

## **DELEGATES REPORT OLD CONSULTATIVE FORUM OCT 2013**

**NEW MINISTER FOR DVA:** Senator Michael Ronaldson, the former shadow DVA minister since 2008, was sworn in as the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the PM for the Centenary of ANZAC and the Special Minister of State. He was a former councillor for the city of Ballarat and was the Federal Member for Ballarat between 1990 and 2001. He became a member of the senate in 2004. The Minister for Defence is Senator David Johnston.

### **CLIENT AND COMMUNICATION BRANCH**

**ON BASE ADVISORY SERVICE (OBAS):** For the period 1 January 2013 - 31 August 2013 there have been approximately 7,590 enquiries made nationally through OBAS, exceeding the 2012 calendar year figure of over 7,500. In comparison to the same period in 2012 this is an increase of over 2,190 enquiries, indicating the increased visibility of the OBAS. For the January - August 2013 period there have been over 2,200 new clients to DVA. This is an increase of over 510 new clients to DVA in comparison to the same period in 2012. For the 2012 calendar year there were over 2,400 new clients to DVA.

**NEW SERVICE MODELS:** Service coordinators continue to support the widows, widowers and dependants of deceased ADF members and contemporary veterans. Since August 2011, service coordinators have worked with a number of families where a death has occurred in service, both operational and non-operational, and for recently discharged members. This has included some cases where an ADF member or contemporary veteran has had a terminal illness and the service coordinator has worked with the family prior to the death. Service coordinators have also progressively worked through cases where a death may date back to 1999 and service coordination may be beneficial to the family. The introduction of the service coordinator role has allowed a better understanding of dependants' individual circumstances and needs.

**COMPLEX & MULTIPLE NEEDS SERVICE MODEL:** Based on client expectations, the overarching aim of this service model is to ensure that clients are receiving the right support at the right time, appropriate to their needs and the needs of their families.

**FEMALE VETERANS:** The department funded a comprehensive study regarding the health and wellbeing of female Vietnam and contemporary veterans, led by DR. Samantha Cromptvoets. A Defence/DVA co-chaired reference group was established to further consider how Defence and DVA can better connect with servicewomen to ensure they are receiving the support they and their families need, at the right time. The committee will deliver a report in late 2013 to the repatriation and military and rehabilitation compensation commissions to guide inclusive service design.

**COMMEMORATIONS AND ANZAC CENTENARY BRANCH:** DVA is now well into the implementation and delivery phase of the government's ANZAC Centenary Program of projects and initiatives. Government funding commitments to ANZAC Centenary now amount to some \$140 million. This includes \$83.5 million in the 2012-13 budget; \$25 million in response to ACAB report; and other amounts, such as \$5 million to build the Australian war memorial in Wellington, New Zealand. The board's private funding coordinator, Mr. Lindsay Fox, is continuing to work with the Australian corporate sector to attract donations. These will be separately and transparently collected in an ANZAC Centenary public fund. It is expected that these corporate donations will be collected by an annual instalment.

**VIETNAM VETERANS EDUCATION CENTRE:** The Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) would like to thank all those in the veteran community who have assisted in collecting personal images of Australians who died in the Vietnam War, for eventual display in the Vietnam Veterans education centre in Washington. A full listing of the names of the Australian war dead that OAWG are still seeking assistance with can be found at <http://www.dva.gov.au> search for 'VVEC'. If you can assist with locating a relative, or have a good quality image of any of these men, please contact OAWG on (02) 6225 4487 or email [vvec@dva.gov.au](mailto:vvec@dva.gov.au).

### **PRIMARY HEALTH CARE BRANCH**

**EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGISTS:** There is an ongoing issue with exercise physiologists (EPS) advertising gym memberships and using DVA logos in their material. The primary health care (PHC) branch is working on resolving the issues, in particular in the advertising arena. Some of these advertisements are causing confusion to the veteran community, as there are different policies depending on whether an individual has VEA, MRCA or SRCA entitlements.

### **HOSPITALS AND DEFENCE HOME SERVICES BRANCH**

**PRIVATE HOSPITALS:** DVA currently contracts with 240 private hospital facilities Australia wide for the provision of services to entitled persons. Private hospital contracts have recently been extended for a two year period until 30 June 2016.

**Day procedure centre price review 2013:** DVA currently contracts with 224 facilities for day procedures centres. The annual price review is currently being undertaken and fee increases for the 2013-14 periods will be in place by 1 October 2013.

## **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BRANCH**

**IN-HOME TELEMONITORING FOR VETERANS TRIAL:** The Telemonitoring trial is being undertaken in selected 'National Broadband Network (NBN) enabled' sites to make it possible for veterans and war widows/widowers who are chronically ill to have their health monitored by health professionals without being required to leave their home. GP's enrol consenting veterans into the trial. They will also be enrolled in the department's Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program if not already enrolled. DVA will connect participating veterans and war widows/ers to the NBN. Telemonitoring equipment will be installed allowing veterans to regularly record measurements, like blood pressure, in the comfort of their own home. The results are then sent via the NBN to the veterans' practice nurse and GP. If the results show something out of the ordinary, the practice nurse or GP will establish if treatment modification is necessary (or if there was an issue when taking the readings). The trial commenced in Armidale NSW in June 2013. DVA is currently working with Medicare locals and practices in Armidale, Coffs Harbour and Toowoomba, with two veterans currently receiving services in Armidale. One veteran was taken off the trial due to their 'end stage' condition. All 61 Medicare locals around the country are now able to offer assisted registration to the veteran community.

**COORDINATED VETERANS' CARE (CVC) PROGRAM:** The CVC program commenced on 1 May 2011 and as at 29 August 2013, 19,664 gold card holders had been enrolled on the program. Third party support for the CVC program remains strong, including from ex-service organisations, the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and other peak medical bodies, which are represented on the program's clinical reference group. Early indications are there has been a decrease in hospital admissions, and therefore hospital costs, for patients enrolled on the program.

**NEW INITIATIVES:** DVA is currently working on implementation of a range of initiatives announced in the budget in May 2013, including an expansion to eligibility for the veterans and veterans families counselling service and an expansion of existing arrangements under DVA will pay for PTSD, anxiety and depression for certain entitled people without the need for the condition to be linked to service.

**HOMELESSNESS IN VETERAN COMMUNITY:** There has been some recent media activity (including tweets and blogs) quoting 3,200 as the number of veterans who are currently homeless in Australia. The figure of 3,200 is quoted from the 2009 veterans at risk report. While the veterans at risk report gave one possible picture of the problem, the department believes a more realistic number of "homeless or at risk" veterans is between 200 and 300. (The larger figure estimated Homeless 'Veterans' (in the widest possible sense, meaning every person who has ever served in uniform) as a proportion of the Australian homeless population).

**THE PTSD COACH AUSTRALIA** is a self-help smart phone app designed to help current and former serving personnel understand and manage the symptoms that may occur following exposure to trauma. The app provides education about PTSD, information about self-assessment and professional care, and tools to manage the stresses of daily life with PTSD.

## **ESO ROUND TABLE REPORT**

**NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)** The scheme has been renamed to Disability Care Australia. DVA has been working closely with department of families, health, community services and indigenous affairs to ensure that the needs of the veteran community are considered in the development of disability care policies and there will be no reduction in benefits or services that eligible veterans and war widows/widowers are entitled to receive through DVA.

**TRAINING AND INFORMATION PROGRAM (TIP) ACCREDITATION WORKING PARTY:** The working party on tip accreditation was formed and advised that tip has implemented a 10 year plan which included moving accreditation from an information exchange style to a competency based style of learning. The joint objective is to ensure all veterans receive all of their entitlements.

**NATIONAL CONSULTATION FORUM UPDATES:** Emerging themes discussed at the deputy commissioners' consultation forums included; VVCSs eligibility, TIP, BEST funding and the role of advocates and single appeal pathway and future of veterans advocacy.

**ANZAC CENTENARY UPDATE AND MANAGING ATTENDANCE 2015:** The Gallipoli 2015 ballot arrangements were opened for registrations on 15 November and will close on 31 January 2014. Advice will be provided to individuals on the ballot outcome in March 2014. Ticketek was the successful tenderer for providing the ballot and ticketing services. ([www.gallipoli2015.org](http://www.gallipoli2015.org)).

**MY ACCOUNT ON LINE ACCESS:** ([www.myaccount.dva.gov.au](http://www.myaccount.dva.gov.au)) There are now 16,400 active members, the average age is 64, the youngest is a 10yr old orphan, the oldest a 105 yr. old widow. The next updates will allow you to: nominate your power of attorney or your representative, advise DVA of overseas travel, update income and assets details, alter payment destination details, access enhanced transport services and you will now be able to lodge additional claims. To register for 'my account', call DVA on 1800 178 858.