



## Deputy Commissioner's NSW Consultative Forum

Meeting Minutes	
Time	10:00am – 12:00pm
Date	6 February 2024
Edition	Housing and Homelessness
Location	280 Elizabeth St, Centennial Plaza – Concord and Lady Davidson Meeting Room
Chair	Victoria Benz; Deputy Commissioner ACT/NSW
Secretariat	Jessica Battaglia; Executive Officer, Department of Veterans' Affairs
Forum Members in attendance	
	<p>Isaac Ohlin; on behalf of Mick Bainbridge, The Returned &amp; Services League of Australia, NSW Branch - (RSL NSW)</p> <p>Ron Glew; Air Force Association NSW</p> <p>Margaret Green AM; Defence Force Welfare Association, NSW Branch</p> <p>Dr Rod Bain OAM; Naval Association</p> <p>Ian Thompson; Sydney Legacy</p> <p>Gemma Pigott; Wounded Heroes</p> <p>David Anderson; RSL LifeCare</p> <p>COL Graham Fleeton RFD; Defence Reserves Association, NSW Branch</p> <p>Caroline Mackaness; NSW Office for Veterans Affairs</p> <p>Patrick Lee ; NSW Office for Veterans Affairs</p> <p>Aspasia Iosifidis; Department of Defence (DFMS)</p> <p>Tony Griffiths; on behalf of Ben Lesslie, Disaster Relief Australia</p> <p>Harry Lowe, on behalf of Kevin Kelly; TPI Association of NSW</p> <p>John Hopman, on behalf of Geoff Harrison; Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP)</p> <p>Dean Mainey, on behalf of Amy Cooper; Soldier On</p> <p>Narelle Bromhead OAM; on behalf of Louise Freebairn, Partners of Veterans Association, NSW Branch</p> <p>Caroline Kirche; on behalf of Renee Wilson, Australian War Widows NSW Ltd</p> <p>Julie Pert; Open Arms</p>
Guest speakers	
	<p>Justin Donnelly; RSL LifeCare</p> <p>Anne Mathur; RSL LifeCare</p> <p>Wayne Perry; Assistant Secretary, Housing Programs and Approved Accounts Branch</p> <p>Heather Gow; Open Arms</p>
Department of Veterans' Affairs	
	<p>Elizabeth Connolly; Transition Branch</p> <p>Maree Everitt; Claims Assessment Branch</p> <p>Chris Bakis; Coordinated Client Support Branch</p>



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	<p>Jessica Battaglia; Grants and Client Engagement Branch</p> <p>Adam Hadley; Grants and Client Engagement Branch</p> <p>Sophia Marlin; Grants and Client Engagement Branch</p>
<b>Apologies</b>	<p>Margot Smith; RSL &amp; Services Clubs Association NSW</p> <p>Matt Burke OAM; Australian Peacekeeper &amp; Peacemaker Veterans' Association</p> <p>Del Gaudry SQNLDR (Retd); Women Veterans Network Australia</p> <p>Renee Wilson; Australian War Widows NSW Ltd</p> <p>WGCDR Michael Stuart-Watt; Defence Force Welfare Association, NSW Branch</p> <p>Jye Martin; Invictus Australia</p> <p>Sam Vecchio; Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, NSW Branch</p> <p>Rob Shoebridge; Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association, NSW Branch</p> <p>Ron O'Connor; Vietnam Veterans Peacekeeping &amp; Peacemaking Association, NSW Branch</p> <p>John Rogers; Vietnam Veterans Peacekeeping &amp; Peacemaking Association, NSW Branch</p>

**Minutes of meeting held on 6 February 2023**

Topic	Discussion
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deputy Commissioner, Victoria Benz paid her respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the traditional custodians and owners of the land and acknowledged those who serve and have served, and their family and friends who provide support.</li> <li>An acknowledgement for Disaster Relief Australia, who are currently assisting families and communities in response to recent weather events.</li> <li>Congratulations to RSL LifeCare on being awarded a \$5 million dollar grant to establish a Veterans' and Families' Hub in Queanbeyan.</li> <li>The next hearing block for the Royal Commission is taking place on 4 March 2024 in Sydney, and expect the exposure draft of the new Legislation will be released shortly.</li> <li>Initial Liability and Incapacity claims are back to BAU timeframes, with Permanent Impairment claims improving.</li> </ul>
NSW Office for Veterans Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caroline Mackaness, and Patrick Lee provided an overview of Housing and Homelessness on behalf of the NSW Office for Veterans Affairs.</li> <li>For further information on Rent Choice Veterans, please visit - <a href="#">Rent Choice Veterans   Family &amp; Community Services</a></li> <li>For further information on Link2Home, please visit - <a href="#">Are you homeless?   Family &amp; Community Services</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secretariat to share presentation from NSW Office for Veterans Affairs with forum members.</li> </ul>
Defence Service Homes Insurance and Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wayne Perry, Assistant Secretary Housing Programs and Approved Accounts Branch provided an overview of the different housing supports and services available to eligible veterans.</li> </ul>

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<b>Home Ownership Assistance Scheme</b>	<p><b>Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (DHOAS) is a home loan subsidy scheme available to current and former ADF members who served on or after 1 July 2008, completed a qualifying period of service and accrued sufficient entitlement.</li><li>• Further information can be found here - The Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme <a href="#">The Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme</a></li></ul> <p><b>Defence Service Homes Insurance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Defence Service Homes Insurance (DSHI) Scheme offers home insurance to eligible veterans and ADF personnel or their widow/widowers,</li><li>• Further information can be found here - DSHI Scheme <a href="#">Defence Service Homes Insurance</a></li></ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secretariat to share presentation from DVA's Housing Programs and Approved Accounts Branch with forum members.</li><li>• <b>Question on Notice</b> - If you are medically separated, is there a time limit to apply for the final subsidy certificate?</li><li>• <b>Question on Notice</b> - When did the initial service period drop to two years, and did that get passed onto people that were already on the scheme?</li><li>• <b>Question on Notice</b> - Does a client's DHOAS entitlement pass on to their spouse if they pass away?</li></ul>
<b>Open Arms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heather Gow, Assistant Director, Open Arms provided an overview on Crisis Accommodation support.</li></ul> <p><b>Crisis Accommodation Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open Arms Crisis Accommodation Support (CAS) aims to provide crisis accommodation to eligible Open Arms clients who require access to alternative, short-term accommodation in addition to mental health support.</li><li>• In some cases, the client will be referred to external services such as linkage to the housing and homelessness sector.</li><li>• Access may be <b>up to 3 nights</b>, depending on individual circumstances.</li><li>• Further information on Crisis Accommodation, please visit - <a href="#">Crisis accommodation</a> . To speak to open arms, please dial <b>1800 011 046</b></li></ul>
<b>RSL LifeCare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation from David Anderson, Justin Donnelly and Anne Mathur from RSL Life Care on the supports and services provided by RSL LifeCare.</li><li>• For further information on Homes for Heroes, please visit - <a href="#">Homes for Heroes</a></li><li>• To view the Homelessness and Housing support from RSL LifeCare Veteran Services YouTube Video, please visit - <a href="#">Homelessness and Housing Support</a></li></ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secretariat to share presentation from RSL LifeCare with forum members.</li></ul>

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<b>Air Force Association NSW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ron Glew provided an overview of some of the work being conducted by the Air Force Association NSW, such as<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➔ Arranging a YouTube video on Aviation History</li><li>➔ Establishing the Ad Astra Foundation, looking to set up a crisis centre to address homelessness, domestic violence, and suicide prevention for ADF members and general citizens at Callan Park in Sydney's Inner West.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Other Business</b>	<p>Victoria addressed the following in response to the agenda items that were raised, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Defence hold regular Transition seminars that provide information to assist Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and families to prepare for transition to civilian life. Transition seminars also discuss the role of an ESO, and the <b>importance of joining an ex-service organisation</b></li><li>• For further information on when these Seminars are taking place, please visit - <a href="#">Australian Department of Defence - Transition Seminar</a></li><li>• Tripling of the veteran payment should address concerns relating to <b>Medical Practitioners</b> not accepting <b>Gold Card holders</b>. Veterans are encouraged to have a chat to their local GP to understand whether they accept the Gold Card, or look to find another GP who does.</li><li>• The <b>Repatriation Commissioner</b> and Veteran Family Advocate are invited to every forum and will attend when able to do so.</li><li>• The theme for the next Deputy Commissioner Consultative forum will be based on <b>Aged Care</b>, and the supports and services available to veterans and their families.</li></ul> <p><b>RSL NSW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Isaac Ohlin provided an update regarding the RSL NSW submission to the Government for consideration in the next budget.</li></ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secretariat to share the RSL NSW submission with forum members.</li></ul>