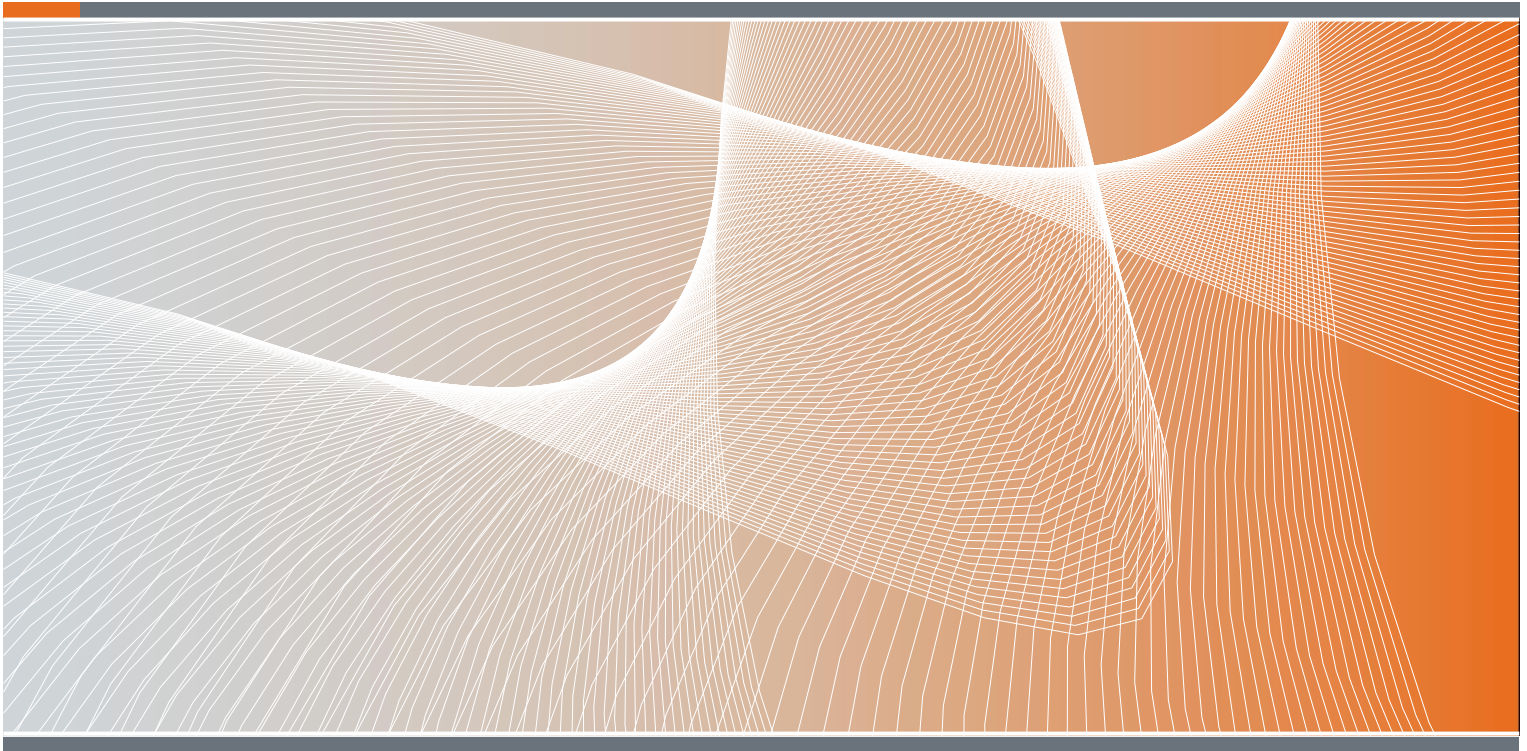




Australian Government
Defence

Program Board Charter

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide
Defence Implementation Program Board



September 2025

Version 1.3



Contents

Purpose.....	4
Program Board Responsibilities.....	4
Membership.....	5
Responsibilities of the Chair	6
Responsibilities of Program Board Members	6
Transparency through Full Disclosure	6
Contestability.....	7
Program Board Direction and Powers.....	7
Quorum	7
Meeting Frequency.....	7
Secretariat.....	7
Agenda.....	8
Meeting Papers	8
Out-of-Session	8
Below-the-Line	8
Outcomes.....	9
Open Action Items	9
Record Keeping.....	9
Review	9

© Commonwealth of Australia 2024

This work is copyright. Apart from use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Department of Defence.

All Defence information, whether classified or not, is protected from unauthorised disclosure under the *Crimes Act 1914*. Defence information may only be released in accordance with the Defence Security Principles Framework Control.

Document version	Version 1.3
Document status	Approved
Issue date	September 2025
Related documents	
Author	Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office – Program Governance
Owner	Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office – Program Governance
Objective ID	BQ74208218
File name	Program Board Charter – RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board

Reviews and approvals

This document has been reviewed and approved by the personnel listed in the below table. Evidence of the approvals must be retained in accordance with Information Management policy.

Name	Title	Role	Date
ADML David Johnston	RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board	Approver	27 November 2024
ADML David Johnston	RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board	Approver	23 January 2025
AIRMSHL Robert Chipman	RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board	Approver	07 March 2025
ADML David Johnston	RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board	Approver	September 2025

Summary of changes

Version	Details	Author	Date
Version 0.1	Draft	Director Program Governance RCDVS Implementation-TF	September 2024
Version 0.2	Amended in line with Program Board feedback received 10 Oct 2024	a/Director Program Governance RCDVS Implementation-TF	October 2024
Version 1.0	Approved with minor amendments as discussed during Program Board on 27 Nov 24	Director Program Governance RCDVS Implementation-TF	November 2024
Version 1.1	Amended 23 Jan 2025 to include CFO as a permanently invited member	Director Program Governance RCDVS Implementation-TF	January 2025
Version 1.2	Amended 07 Mar 2025 to include Defence in the Program Board title and adjust the meeting frequency	Director Program Governance RCDVS Implementation-TF	March 2025

	details		
Version 1.3	Amended 24 Aug 2025 to include minor changes as well as amendments to sponsor paper timelines	Director Program Governance - Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office	September 2025

Purpose

1. The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (RCDVS) Defence Implementation Program Board (the Program Board), provides governance and oversight of the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program (the Program) to ensure positive outcomes and benefits are achieved for current and ex-serving Defence members.
2. The Program Board provides assurance to Government and relevant external oversight bodies that Defence is comprehensively addressing the in-scope recommendations of the RCDVS Final Report.
3. The Program Board supports the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the Program. The SRO is responsible for the overall delivery of the Program and ensuring it meets its objectives.
4. The Program Board sets direction and makes decisions applicable to reform initiatives, which address the in-scope recommendations from the RCDVS Final Report.
5. The Program Board ensures alignment between its considerations and the Department's transformation agenda, as articulated in the Defence Transformation Strategy and National Defence Strategy.
6. Issues with the potential for significant impact upon the Defence enterprise may be escalated to the Defence Committee, as determined by the Chair.

Program Board Responsibilities

7. The Program Board is responsible for:
 - a. Providing governance and oversight for in-scope recommendations of the Program;
 - b. Setting the strategic direction of the Program and approving strategic Program documentation including, but not limited to:
 - Strategic Direction;
 - Program Governance Framework; and
 - Program Implementation Schedule.
 - c. Approving reform management documentation including, but not limited to:
 - Implementation plans;
 - Implementation updates;
 - Requests to close; and
 - Change proposals.
 - d. Providing first level oversight of interdepartmental coordination of joint recommendation implementation;
 - e. Resolving strategic issues and de-conflicting implementation issues between recommendations and themes where they cannot be resolved at the operational level;
 - f. Defining the acceptable levels of risk for the Program and ensuring risks are appropriately managed within these boundaries;

- g. Ensuring outcomes and benefits identified for thematic groupings are measured, monitored and reported so that action can be taken to address deficits in achievement.
- h. Oversee and manage resources committed to implementation of recommendations, and where necessary direct priorities and requests to relevant Enterprise Committees.

Membership

8. The following are standing members of the Program Board:
 - Chief of the Defence Force (Chair)
 - Vice Chief of the Defence Force (Deputy Chair)
 - Associate Secretary
 - Chief of Personnel
 - Deputy Secretary Defence People.
9. The following is a subject matter expert to the Program Board and a standing member:
 - Director General Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office (Program Manager)
10. The following are permanently invited members of the Program Board:
 - Chief of Navy
 - Chief of Army
 - Chief of Air Force
 - Chief of Joint Capabilities
 - Chief Finance Officer
 - Deputy Secretary Governance
 - Deputy Secretary Policy and Programs (DVA).
11. The following attend as Advisors to the Program Board and secretariat support to the Chair:
 - Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Defence Force
 - Chief of Staff ADF Headquarters
 - Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of the Defence Force
 - Director Program Governance - Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office
12. The following attend as observers to the Program Board:
 - Deputy Chief of Personnel
 - Head RCDVS Implementation Taskforce (PM&C)
 - Deputy Head RCDVS Implementation Taskforce (PM&C)
 - First Assistant Secretary Royal Commission Implementation (DVA).
13. When a Program Board member is unavailable to attend a meeting, an alternative representative, not below Band 2 / 2 Star level, may attend. The Secretariat must advise the Chair of alternative representatives. Representatives below Band 2 / 2 Star level may attend as representatives only with the explicit approval of the Chair.
14. The Chair may invite additional subject matter experts for specific agenda items to inform the Program Board's decision making as required.
15. The Chair may invite observers from other Commonwealth agencies who are key stakeholders for the implementation of joint recommendations, which require interdepartmental collaboration.

Responsibilities of the Chair

16. The Chair is responsible for:
 - ensuring Program Board members remain focused on achieving outcomes and benefits that are aligned with Program objectives;
 - setting the agenda for matters to be considered by the Program Board;
 - ensuring the information provided to the Program Board is relevant, accurate, timely and sufficient; and
 - facilitating open and constructive communications amongst Program Board members and encouraging their contribution in deliberations.
17. As the Program Board considers matters and issues as a whole, the Chair's role is to seek a broad range of views to reach robust decisions, summarise the thoughts of the Program Board, and decide the recommendations presented to the Program Board.
18. The Chair will ensure that outcomes and actions generated by the Program Board are explicit, linked to an action officer and timeframe to support effective secretariat functions. The Secretariat will ensure Program Board members are aware of actions arising from the meeting, and their responsibilities in relation to those actions.
19. The Chair will determine whether issues discussed during Program Board meetings need to be brought to the attention of the Defence Committee, or other Enterprise Committees. The Chair will act as sponsor for any papers brought before Enterprise Committees.
20. The Director General Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office is the Program Manager for the Program. In this capacity, the Director General informs the development of the Program Board's Forward Work Plan (FWP) to assure the CDF that key obligations as SRO are met.
21. The CDF may assign an alternate Chair in the event that both the Chair and the Deputy Chair are unavailable to attend the Board.

Responsibilities of Program Board Members

22. For the purpose of this Charter, the responsibilities and obligations assigned to Program Board members are also applicable to subject matter experts.
23. The Program Board subscribes to conflict of interest principles set out in the Australian Public Service Commission publication *Values and Code of Conduct in practice*.
24. Declarations of conflicts or potential conflicts of interest are updated annually for Program Board members, subject matter experts, and individuals who regularly attend meetings. This is managed by the Defence Integrity Division via the [Defence Conflict of Interest Declaration Form \(AF220\)](#), available through the Service Connect portal.
25. In addition, at the commencement of each Program Board meeting, the Chair must seek declarations of conflicts of interests from all attendees. A Program Board member who has a material personal interest in any matters due for consideration must give the Program Board no less than two (2) working days' notice of the interest, and provide the details of the nature and extent of the interest. Secretariat is to retain all details of interests declared and all standing notices of interest.

Transparency through Full Disclosure

26. Program Board members are accountable for the information they provide to the Program Board and need to provide assurances that information regarding interdependencies and implications of implementation, including resourcing, have been properly considered through consultation.

27. Program Board members should provide transparency of judgements, processes and risks of the proposal being considered.

Contestability

28. Program Board members are to offer any challenge of ideas in a constructive and respectful manner, trusting that other Program Board members will do the same.
29. Individual and shared accountabilities of Program Board members are to be recognised and respected; as such, Program Board members are to seek assurances on issues where there are interdependencies prior to Program Board consideration.

Program Board Direction and Powers

30. The Program Board is required to make only those decisions that do not fall within the remit of another Enterprise Committee and are outside the normal remit of an individual Program Board member's accountabilities.
31. The Program Board may give directions to a lower Program or Project Board, Steering Group or Working Group to provide assistance and/or direction to the Program Board. The Program Board may also receive direction from the Defence Committee. In each case, the lower Program or Project Board, Steering Group or Working Group must comply with those directions.
32. The Program Board may direct the timeframe by which lower Program or Project Boards, Steering Groups or Working Groups are to meet requests for information. The documentation or information is to be provided to the Chair of the Program Board through the Secretariat.
33. The Program Board will maintain oversight of resource allocation to line areas to support implementation, including funding and ASL. Access to the Secretary's ASL reserve may be made at the request of the Chair. Any requests to access the reserve will be facilitated by the Workforce and People Strategy Division, People Group.

Quorum

34. Program Board decisions are valid only when a quorum is present. A quorum is achieved by the presence for the duration of the meeting of more than half of the Program Board members, at least one of whom must be the Chair or Deputy Chair.
35. Representatives attending on behalf of Program Board members with no official acting arrangements in place do not count towards a quorum.

Meeting Frequency

36. The Program Board will initially meet once every two months. The Chair may convene additional meetings as required.
37. Meetings will routinely be scheduled for two (2) hours, however may extend to longer periods if the agenda demands.

Secretariat

38. The Director Program Governance - Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office will be the Program Board Secretariat, supported by the Program Governance team.
39. The Secretariat is responsible, in consultation with the Chair, for setting meeting dates, issuing invitations (including to approved subject matter experts and guests), compiling and distributing meeting packs, and recording outcomes.
40. Meeting packs are delivered to the following:

- Chief of the Defence Force (Chair)
- Vice Chief of the Defence Force (Deputy Chair).

Agenda

41. The Defence Royal Commission Program Management Office – Program Governance supports the Program Board through the development of the Program Board FWP in consultation with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Program Board members.
42. The Program Manager, through the submission of an agenda request via the Secretariat, must approve any requested changes to an agenda. The Chair, or their delegate, may approve any requested changes to the FWP.
43. A Program Board member must sponsor all agenda items.
44. By exception, CDF will direct certain information to be provided to the Program Board as a verbal update. These items will be scheduled in the same manner as other items, however, they will not be supported by a paper. While verbal updates will not seek decisions, any resultant directions will still be captured in the meeting outcomes.
45. Sponsors may be supported by presenters and all presenters should be invited to provide expertise for the item and not for notetaking purposes. The Sponsor must provide the names of the additional presenters to the Secretariat, prior to the meeting, for inclusion on the list of attendees for the Chair, or their delegate's approval.

Meeting Papers

46. All Program Board papers are to be prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the paper template which is available via the Secretariat.
47. Program Board papers are to be cleared by the sponsor and lodged with the Secretariat no later than **10 working days** prior to the meeting. Program Board papers are to be distributed to members no later than **five (5) working days** prior to the meeting.
48. Where a Program Board paper is not provided **three (3) working days** prior to the meeting, the sponsor must provide a verbal update at the meeting in lieu of presenting the paper and request a new date for the Program Board paper to be considered.
49. The Secretariat will grant access to all personnel who require access to the Parliamentary Document Management System on the Defence Protected Network (DPN) for the Program Board as a central repository, used by Groups and Services to lodge and access meeting papers.
50. To ensure agenda items adhere to its allocated time, no papers are to be circulated during the Program Board.

Out-of-Session

51. Items may be considered out-of-session by exception at the Chair's discretion. Members will be given **five (5) working days** to review papers and provide comments.

Below-the-Line

52. Items not requiring a decision by the Program Board (for noting only) may be considered below the line.
53. Program Board members are provided with an opportunity to discuss below-the-line items during 'other business' at the conclusion of the formal agenda. If the below-the-line items are not raised for discussion, the paper is considered as read and the recommendations noted in the meetings outcomes.

Outcomes

54. The Secretariat will draft Program Board outcomes to capture decisions and incorporate actions from each meeting. Outcomes must clearly identify sponsoring Program Board members and accountable officer(s) for delivery and timeframes to fulfil actions.
55. Draft outcomes are provided to the Office of the Chief of the Defence Force for review and sign-off by the Chair.
56. All outcomes and actions drafted by the Secretariat are considered drafts until Chair approval is received. The Secretariat are unable to change approved outcomes.
57. Where a Program Board member seeks a change to the approved outcomes or actions, these changes are to be raised in session for consideration by the Program Board.
58. Copies of outcomes will be made available to Program Board members and their authorised staff ten (10) working days after the meeting, provided they can be cleared through the Chair in that time.
59. Program Board members are to ensure that all decisions and actions arising from the Program Board are implemented where they fall to their areas of accountability.
60. The Program Board will consider agenda items that are classified above PROTECTED by exception only. If they are classified as PROTECTED or below, they will be provided to the Secretariat and included in the regular Program Board outcomes. The outcomes classified above PROTECTED are to be provided directly to the staff of the item's sponsor and managed accordingly.

Open Action Items

61. The Secretariat will maintain a register of open actions that will be tabled as a standing item at each Program Board meeting. Only the Chair has the authority to approve the closure of actions.
62. Action officers are responsible for advising the Secretariat in writing when an action is deemed complete and proposed for closure.

Record Keeping

63. The Secretariat must maintain Program Board records in accordance with the Department's Records Management Policy and its obligations under the *Archives Act 1983* and Section 37 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Review

64. The Secretariat will coordinate a review of the Program Board Charter on an annual basis. The annual review provides an efficient approach to continuous improvement and to ensuring strategic alignment with Defence reforms.
65. Performance review of the Program Board is to be undertaken annually to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Program Board. The Program Board will consider the review with outcomes incorporated into the forward work plan as required.