**Minutes**

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

Chair welcomed members, noted apologies from Dr Ruth Vine and Ben Farinazzo 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.

**Agenda Item 3 Assistant Minister Remarks**

The Assistant Minister thanked members for their attendance and apologised for not being present in person. He also noted Mr Andrew Kefford, Deputy Secretary Policy and Programs Group, DVA was in attendance.

The Assistant Minister thanked members for their hard work and advice provided during the two years in office. He advised that he continues to travel and meet with both Veterans and current serving members and noted that no all Veterans are ‘broken’ that a lot do lead fulfilling lives, and some do struggle with mental health and complex needs. There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to complex needs, and in the past this may not have been done well. The role of NAC members is to supply advice to allow change.

The Assistant Minister advised that he was keen to see outcomes for the NAC meetings and understood that presentations were on the agenda for Younger Veterans and Transitions. He is interested in how we improve the transition process to limit the amount of clients ‘falling through the cracks’.

The Assistant Minister noted that the number of claims awaiting processing by DVA had reduced from 43,855 at 30 June 2022 to 3,500 at February 2024.

The Assistant Minister acknowledged the work of Repatriation Commissioner Fegan and the scoping study regarding needs of Afghanistan Veterans in conjunction with RSL NSW. This will commence in the third quarter of 2024 and run for twelve months. The study will provide advice to DVA to how best to support this cohort of Veterans.
The Assistant Minister provided a brief update on the Legislative reform and advised on the consultation process. Feedback can be provided to the Department before the closing date of 28 April 2024.

**Agenda Item 4 Engagement With Other Jurisdictions**Mr Andrew Kefford, Deputy Secretary Policy & Programs Group DVA provided members an update on engagements with other jurisdictions, this included other Overseas counterparts, Commonwealth Departments, State Departments and Service Organisations
Topics have included Concessions, Psychiatric Assistance Dogs, Veteran Identifiers, Suicide Prevention, Incarcerated and homeless Veterans.
 **Agenda Item 5 First Assistant Secretary Update**

First Assistant Secretary Open Arms provided update. See attached presentation.

**Agenda Item 6 National Update**

Assistant Secretary Clinical Operations provided update. See attached presentation.

**Agenda Item 7 Regional Update**Regional Director provided a regional update for Western Australia. See attached presentation.

**Agenda Item 8 Legislation Reform**Deputy Secretary provided an update on Legislation Reform.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to***  |
| **2023 – 22** | Provide all members with the link to Legislation from DVA website  | Secretariat |

**Agenda Item 9 Operation Thrive**

Mr Ray Martin provided members with information regarding Operation Thrive. See attached presentation

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***No.*** | ***Action*** | ***Assigned to***  |
| **2023 – 23** | Upload OPC provider notes onto Open Arms website | AD – Strategic Communications |
| **2023 – 24** | Promotion of Family Services on Social Media | AD – Strategic Communications |

**Agenda Item 11 Veteran Survey and Results**

Member Mr Farrell provided members with survey questions asked to veterans and discussed results. See attached

**DAY 2.**

**Agenda Item 1**

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

1. **WA regions updates**
2. **Legislation reform**
3. **FAS & AS updates**
4. **Operation Thrive**
5. **Communications update**
6. **Veteran survey**

**Agenda Item 2 DVA Transition / Defence Transition Presentation**

Assistant Secretary DVA Transition and Director General Joint Transit Authority, Department of Defence provided members updates on transition for both DVA and Defence.

**Agenda Item 3 Research Presentation**Member Ms Fry presented to members on research. See attached presentation.

Dr Khoo thanked members for their contributions and wished everyone safe travels home.

**Meeting closed: 10:28 am**.

|  |
| --- |
| **Members/Attendees** |
| The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite | Assistant Minister for Veterans’ Affairs |
| Dr Andrew Khoo | Chair |
| Ms Karen Bird (virtual) | 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 (virtual) | Lived Experience Family Member |
| Ms Leonie Nowland  | 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 |
| BRIG Caitlin Langford (virtual) | Defence People Group, Director General Mental Health and Wellbeing |
| **Presenters** |
| Mr. Andrew Kefford | Deputy Secretary, Policy & Programs Group DVA |
| Mr. Michael Burvill | A/g Assistant Secretary, Clinical Operations – Open Arms |
| Mr. Bucky Toller (virtual) | Assistant Director, Strategic Communications |
| Ms Alison Hale (virtual)  | Assistant Secretary, DVA Transition Branch |
| AIRCDRE Kaarin Kooij (virtual) | Director General Joint Transition Authority |
| Mr Ray Martin | Director Defence Veterans Engagement, Defence NT Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet  |
| **Secretariat** |
| Ms Karen Humphreys | Executive Officer, Open Arms |
| **Apologies** |
| Mr Ben Farinazzo | Contemporary Veteran |
| Dr Ruth Vine | Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Mental Health, Department of Health |
| Ms Gwen Cherne | Veteran Family Advocate  |