



RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board Update

Date: 27 May 2025

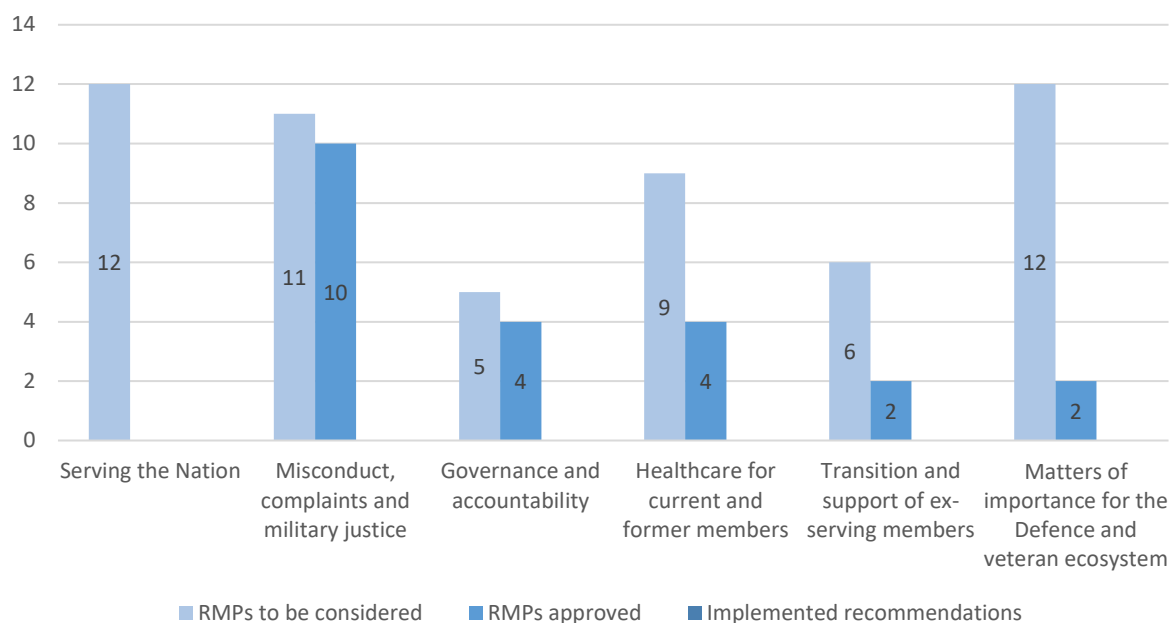
The RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board (the Board) met on 27 May 2025 to discuss the progress of the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program and consider a number of Reform Management Plans (RMPs). RMPs not approved will be the subject of further planning and consideration based on feedback provided 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 22 RMPs approved with a further 55 RMPs to be considered or reconsidered.

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

Governance and accountability

- Recommendation 38 - Improve governance processes related to accountability and continuous improvement - **Approved**
- Recommendation 40 - Improve governance mechanisms from the unit level to the enterprise level - **Approved**
- Recommendation 41 - Build project-management capability so that reform initiatives are successful - **Approved**

Transition and support for ex-serving members

- Recommendation 79 - Ensure that respect for and recognition of services are embedded throughout Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs - **Approved**
- Recommendation 83 - Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education - **Not approved**
- Recommendation 84 - Issue separating members with a reference that states their skills, expertise and capabilities - **Approved**

Matters of importance to the whole of Defence and veteran ecosystem

- Recommendation 116 - Improve the quality, evaluation, translation and sharing of research findings - **Approved**

Program Board Outcomes

Acknowledgement of Defence members and veterans who have died by suicide

Following on from the 1 May Program Board, the Board discussed the update on known or suspected deaths by suicide of full-time serving ADF members. The Board agreed that, moving forward, an acknowledgement of the Defence members and veterans who have died by suicide would be a regular agenda item at the Program Board meetings and this acknowledgement would continue to reinforce to the members of the Board why the timely and effective implementation of reforms is so important.

Governance and accountability

Recommendation 38 - Improve governance processes related to accountability and continuous improvement

The RCDVS identified that the high rate of suicide among serving and ex-serving ADF members serves as a “tragic reminder of the importance of accountability, continuous improvement, learning from past mistakes, and monitoring and adjusting activities to ensure they have the desired effect”. The Government agreed that Defence should improve accountability and drive continuous improvement regarding how mental health and wellbeing outcomes are measured and monitored.

The Board considered the central output to develop a mental health and wellbeing performance framework which integrates with, and draws insight from, the Defence Enterprise Performance Framework. The framework’s goal is to understand all performance measurement and reporting activities across Defence – including those shared publicly and with veterans, as well as those used internally by Defence leaders to improve accountability and outcomes.

The Board discussed the importance of determining appropriate deliverables and performance measures for the recommendation.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 38.

Recommendation 40 - Improve governance mechanisms from the unit level to the enterprise level

The RCDVS Final Report indicated that Defence did not have an approach across all levels of the Defence enterprise to ensure that accountabilities are being correctly discharged, and that systems within Defence were considered to be burdensome, duplicative and place onerous reporting requirements on managers within that system.

The Board acknowledged the Final Report observation that good governance is key to enduring cultural change for personnel in the Defence enterprise. The Board considered the phased approach to implementation, including review of current governance and reporting processes; identification of non-compliance causes with required reporting and duplicative reporting; and improvements to reduce administrative and improve governance, performance reporting and data literacy through educational.

The Board discussed the broad recommendation and agreed to tighten the implementation scope to focus on governance related to people systems.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 40, with updates to the Plan regarding adjusting the scope of the recommendation to be submitted for out of session consideration by 1 August 2025.

[Recommendation 41 - Build project-management capability so that reform initiatives are successful](#)

The RCDVS identified that improvements were needed to Defence's project management practices regarding implementing recommendations and reforms. The RCDVS considered that Defence has a 'set and forget' approach to implementing recommendations from previous reviews.

The Board acknowledged that improving project management maturity and practices will ensure increased capability and improve outcomes. The Board endorsed the implementation approach and scope which included procuring an independent expert assessor to conduct the project-management maturity assessments (commencing in late 2025), ahead of developing a blueprint and implementation plan for capability uplift.

The Board discussed the importance of focussing on support and acknowledged that some more advanced elements of the plan will be developed based on emerging information.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 41.

Transition and support for ex-serving members

[Recommendation 79 - Ensure that respect for and recognition of services are embedded throughout Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

The RCDVS identified that respect and recognition are important issues for veterans, and a lack of recognition of their service can affect overall wellbeing. The RCDVS highlighted that transition is a time of immense change, and a phase of life that can be associated with a loss of purpose and identity. Increasing the recognition of experiences, and therefore increasing the respect afforded to serving members, is expected to aid in reducing feelings of disconnection, thereby potentially reducing risk-factors for suicide and suicidality.

The Board noted this recommendation is being implemented jointly with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and acknowledged the significant volume of work already completed. The Board discussed ongoing work, particularly recognition of service through Defence Honours and Awards.

The Board considered work underway to standardise practices across the three Services in relation to respect and recognition activities. With regards to measuring workplace experiences, attitudes, culture and respect and recognition, Defence does this through various surveys including the Transition Preparedness Questionnaire (TPQ) and Post-Transition Survey.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 79.

Recommendation 83 - Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education

Program Board outcome: The Board **did not approve** the RMP for Recommendation 83.

Recommendation 84 - Issue separating members with a reference that states their skills, expertise and capabilities

The RCDVS recognised the challenges that some ex-serving members face in finding civilian employment, particularly in terms of the skills, experience and capabilities attained throughout their Service career.

The Board agreed that an individualised reference, or testimonial, for transitioning members, based on skills, experiences and capabilities demonstrated whilst serving, could assist veterans to promote their skills, increasing opportunities for civilian employment.

The Board noted the work undertaken during the RCDVS's inquiry to introduce a reference-like product for transitioning members. In April 2024, Service-specific Testimonials were informally implemented, providing opportunity for the author to include details about a member's skills and experience.

The Board discussed use of automated systems to support further development and enhancement of testimonials, and requested a business case to be prioritised to expedite a technological solution.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 84.

Matters of importance to the whole of Defence and veteran ecosystem

Recommendation 116 - Improve the quality, evaluation, translation and sharing of research findings

The RCDVS highlighted the necessity of centralised evaluation and research teams to improve the quality and coordination of research and evaluation practices, benefitting the whole of Defence and veteran ecosystem.

The Board noted this recommendation is being implemented jointly with the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Board acknowledged the widespread efforts already underway serving as a foundation to implement this work.

The Board discussed two proposed approaches to implementation and agreed on a staged approach which would see the establishment of a 'Tiger Team' to streamline governance, lead change management and work collaboratively with the Department of Veterans' Affairs. As part of phase two, the Tiger Team would transition to a permanent central hub, delivering governance, evaluation and some research functions. Made up of policy advisors and researchers, the hub would build a central research library and work with the Department of Veterans' Affairs to deliver an enhanced research agenda.

The Board requested a reassessment of implementation risks be conducted and the outcome provided for record keeping.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 116.

Other business

The Board considered items pertaining to its governance functions including its forward work program. The Board noted that a Defence Integrity Division Audit is due to be finalised by August 2025.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Commonwealth Taskforce representative acknowledged the work of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs in support of their reports to government.