



Australian Government

Defence

RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board Update

Date: 12 December 2025

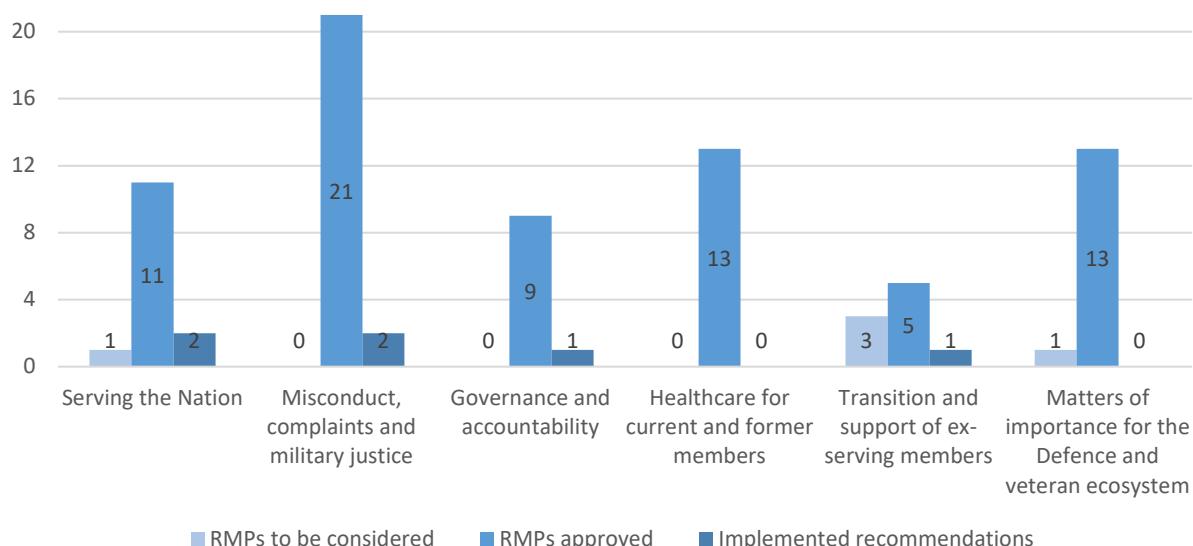
The RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board (the Board) met on 12 December 2025 to discuss the progress of the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program and consider a number of Reform Management Plans (RMPs). RMPs not approved will be the subject of further planning and consideration based on feedback 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 72 RMPs approved with a further 4 RMPs to be considered or reconsidered. Of the 72 approved RMPs, 6 have been implemented (recommendations 6, 10, 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

Governance and accountability

- Recommendation 59 - Defence to participate in Comcare's Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program

Health care for serving and ex-serving members

- Recommendation 61 - Establish a brain injury program

Transition and support for ex-serving members

- Recommendation 83 - Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education
- Recommendation 93 - Fund the Transition Medical Assessment Pilot Program on an ongoing and national basis

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

Other business

- Recommendation 42 - Ensure that future Inspectors-General of the Australian Defence Force will not have served in the ADF
- Recommendation 57 - Comcare to regularly review Australian Defence Force determinations of 'service nexus' for suicide attempts and suspected deaths by suicide
- Recommendation 80 - The Department of Veterans' Affairs to take responsibility for supporting members to transition out of the Australian Defence Force
- Recommendation 87 - Establish a new agency to focus on veteran wellbeing

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.

Governance and accountability

[Recommendation 59 - Defence to participate in Comcare's Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program](#)

The RCDVS Final Report noted that Defence has an elevated risk relevant to psychosocial hazards due to the diverse nature of work. It also noted that Comcare's cost recovery model is prohibitive to more proactive regulatory initiatives, and recommended Defence should fund its participation in Comcare's Psychosocial Inspection Program.

The Board noted that Defence is implementing this recommendation jointly with Comcare. Defence's role is based on providing funding and participating in the Program.

The Board noted that Comcare's trial of the Psychosocial Inspection Program concluded subsequent to the release of the Final Report, with general guidance made publicly available on the Comcare website.

The Board acknowledged the intended outcome of implementation is to ensure Defence is an organisation that understands its legislative obligations to identify, assess and manage work health and safety hazards, including the new psychosocial hazards. The Board also acknowledged the need for Defence to have clear governance frameworks and supporting systems that enable decision makers to make determinations on how to manage hazards, and ensure workers' health and safety.

The Board noted that Defence and Comcare meet regularly through established forums that discuss the risk of psychosocial hazards to Defence personnel, including the Defence Work Health and Safety Board, the Comcare-Defence Liaison Forum and the Suicide and Self-Harm Working Group. Comcare's proposed approach to conduct a pilot in the first half of 2026 was noted.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 59, with updates to the Plan required to clarify the phased approach and Defence's active role in the pilot, to be submitted for recordkeeping by 13 February 2026.

Health care for serving and ex-serving members

[Recommendation 61 - Establish a brain injury program](#)

The RCDVS Final Report found that military service is associated with an increased likelihood of brain injury. Additionally, the Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran

Suicide Prevention's Preliminary Interim Report (the Boss Report), identified that traumatic brain injury is a risk factor which could lead to a higher rate of suicide.

The Board approved the RMP for Recommendation 61 on 1 May 2025, however sought additional information on some elements of the Plan. In November, the Board considered updates to the Plan out of session. The Board agreed to the updates, subject to amending outputs and timeframes within the Plan.

The Board discussed the updates to timeframes and outputs in the Plan.

Program Board outcome: The Board noted the approved RMP for Recommendation 61 as provided out of session.

Transition and support for ex-serving members

[Recommendation 83 - Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education](#)

The RCDVS Final Report identified that job readiness supports are fragmented and inconsistent. It called for better tools to promote ex-serving members' skills, experience and stronger connections with employers. While the Final Report highlighted limited university recognition of prior learning and noted that ADF training does not align with civilian qualifications, Defence does recognise service-acquired skills enabling serving and transitioning ADF members to leverage their Defence experience in civilian employment, thus increasing employability and easing post-service adjustment.

The Board did not approve the RMP for Recommendation 83 when presented at previous Program Boards.

The Program Board considered reform activities to address the three elements of the recommendation. Since 2016, Defence has issued civilian qualifications at the point of completion of training through the Defence Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

The Board discussed existing arrangements whereby there are no limits placed by Defence on the issuance of qualifications or units of competency gained as a result of formal training courses. Defence, as an Enterprise RTO, subsumes the cost of issuance and recognition within its operating budget. Defence members are encouraged to gain qualifications throughout their workplace experience. Defence has continued to issue up to an additional two qualifications and two micro-credentials for members on transition, which recognised their transferrable skills in addition to any qualifications gained as a result of formal training opportunities.

Defence is focussing on bridging vocational training opportunities to fill skills gaps. Defence and Public Skills Australia are working together to establish sustainable mechanisms for skills analysis and mapping to support accreditation. Concurrently, Defence, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (and the Wellbeing Agency once it is operational) are working to address bridging opportunities for skills and qualification gaps post-transition, and reduce factors that may contribute to suicide and suicidality in the Defence and veteran community.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 83.

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 (TMAPP) 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 should government wish to expand the Program.

A verbal update on Recommendation 93 was presented to the 20 November 2025 Program Board.

The Board were presented with a further update on Defence's involvement in recommendation implementation, noting that Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs are joint leads on this recommendation. The Board discussed funding arrangements and the timelines for implementation.

Following the Board, further discussion occurred regarding Defence's role in implementation. It was acknowledged that this should be a Department of Veterans' Affairs led recommendation with Defence in support. The broader Board would receive advice on this out of session for their agreement.

As such, this would not be a recommendation for which Defence requires an RMP.

Program Board outcome: The Board **noted** the update for Recommendation 93.

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 RMP for Recommendation 113 was not approved when initially considered at the 20 November 2025 Program Board. The Board requested an 'interim' data solution to support Commanding Officers and requested identification of connections to Recommendation 26 (*Foster a strong culture of reporting unacceptable behaviour*) be identified in the RMP.

The Board considered the updates to the Plan, which included launching a minimum viable capability data resource based on existing, validated reporting sources. It was acknowledged that this recommendation has strong links to Recommendation 26. The dashboard being developed for Recommendation 113 will support identification of at-risk locations across Defence to support implementation of Recommendation 26.

The Board also considered how Defence, in collaboration with internal stakeholders, will discover, design and implement the new dashboard within the One Defence Data (1DD) platform that collates relevant data sources.

Program Board outcome: The Board **approved** the RMP for Recommendation 113.

Other business

The Board considered items pertaining to its governance functions including its forward work program, recommendation progress reporting and risk reporting.

The Board considered initial enterprise and Service Respect@Work Action Plans, as related to implementation of Recommendation 10. The Board approved the enterprise Action Plan and agreed with the Service-specific Action Plans.

Recommendations

Defence does not have lead responsibility for recommendations 42, 57 or 87 but is working with the lead agency to provide support for implementation. Details of this support was briefed to the Program Board:

Recommendation 42 - Ensure that future Inspectors-General of the Australian Defence Force will not have served in the ADF

The Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force (IGADF) plays a key role in relation to the ADF military justice system. The RCDVS Final Report highlighted that the IGADF was established to promote trust in the ADF and ensure all personnel have access to a fair and impartial military justice system. Effective oversight of the military justice system and confidence in the Inspector-General's functions is critical to ensuring the wellbeing of the system and the ADF members who engage with it.

The RCDVS Final Report also highlighted the perception that the Inspector-General is not sufficiently independent of Defence and recommended that future Inspectors-General should not have served in the ADF.

Recommendation 42 is being led by the IGADF.

The Board acknowledged Defence's role to support legislative change associated with this recommendation. The Board considered the importance of close engagement with Defence senior leaders to ensure Defence equities are considered during legislation drafting.

Program Board outcome: The Board noted Defence's actions to support implementation.

Recommendation 57 - Comcare to regularly review Australian Defence Force determinations of 'service nexus' for suicide attempts and suspected deaths by suicide

The RCDVS Final Report highlighted Defence's obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) (the WHS Act) as a duty holder, having a primary duty of care to ensure the physical and psychological health of ADF members, including identifying and managing psychosocial hazards and risks. Comcare, as the national regulator, oversees Defence's compliance with its duties under the WHS Act. The Final Report examined Defence's

approach to WHS and raised concerns about the efficacy of risk identification, and management and control mechanisms for suicide and suicidality.

Recommendation 57 is being led by Comcare.

The Board acknowledged Defence's ongoing work to develop processes to support development of a register of applicable incidents for sharing with Comcare. Defence will provide data to Comcare on which notifiable incidents for attempted suicide and suspected deaths by suicide were determined as not having a work connection (service nexus).

The Board considered the upcoming activities including confirming a definition of service nexus to be used in revised policy and safety systems; a three year review period regarding compliance; and periodic reviews (frequency not yet defined). Outcomes of the periodic regulator reviews will be shared by the Defence WHS Board to ensure lessons learnt are shared to improve Defence's compliance against notifiable reporting obligations.

Program Board outcome: The Board noted Defence's actions to support implementation, requesting further information be captured to reflect Defence and Comcare's relationship across all Comcare related recommendations. This is to return to the 2 April 2026 Program Board.

Recommendation 80 - The Department of Veterans' Affairs to take responsibility for supporting members to transition out of the Australian Defence Force

Recommendation 87 - Establish a new agency to focus on veteran wellbeing

The RCDVS Final Report noted that DVA should take greater responsibility for supporting members in their transition into civilian life, especially in relation to cultural and social challenges of this journey, enabling transitioning members to build or rebuild their identity as a civilian, find their purpose beyond military service, and connect to friends, family and community after service. The RCDVS observed that ex-serving members reported that cultural and social challenges make it difficult to integrate into civilian life, and this complex and challenging psychological adjustment, including a loss of familiar military culture, purpose, identity and community, can increase risk of suicidality (Recommendation 80).

The RCDVS identified that a new executive agency with distinctive branding is needed to focus on veteran wellbeing, led by a Chief Executive Officer, reporting directly to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The functions of the new agency should be co-designed by veterans, with at least four key functions being transition; system navigation and connection to wellbeing supports; improving referral pathways and service integration; and co-designing wellbeing supports (Recommendation 87).

Recommendation 80 is being co-led by Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and Recommendation 87 is being led by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, with support from Defence. As these recommendations are interrelated, Defence's activities to support implementation were considered concurrently.

The Board noted that the new Wellbeing Agency (official name continues to be developed) would be stood up from 1 July 2026. Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs continue to work closely on information and data sharing arrangements.

The role of the Joint Transition Authority's (JTA) integration within Defence remains essential to achieve outcomes for ADF members and command. The Board considered the importance of a single point of accountability and the JTA retaining interdependent relationships with command, Defence's Joint Health Command and the Defence People System in delivering transition program and system reforms.

Program Board outcome:

- The Board noted Defence's actions to support implementation of Recommendation 87.
- The Board requested an RMP be developed for Recommendation 80 as Defence is jointly leading this implementation with the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The RMP is to be provided by 17 December 2025 and circulated for out of session approval.