

Theme 5: Transition and Support for Ex-Serving Members

Update on Defence's implementation of the **Australian Government Response** to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Factsheet Themes

Defence has produced six theme-based factsheets outlining the key milestones and reforms delivered as part of the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide:

1. Serving the Nation
2. Misconduct, Complaints and Military Justice
3. Governance and Accountability
4. Health Care for Serving and Ex-Serving Members
5. **Transition and Support for Ex-Serving Members**
6. Matters of Importance to the Whole Defence and Veteran Ecosystem

Defence Priority Reforms:

The Department of Defence is implementing the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, related to the theme of **Transition and Support for Ex-Serving Members**. This factsheet highlights key reform on recommendations for which Defence has primary or shared responsibility.

The recommendations align with five priority areas defined by the Royal Commission—referred to as the 'lines of effort'—supported by enabling actions to reduce suicide and suicidality among serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members.

These lines of effort are to:

- prevent harm
- intervene early
- improve communication, coordination and collaboration
- build capability and capacity
- strengthen oversight and accountability.

Support Information:

Visit www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/crisis-support/helplines for information on support available internal and external to Defence.

Key Impacts:

- Stronger **recognition** of service throughout the member lifecycle, including unified recognition products and improved transition communication.
- More integrated Defence–Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) transition support, ensuring tailored, member-centred **assistance**.
- Improved **connection** and wellbeing for ex-serving members through **consistent** and **safe** base access.
- Greater **support** for civilian employment through qualifications, testimonials, and Australian Public Service (APS) pathways.
- Faster and more efficient claims processing through digitised records and **modern** health information systems.



1) Recognition, Respect & Member-Centred Transition

Recommendations 79, 80 & 84

- Defence and DVA are enhancing recognition across the career lifecycle through service testimonials, command commendations, medallions, and recognition programs.
- Mandatory testimonials (since 1 March 2025) ensure members leave service with a formal record of experience and skills in order to support post-service employment outcomes.
- Defence and DVA continue to refine transition responsibilities to support a seamless member experience through a new DVA-led Agency for Veteran and Family Wellbeing.



2) Access, Connection & Community for Ex-Serving Members

Recommendation 82

- A pilot program is underway for a new Veteran Defence Common Access Card (DCAC) that will provide former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members two years of base access following separation. This will help veterans maintain social connections, access familiar facilities, and better maintain continuity during the early stages of civilian transition.
- The pilot program was designed through engagement across the services, base managers and veteran communities, ensuring it reflects real transition needs and veteran perspectives.
- The findings of the pilot program will inform a national rollout. This will help ensure the final policy is veteran-centred, practical, and enhances wellbeing by preserving community ties and easing adjustment after service.



3) Skills, Qualifications and Employment Pathways

Recommendations 83-85

- Defence's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) continues to expand civilian qualification pathways, increasing the ability of in-service and transitioning members to have their Defence-acquired skills formally recognised in the civilian workforce.
- A referral process now supports members to convert Defence skills and training into accredited civilian qualifications, directly improving employability by aligning military experience with post-service career goals.
- The Defence RTO delivers 66 qualifications, 2178 units of competency and 163 skill sets, allowing veterans to access the qualifications they need to enter or advance in civilian industries.
- VetPaths, led by DVA, provides structured APS employment pathways and tailored support, with expansion planned for 2026, creating clearer, supported entry routes into public sector careers for veterans.
- Legislative amendments under consideration aim to establish an affirmative measure for veteran recruitment across the APS, strengthening employment opportunities and recognising the unique value veterans bring to government roles.



4) Information Integration for Better Claims Outcomes

Recommendation 94

- Defence and DVA have established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under the 2025 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to improve the timeliness and accuracy of information-sharing for claims processing, reducing delays and ensuring veterans receive decisions and support faster.
- The ADF Health Records Digitisation Project is complete, with relevant records digitised. Further work to digitise records dating back to 1947 is expected by June 2026, ensuring mature veterans and families also benefit from faster, more reliable claims assessment.
- The new Health Knowledge Management (HKM) System will integrate clinical health information across Defence and streamline claims processing through a secure shared portal, reducing administrative burden on veterans.
- HKM rollout began at Edinburgh in November 2025, with full implementation expected by December 2028, delivering a modern, end-to-end health information system that better supports smoother transition and better long-term care for veterans.

This document was last updated on 4th March 2026.