



RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board Update

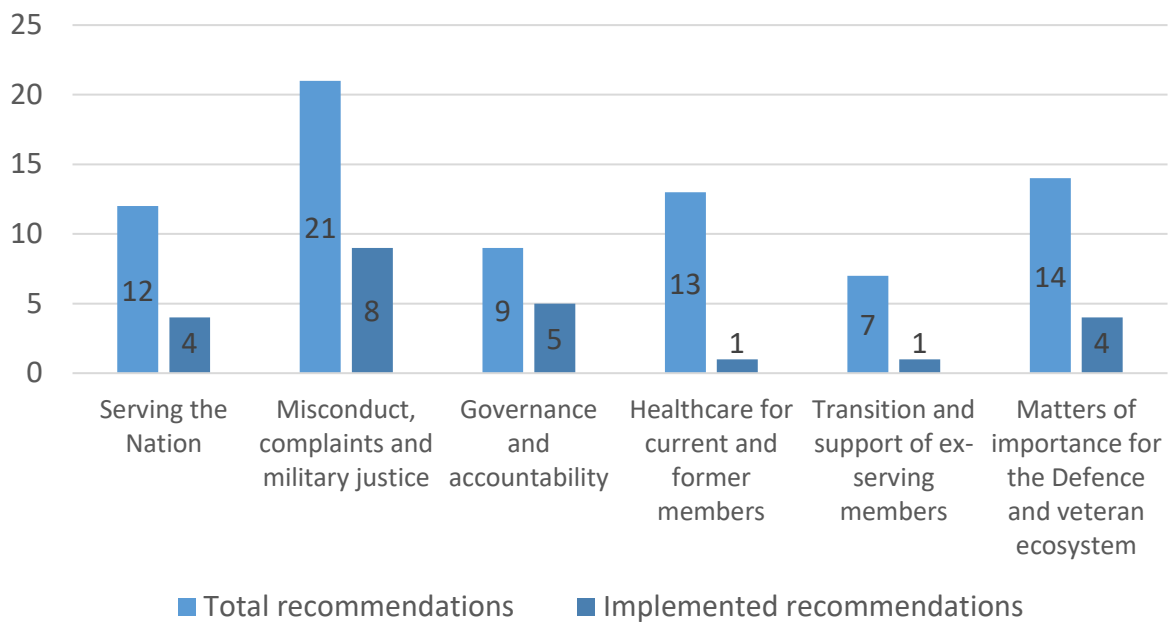
Date: 02 April 2026

The RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board (the Board) met on 02 April 2026 to discuss the progress of the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program. The focus for 2026 Program Boards remains implementation progress monitoring and processes to assess implementation status.

Progress on Defence Recommendations

As at the 02 April 2026 Board, all 76 Reform Management Plans (RMPs) have been considered and approved. Across the 76 recommendations, 23 recommendations have been implemented, and will be subject to further assurance processes.

Progress on Defence Recommendations by Theme



Program Board Items

Other Business	3
Implementation Progress	5
Misconduct, Complaints & Military Justice	5
Recommendation 21: Implement a 'presumption' of discharge for Australian Defence Force members found to have engaged in certain forms of sexual misconduct	5
Recommendation 26: Foster a strong culture of reporting unacceptable behaviour	5
Governance & Accountability	5
Recommendation 41: Build project-management capability so that reform initiatives are successful	5
Healthcare for current and former members.....	6
Recommendation 69: Improve suicide-prevention training so it is practical, tailored, informed by lived experience and delivered in person	6
Transition and support of ex-serving members.....	6
Recommendation 83: Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education	6

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.

Preliminaries

The Board was briefed on enhancements to the Program Update designed to highlight RMPs with change requests requiring approval and identify potential risks or issues for consideration at each Board meeting.

The Board discussed the Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) established and co-chaired by Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and recognised the importance of the IDC for monitoring the implementation of recommendations owned by organisations across Government.

Other Business

The Board was briefed on the level of engagement with the Program internet pages and associated artefacts. The Board noted that communicating the progress of implementation remains a high priority and that more focus on our communications was required to ensure our progress in implementing recommendations is well known.

At the 14 October 2025 meeting, the Program Board requested information on data sharing arrangements across recommendations to understand what data management plans or MoUs are in place with external agencies. The Program Board were provided a brief advising that six recommendations have existing data sharing arrangements in place, with a further five to have arrangements in the future. It was recommended that Defence's Data Division monitor the data governance arrangements going forward. The Board noted the arrangements Defence has or will implement for data sharing with external agencies. The Board agreed that Data Division will monitor the data governance arrangement and that the Defence Data and AI Board is the appropriate forum to refer data sharing issues.

The Program Board received an update regarding the relationship between Defence and Comcare for each of the Work Health and Safety Branch co-lead or Comcare supported recommendations (recommendations [56](#), [57](#), [59](#) and [60](#)). The Board noted the relationship for each recommendation:

- **Recommendation 56 (Improve guidance and understanding of Defence's 'if in doubt, notify' policy):** Defence will lead improvements on Defence policy and guidance materials with Comcare providing a regulatory advice and guidance.
- **Recommendation 57 (Comcare to regularly review Australian Defence Force determinations of 'service nexus' for suicide attempts and suspected deaths by**

suicide): Defence will support Comcare in conducting assurance of notifiable incident determinations related to suicide attempts and suspected deaths by suicide.

- **Recommendation 59 (Defence to participate in Comcare’s Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program):** Comcare will conduct a pilot in 2025-26 financial year focusing on a single Defence unit, which will serve as a preliminary platform for the methodology, allowing Comcare to make adjustments to its approach before applying it to the wider program to be conducted from July 2026-June 2029. Comcare will deliver periodic Inspection reports to Defence throughout the program followed by a final report that speaks to the entirety of the proactive program, activities conducted, recommendations made, actions taken and ongoing areas of concern.
- **Recommendation 60 (Improve strategies for harm prevention and early intervention by sharing quality data with Comcare):** Defence will provide Comcare with aggregated, non-identifiable data on a quarterly basis. Comcare will support Regulatory Program activities and assess notifications for psychosocial incidents to identify trends, patterns and repeat incidents. Comcare will also analyse data to identify areas of potential Defence WHS System improvement to improve strategies for harm prevention and early intervention of psychosocial hazards and risks, including other datasets accessed by Comcare such as from the National Veteran’s Data Asset (Recommendation 58), when established.

The Program Board were advised that Defence and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs would continue to share information on their implementation planning to support visibility of joint recommendations. The Board noted the verbal update.

The Program Board received an update in relation to the Program Implementation Strategy 2026-2028 and the associated Program Benefits Logic. The Strategy and Logic will work in tandem to define, measure and promote the lasting benefits of the Program. The Board provided initial feedback on the Strategy and requested an updated version incorporating this feedback, and any further feedback (to be provided out of session), be provided to the May 2026 Program Board.

Implementation Progress

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
Misconduct, Complaints & Military Justice		
<p>Recommendation 21: Implement a 'presumption' of discharge for Australian Defence Force members found to have engaged in certain forms of sexual misconduct</p>	Off track	<p>The Board noted that this recommendation has been almost entirely implemented following amendments to the <i>Defence Regulations 2016</i> that occurred on 13 December 2025 and the associated updates to the Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual and Military Personnel Policy Manual. All outputs of the RMP are considered complete. The recommendation requires that 'Service Chiefs must approve decisions' to retain or discharge members following a finding of sexual violence, a brief to settle the mechanism by which this will occur has been drafted for discussion between the CDF, CPERS and Service Chiefs. Until a decision in this regard has been made, the recommendation will be considered 'off track' despite the completion of the underpinning legislative and policy updates.</p> <p>Board Outcome: Noted the update and requested review of the aforementioned brief be prioritised and requested a further update at the May Program Board.</p>
<p>Recommendation 26: Foster a strong culture of reporting unacceptable behaviour</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted several important milestones that have strengthened reporting of unacceptable behaviour, identified areas of higher-risk, and improved action and transparency. Communications products have been developed and released to explain how personnel can report unacceptable behaviour through the Defence Central Complaints Unit, helping address under-reporting. Defence has also validated and shared the data and information sources needed to identify at-risk locations, cohorts, ranks and roles. Quarterly reporting on identified at risk areas has commenced through the Work Health and Safety Board, creating a regular pathway for issues to be escalated to leadership. For public reporting, Defence has confirmed the Defence Culture Report as the reporting mechanism, and the 2025 report has been endorsed by senior leadership, representing clear progress toward the Recommendation's transparency objective.</p> <p>Board Outcome: Noted the update and requested a further update by no later than the June Program Board.</p>
Governance & Accountability		
<p>Recommendation 41: Build project-management capability so that reform initiatives are successful</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted Defence has completed the core assessment and design work needed to strengthen project management capability in the areas responsible for implementing Royal Commission recommendations. Independent project management maturity assessments have been completed and the implementation plan and blueprint for capability uplift have been</p>

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
		<p>delivered, a major step toward addressing identified capability gaps. An initial eight-week capability uplift initiative commenced on 23 February 2026. Further work is required to embed enduring project management capability uplift in Defence. The Board requested that consideration be given to how training can be delivered in an enduring manner within existing capability and resources.</p> <p>Board Outcome: Noted the update and requested a further update at the May Program Board.</p>
Healthcare for current and former members		
<p>Recommendation 69: Improve suicide-prevention training so it is practical, tailored, informed by lived experience and delivered in person</p>	<p>Implemented, subject to further assurance processes</p>	<p>The Board considered an update to the RMP.</p> <p>The Board noted that the recommendation is now implemented. Defence has completed substantial work to update suicide-prevention training so it can be delivered more consistently in-person and better reflect lived experience. The SafeSide suite of courses has been introduced, including upskilling for Command staff, Wellbeing Support Personnel and Chaplaincy to support in-person delivery, and revised training packages have been developed, approved and moved into implementation. Defence has also approved a Lived Experience Framework and updated the Keep Your Mates Safe Suicide Prevention (KYMS-SP) course with lived experience content developed through the Lived Experience Advisory Forum, with revised KYMS-SP course materials released. In addition, Australian Defence Force Academy, Air Force, Army and Navy have confirmed that all ab-initio training schools are conducting in-person suicide-prevention training, representing clear progress toward the Recommendation’s in-person delivery requirement.</p> <p>The Board noted that monitoring needs to occur to ensure that over time, the intent of the recommendation continues to be met.</p> <p>Board Outcome: Approved the RMP and noted the update.</p>
Transition and support of ex-serving members		
<p>Recommendation 83: Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence training and education</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>The Board noted Defence has completed the key arrangements to issue civilian accreditation at the point members complete Defence vocational training rather than waiting until transition and to recognise transferable vocational skills gained during service. Defence has also established a business as usual process for working with higher education providers on advanced standing opportunities. Work is continuing to further review the skills and qualifications that individuals need as part of their transition. DVA are also scoping options for sponsored education assistance</p>

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
		<p>post transition and that this may be a function supported by the new wellbeing agency once it is operational. The Board questioned whether it was possible to identify qualifications that might be most valuable for transitioning members to focus Defence investment and deliver on the intent of the recommendation.</p> <p>Board Outcome: Noted the update and requested a further update at the June Program Board.</p>