Veterans’ Affairs |
| Dr Andrew Khoo | Chair |
| Ms Karen Bird | Deputy Chair |
| Dr Brad Murphy | General Practitioner |
| Mr Max Ball | Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia |
| Ms Jane Pool | Social Worker |
| Ms Megan Fry | Psychologist |
| Dr Richard Magtengaard | Psychiatrist |
| Mr Dave Farrell | Contemporary Veteran |
| Ms Lidia Hall | Lived Experience Family Member |
| Ms Leonie Nowland | Ag First Assistant Secretary - Open Arms |
| Dr Jenny Firman | Chief Health Officer, Department of Veterans’ Affairs |
| Dr Jon Lane | Senior Psychiatric Adviser, Open Arms |
| Ms Libby Cremen | Director General, Defence Members and Families Support |
| Ms Gwen Cherne | Veteran Family Advocate |
| Mr Michael Burvill | Ag Assistant Secretary Clinical Operations – Open Arms |
| **Presenters** | |
| Ms Julie Wilson | Ag Assistant Secretary – Chief Health Officer Division - DVA |
| Mr Bucky Toller | Assistant Director, Strategic Communications |
| **Secretariat** | |
| Ms Karen Humphreys | Ag Executive Officer, Open Arms |
| **Apologies** | |
| BRIG Caitlin Langford | Defence People Group, Director General Mental Health and Wellbeing |
| Dr Ruth Vine | Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Mental Health, Department of Health |