



# RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board Update

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Date: 14 May 2026

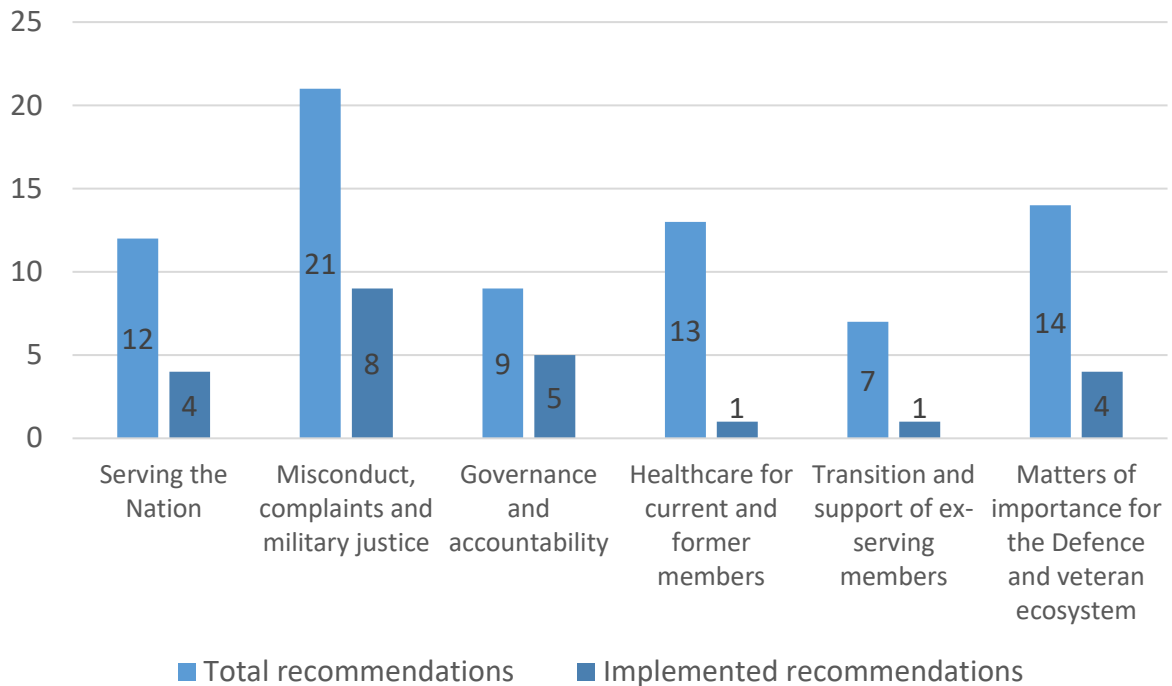
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The RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board (the Board) met on 14 May 2026 to discuss the progress of the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program. The focus for 2026 Program Boards remains implementation progress monitoring and processes to assess implementation status.

## Progress on Defence Recommendations

Defence is responsible for 76 recommendations, either solely or jointly with other agencies. Across the 76 recommendations, 23 recommendations have been implemented, and will be subject to further assurance processes.

**Progress on Defence Recommendations by Theme**



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## 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.

### Other Business

The Board received a verbal update on how Defence data informs enterprise-level decision making.

The Board considered an update to the Program Implementation Strategy following the incorporation of feedback from Board members and broader stakeholders. The Board approved the updated strategy. The Board also reviewed and approved-in-principle the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Collective Measures of Effectiveness; final measures will be presented to the Board by the end of 2026.

The Board considered and approved the closure criteria for 15 implemented recommendations. For each recommendation, the Board will consider and approve closure criteria, tailored to each recommendation, which outlines the core elements of the recommendation to be delivered. When the implementation area has met the closure criteria, this will prompt a broader closure process as part of departmental assurance, which the Board will also consider and approve.

The closure assurance process contributes to the robustness of the program assurance, strengthening transparency and supports confidence in the implementation of recommendations. There is a phased approach to closure, comprising of three milestone statuses: recommendation implemented; additional reforms delivered; and outcomes and benefits embedded.

The closure of the *recommendation* is the first of three closure activities and occurs once activities specified in the recommendation wording and Government Response have been delivered. The *implementation plan* (Reform Management Plan) is closed once additional reforms, beyond those required by the Royal Commission, have been delivered. Finally, the *outcomes and benefits* are closed following the delivery of agreed outputs and when it has been demonstrated that the reforms are embedded in Defence operations and progress is made towards achieving outcomes and benefits.

The closure criteria was considered and approved for the following recommendations:

- [Recommendation 6](#): Improve the procedural fairness of the military employment classification
- [Recommendation 7](#): Increase employment opportunities within the Australian Defence Force for members who cannot be deployed

- [Recommendation 9](#): Improve organisational culture and leadership accountability to increase member wellbeing and safety
- [Recommendation 15](#): Clarify definitions and processes related to sexual offences
- [Recommendation 16](#): Evaluate training on managing sexual misconduct and make it mandatory for all leaders
- [Recommendation 21](#): Implement a presumption of discharge for Australian Defence Force members found to have engaged in certain forms of sexual misconduct
- [Recommendation 22](#): Adopt a policy of mandatory discharge for Australian Defence Force members convicted of sexual and related offences
- [Recommendation 29](#): Establish a new role to improve training and communication on conducting inquiries
- [Recommendation 31](#): Consider how mental health may contribute to poor conduct before recommendation administrative termination
- [Recommendation 32](#): When requested, conduct a merits review when a member's service is terminated for the reason 'retention-not-in-interest'
- [Recommendation 34](#): Prioritise the review into the regulations governing court martial panels
- [Recommendation 53](#): Give members 21 days to make a complaint after being notified of a decision to terminate their service
- [Recommendation 55](#): Conduct an audit into Defence workplace healthy and safety risk management
- [Recommendation 69](#): Improve suicide-prevention training so it is practical, tailored, informed by lived experience and delivered in person
- [Recommendation 84](#): Issue separating members with a reference that states their skills, experience and capabilities

## Implementation Progress

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
<b>Serving the Nation</b>		
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 2</a>: Improve outcomes and access to support for recruits in ab initio training</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted that the condition setting and delivery of pilot activities are largely complete and these are being rolled out further in a tailored manner across ab initio institutions. For example, the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) Healthy Relationships Program Trial is complete and approved for broader rollout. ADFA introduced an open-ended trial of the Squadron Support Officer Program in January 2025 which complements its existing Residential Support Officer Program by providing an additional layer of care for trainee officers.</p> <p>Work continues across Defence to finalise the ADF Model of Support Framework and then adapt it to ab initio establishments.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board noted the update.</p>
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 5</a>: Support all serving members to decompress, rest and reintegrate, especially after high-risk experiences</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted that a Working Group was established to properly understand the baseline of existing processes, policies and practices related to decompression, rest (respite and fatigue management) and reintegration.</p> <p>An independent entity has been contracted to conduct an evidence review of decompression and reintegration comparable to industries such as emergency services. A literature review is also underway on the mental health and wellbeing impacts of deployment on ADF members and their families.</p> <p>The outcomes of this evidence review and baselining activities will inform the next steps of implementation for this recommendation.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board noted the update.</p>
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 8</a>: Maximise workforce retention by addressing factors that contribute to voluntary separation</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted that the Defence Culture Blueprint 2025 was agreed within Defence in December 2025 and is expected for public release by mid-year 2026 following further consideration.</p> <p>The Defence Workforce Plan is underway, due for release by end 2026. The Plan will include an assessment of existing retention initiatives and consideration of future retention initiatives to address burnout, fatigue and psychosocial stress. Work continues to evolve Defence’s Benefits and Conditions of Service.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board noted the update.</p>

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 12</a>: Consider emotional intelligence and performance against wellbeing targets in selecting leaders to promote</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted the links between this recommendation and recommendation 11 and that the implementation teams for each are conducting regular meetings. The Board noted the work that has been completed reviewing the command selection programs of both the United Kingdom and United States militaries.</p> <p>An Upwards Feedback Trial is underway for Officers at the O5 level (Commander, Lieutenant Colonel and Wing Commander) with feedback to inform future rollout.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board noted the update.</p>
<b>Misconduct, Complaints &amp; Military Justice</b>		
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 17</a>: Prioritise the prevention of sexual misconduct in the Australian Defence Force</p>	Off track	<p>The Board noted that the majority of activities for this recommendation, including the drafting of a comprehensive sexual violence prevention strategy, have been completed within the agreed timeframes. The Board noted that implementation by the expected date was not met as the strategy underwent additional consultation external to Defence. Consultation is complete and the draft is undergoing further approvals ahead of endorsement.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board noted the update.</p>
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 21</a>: 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 considered the feedback of Service Chiefs regarding the most appropriate mechanism for them to approve decisions to retain or discharge members following a finding of sexual violence. The Board confirmed an appropriate mechanism for Service Chiefs to approve decisions to retain or discharge members following a finding of sexual violence. When this process is in-effect, the recommendation can be considered implemented.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board noted the update and mechanism for Service Chief decision making.</p>
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 33</a>: Seek to understand whether/how involvement in military justice processes contributes to adverse outcomes</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted the baseline review and project documentation completed in late 2025. Although research is currently underway, scope amendments are required and Board discussion was required to provide direction.</p> <p>The Reform Management Plan for Recommendation 33 was initially approved on 14 August 2025. The Board considered a revised approach to implementing Recommendation 33 in order to meet implementation timeframes. The Board agreed to the completion of a scoping review and analysis of existing literature to establish what is currently known about associations between experience of military justice processes and its influence on suicide and other health and wellbeing outcomes.</p>

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
		<p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board agreed a revised approach to the implementation of Recommendation 33 and will consider a revised Reform Management Plan out of session.</p>
<b>Governance &amp; Accountability</b>		
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 39</a>: Address risk factors for suicide and suicidality and report on progress as part of enterprise-level risk management</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted that the Defence People Committee have approved the in-service risk factors and the Defence Enterprise Risk category description now specifically refers to suicide and suicidality.</p> <p>The Board considered an updated Reform Management Plan for Recommendation 39 which amended the way that information regarding outcomes-based measures, risk controls and measures of effectiveness would be collated. The amendment to the RMP does not change the implementation date or adversely impact other aspects of implementation.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board agreed to the Reform Management Plan change request and approved an updated Reform Management Plan.</p>
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 40</a>: Improve governance mechanisms from the unit level to the enterprise level</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted that a stocktake of current governance and reporting mechanisms was undertaken, including identification of non-compliance reporting, and duplicative, contradictory or administratively burdensome processes relating to people and wellbeing decision-making. This also included a review of the processes, platforms and systems used to report wellbeing incidents and support people-centric decision-making. The Board was advised the investigation and analysis conducted as part of the stocktake will inform the identification of opportunities for business improvement. Work has commenced to develop meaningful proposals that complement improvements already underway as other related RCDVS recommendations near completion.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> The Board noted the update.</p>
<p><a href="#">Recommendation 41</a>: Build project-management capability so that reform initiatives are successful</p>	On track	<p>The Board noted that the initial eight week project management capability uplift initiative was completed in April 2026.</p> <p>As requested during the 2 April 2026 meeting, the Board received a further update on how project management capability uplift training can be delivered as an enduring solution and to further implementation areas in Defence. The Board was briefed as to how capability uplift training could be delivered and noted that existing self-help materials provide a valuable interim resources while the enduring solution is implemented.</p>

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
		<p>The Board agreed an option whereby direct support and engagement from Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group will be leveraged to deliver further capability uplift training.</p> <p><b>Board Outcome:</b> Agreed an approach to deliver the capability uplift training.</p>