



RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board Update

Date: 20 November 2025

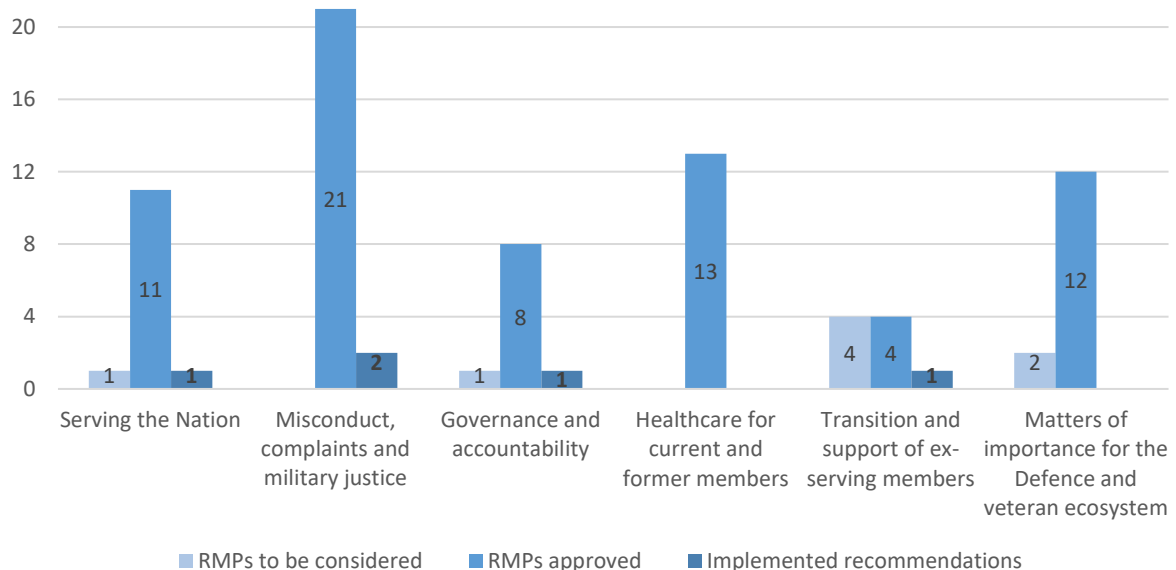
The RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board (the Board) met on 20 November 2025 to discuss the progress of the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program and considered a number of Reform Management Plans (RMPs). RMPs not approved will be the subject of further planning and consideration based on feedback provided by the Board. Implementation activities for approved RMPs are underway and progress of these activities will be reported to future Program Boards.

Progress on Defence Recommendations

Following the Board there have been 69 RMPs approved with a further eight RMPs to be considered or reconsidered. Of the 69 approved RMPs, five have been implemented (recommendations 6, 29, 34, 55 and 84).

Each recommendation has been grouped within a thematic framework. The progress of RMPs against this thematic framework is detailed below.

Progress on Defence Recommendations by Theme



Reform Management Plans Considered

Serving the Nation

- Recommendation 4 - Mitigate the adverse impacts of the posting cycle - **Approved**
- Recommendation 5 - Support all members to decompress, rest and reintegrate, especially high-risks experiences - **Approved**
- Recommendation 12 - Consider emotional intelligence and performance against wellbeing targets in selecting leaders to promote - **Approved**

Transition and support for ex-serving members

- Recommendation 93 - Fund the Transition Medical Assessment Pilot Program on an ongoing and national basis - **Noted**

Matters of importance to the whole Defence and veteran ecosystem

- Recommendation 113 - Ensure commanding officers access and use quality data for continuous improvement of wellbeing metrics - **Not approved**

Program Board Outcomes

Acknowledgement of Defence members and veterans who have died by suicide

The meeting opened with an acknowledgement of the Defence members and veterans who have died by suicide, including any notifications that have been received since the previous meeting. This acknowledgement reinforces to the members of the Board why the timely and effective implementation of reforms is so important.

Serving the Nation

Recommendation 4 - Mitigate the adverse impacts of the posting cycle

Frequent postings was recognised in the RCDVS Final Report as a major stressor for Defence families. Frequent turnover of senior leaders was also identified as a factor that can diminish ownership of, and commitment to, reform within specific locations or roles. Additionally, the RCDVS Final Report acknowledged the frequency of relocation as a barrier to implementing RCDVS recommendations.

The Board considered the proposed phased approach to reduce frequency of relocation, improve support for members and families relocating, enhance flexible employment, and support school enrolment of Defence children without a fixed address. The Board noted that support for members and families relocating is linked to Recommendation 103 (*Improve the support, communication and services provided to Defence families*) and will mainly be addressed through the implementation of that recommendation.

The Board acknowledged current Defence initiatives such as the five-year posting outlook, housing subsidies and allowances, alternate location work options, and the CDF's open letter advocating for stable education and childcare access for ADF families. It considered how these measures support robust career management by reducing relocations, enhancing posting certainty, and enabling flexible work—ultimately promoting member and family wellbeing while maintaining operational effectiveness.

The Board discussed progress to date and highlighted the need to be cognisant of individual circumstances and organisational needs, which may require flexibility in approach and working arrangements.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 4, with updates regarding clarification of training terminology to be made to the Plan and submitted for record keeping by 12 December 2025.

Recommendation 5 - Support all members to decompress, rest and reintegrate, especially high-risks experiences

The RCDVS Final Report identified that a consistent approach to supporting members to decompress, rest and reintegrate, especially after post-deployment and high-risk experiences, was needed to prevent Defence and veteran suicide and suicidality. This approach needs to be underpinned by analysis of data collected on high-risk experiences to derive lessons learnt and improve outcomes for Defence members.

The RMP for Recommendation 5 was not approved when initially considered at the 11 September 2025 Program Board. The Board considered the updates to the Plan, which included a balance between individual wellbeing with operational future force requirements, the need for work to be phased with manageable milestones, and further work to be undertaken with Joint Operations Command, Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Joint Capabilities Group and the three Services to ensure support and involvement for this recommendation.

The Board considered the proposed three-phased approach to implementation. This includes the establishment of an interdisciplinary working group to coordinate and direct input required from Groups and Services; review current evidence of decompression and reintegration, as well as review current research on mental health and wellbeing impacts of deployment on members and families; and finally, development of a framework informed by the first two phase outputs.

The Board discussed the improvements to the RMP to date and importance of continuing focus on preventative measures such as training and resilience, acknowledging that high-risk experiences are not isolated to the deployed or offshore environments.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 5, with updates to the Plan to include details on the ADF Life Course Study and submitted for record keeping by 12 December 2025.

[Recommendation 12 - Consider emotional intelligence and performance against wellbeing targets in selecting leaders to promote](#)

The RCDVS identified that 'selecting the wrong people for leadership positions can have a significant negative impact on members'. In addition, the RCDVS supported the Centre for Defence Leadership and Ethics' recommendation to review command selection frameworks in other Five Eyes countries, and ensure the ADF command selection process emphasises emotional intelligence.

The Board was advised of the linkages between Recommendations 12 and 11.

Recommendation 11 (*Assess Australian Defence Force future leaders based on upward feedback and performance against culture, health and wellbeing targets*) establishes the foundation for assessing leadership performance against culture, health and wellbeing targets, which enables performance against these targets to be considered during leadership and command selection and promotion.

The Board considered the proposed two-phased approach to enhance the leadership selection and promotion framework within Defence by further integrating wellbeing performance metrics and emotional intelligence assessments when selecting leaders to promote. The Board also noted the existing initiatives to strengthen ADF senior leadership accountability, including the Chief of the Defence Force Directive, released in February 2025, mandating that leadership selection prioritises not only qualifications and experience but also character, behaviour, and cultural alignment.

The Board discussed benchmarking conducted by the Australian Public Service Commission and whether this could be included and utilised to enhance the Plan.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 12, with updates including consideration of a phased approach to implementation to be made to the Plan and submitted for record keeping by 12 December 2025.

Transition and support for ex-serving members

[Recommendation 93 - Fund the Transition Medical Assessment Pilot Program on an ongoing and national basis](#)

The RCDVS noted the importance of providing additional support for members who are medically separating given the higher risks of suicide and suicidality for this cohort. The RCDVS Final Report added that the Transition Medical Assessment Pilot Program is a good example of the progress that can be made to support vulnerable cohorts and provide coordinated care. However, the RCDVS did acknowledge that additional funding is required to expand the Program.

A verbal update on Recommendation 93 was provided to the Board, including discussion of the ongoing work by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Further discussion of this recommendation, including formal consideration of the Reform Management Plan, is scheduled for the 12 December 2025 Program Board.

Matters of importance to the whole Defence and veteran ecosystem

[Recommendation 113 - Ensure commanding officers access and use quality data for continuous improvement of wellbeing metrics](#)

The RCDVS noted that data in Defence is not integrated and is underutilised, though acknowledged steps being taken to improve access, use and data literacy. The RCDVS identified the need for Commanding Officers to access and use quality data and metrics to allow a better understanding of the wellbeing of members under their command. Timely access to data would assist commanders to deliver on this responsibility.

The Board noted the work underway in Defence to improve access to, and use of, quality data for all users, including commanders. The most significant and notable project is the One Defence Data (1DD) Program that aims to transform the way Defence manages and uses its data and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to transform how Defence processes, structures, and collates systems and tools into one platform. It was noted that 1DD will be available to priority user groups from late 2025, but will take additional time to realise its potential. The Defence People Dashboard, which contains people-related data/metrics for providing leaders with real-time information on incidents and behaviours, has also been available for over a year but continues to mature and develop.

The Board considered the proposed phased approach to discover, design and implement an analytical dashboard that collates relevant data sources and present them visually to support wellbeing and continuous improvement for Commanding Officers.

The Board noted the inclusion of comparison points from the National Veterans' Data Asset (Recommendation 107) being identified as outside the scope of recommendation implementation. The Board noted that an options paper on the implementation of the National Veterans' Data Asset will be provided to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Royal Commission Taskforce.

The Board requested Recommendation 26 (*Foster a strong culture of reporting unacceptable behaviour*; approved at 19 June 2025 Program Board) to be updated to include connections to Recommendation 113 and presented at the 12 December 2025 Program Board. The Board also discussed whether Commanding Officers could be provided access to existing data sets as an interim solution whilst awaiting the full potential of 1DD to be realised.

Program Board outcome: The Board did **not approve** the RMP for Recommendation 113. It will return for consideration at the 12 December 2025 Program Board.

Other business

The Board considered the proposed 2026 Forward Work Plan, which outlines the schedule of Boards for 2026 and expected items for consideration. The Board agreed to the Forward Work Plan, with Program Boards to be held six-weekly.

The Board considered the proposed closure approach for RCDVS recommendations to provide assurance of, and confidence in, the implementation of recommendations. The Board discussed the joint Defence and Department of Veterans' Affairs approach to closure, which includes milestones of recommendation implementation, additional reform delivery and embedding outcomes and benefits. The Board agreed in principle to the closure approach, pending minor amendments to the 'implemented' phase and endorsement at the Department of Veterans' Affairs Royal Commission Implementation Committee.

The Board considered the joint Defence and Department of Veterans' Affairs approach to oversee and align joint-led recommendations. This would ensure visibility of implementation activities by both Departments to support joint governance arrangements. The Board agreed to this approach.

A verbal update was provided and noted regarding interdependency mapping and co-design sessions with key stakeholders to develop collective benefits and measures of effectiveness. An update from these sessions will be presented at the 12 December 2025 Program Board.

The ADF Suicide Review Pilot was also discussed, focussing on its strong connection to Recommendation 39 (*Address risk factors for suicide and suicidality and report on progress as part of enterprise-level risk management*). It was agreed that Recommendation 39 RMP would incorporate the ADF Suicide Review Pilot and the amended Plan will be submitted for out of session consideration by 12 December 2025.