



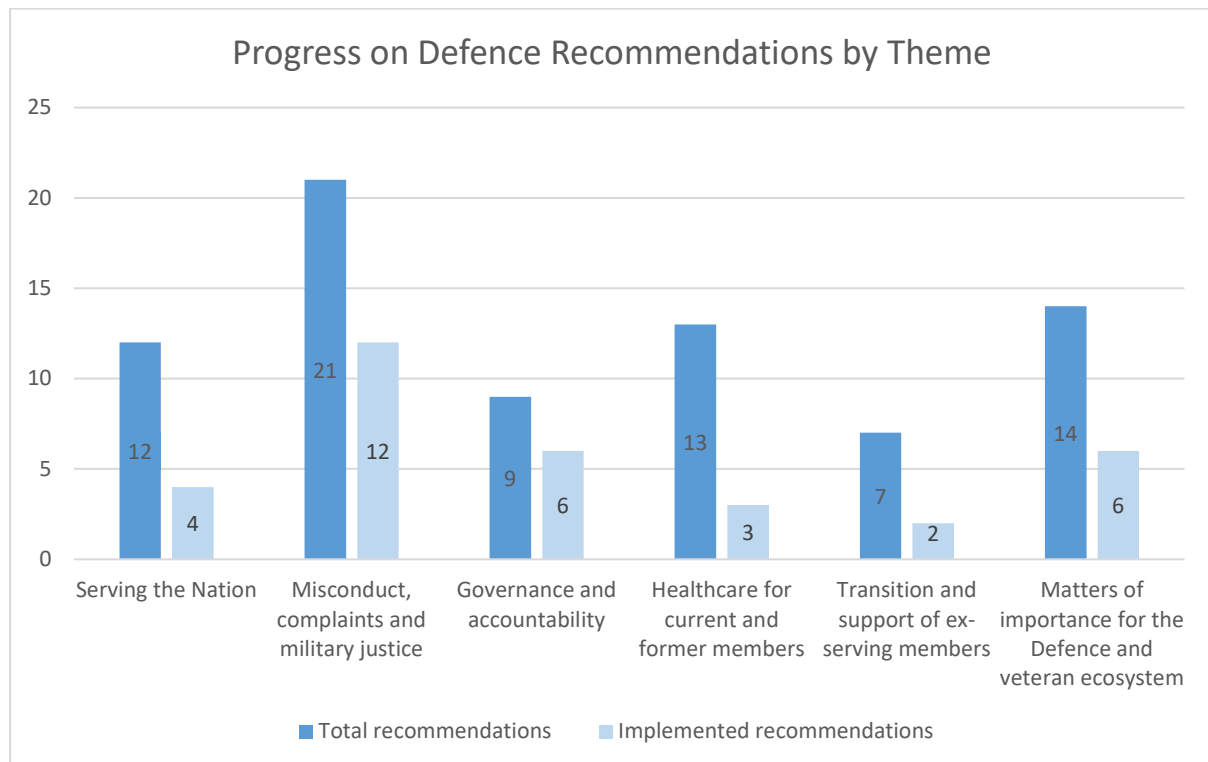
RCDVS Defence Implementation Program Board Update

Date: 12 August 2026

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (RCDVS) Defence Implementation Program Board (the Board) met on 12 August 2026 to discuss progress of the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program. The focus for the 2026 Program Boards remains on monitoring implementation progress, reviewing the status of recommendations, including an assessment of evidence to support Recommendation implementations.

Progress on Defence Recommendations

Defence is responsible for 76 recommendations, either solely or jointly with other agencies. Across the 76 recommendations, 33 recommendations have been implemented, and will be subject to further assurance processes.



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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 considered and approved an updated Forward Work Plan for the remainder of 2026 which schedules recommendations and activities for Board consideration.

The Board noted the Quarterly Risk Report and received an update on implementation level risks across the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program, including the current risk ratings and key areas requiring ongoing oversight. The Board noted a reduction in the number of open risks across the Program. The remaining risks mainly relate to governance arrangements and workforce capacity. The Board acknowledged that these challenges are expected given the scale and complexity of the reform Program. Quarterly risk reviews continue to support the identification and management of emerging risks and issues in accordance with the Risk and Issues Management Plan.

The Board considered and approved milestone achievement criteria for a further 14 recommendations. For each recommendation, the Board considered and approved tailored criteria which outline the core elements required to evidence milestone achievement. These criteria support effective delivery and provide transparent basis for assurance activities within the program delivery approach.

Criteria were considered and approved for the following recommendations:

- [Recommendation 2](#): Improve outcomes and access to support for recruits in ab initio training
- [Recommendation 5](#): Support all serving members to decompress, rest and reintegrate, especially after high-risk experiences
- [Recommendation 8](#): Maximise workforce retention by addressing factors that contribute to voluntary separation
- [Recommendation 12](#): Consider emotional intelligence and performance against wellbeing targets in selecting leaders to promote
- [Recommendation 13](#): Co-design a new doctrine recognising that operational readiness depends on a healthy workforce
- [Recommendation 27](#): Evaluate outcomes to ensure that Defence has addressed the intent behind recommendations
- [Recommendation 28](#): Coordinate governance, assurance and policy functions of the military justice system
- [Recommendation 33](#): Seek to understand whether/how involvement in military justice processes contributes to adverse outcomes

- [Recommendation 35](#): Determine whether support mechanisms for members involved with military justice processes are effective
- [Recommendation 39](#): Address risk factors for suicide and suicidality and report on progress as part of enterprise-level risk management
- [Recommendation 63](#): Reduce stigma and remove structural and cultural barriers to help seeking
- [Recommendation 64](#): Establish an enterprise-wide program to monitor and prevent physical and psychological injury
- [Recommendation 68](#): Strike the right balance between upholding confidentiality and disclosing information when a member is in distress
- [Recommendation 83](#): Increase opportunities for members to gain civilian qualifications from Defence

Milestone Achievement

The Program Delivery Approach, as outlined in the Program Governance Framework (PGF), sets out the phased approach to delivery for the RCDVS Defence Implementation Program. Supporting this approach are three Milestones: Recommendation Achieved, Additional Reform Achieved, and Outcomes and Benefits Achieved. The first two milestones focus on reform implementation, while the third milestone captures the benefits and impacts of the reforms.

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
Serving the Nation		
Recommendation 6 : Improve the procedural fairness of the military employment classification system	Recommendation Achieved	The Board noted the improvements to training and procedural fairness related to the Military Employment Classification (MEC) System achieved to date. These improvements include the requirement that prior to making any determinations, all MEC Delegates are required to complete mandatory Delegate Moderation Training. This training reinforces compliance with legislative requirements relating to delegate authorities within the ADF and provides specific guidance on procedural fairness; including what procedural fairness is, why it is important, and the requirement to apply procedural fairness principles throughout the decision-making process. This training supports consistent, transparent, and equitable MEC determinations. Board Outcome: The Board approved <i>Recommendation Achieved</i> status. Board oversight will continue through regular progress reporting and further Milestone achievement related to additional reform activities.
Misconduct, Complaints & Military Justice		
Recommendation 29 : Establish a new role to improve training and communication on conducting inquiries	Recommendation Achieved	The Board noted the creation of the Inquiry Officer Manager position, the assignment of appropriate duties, and the successful filling of the role. The Board also noted further work including the integration of trauma-informed principles into advanced and introductory administrative inquiry courses, as well as fact-finding training programs. These enhancements will ensure that personnel responsible for conducting inquiries are equipped with contemporary skills, consistent methodologies, and an improved understanding of how to manage sensitive matters in a manner that supports member wellbeing and procedural fairness.

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
		Board Outcome: The Board approved <i>Recommendation Achieved</i> status. Board oversight will continue through regular progress reporting and further Milestone achievement related to additional reform activities.
Recommendation 34 : Prioritise the review into the regulations governing court martial panels	Recommendation Achieved	The Board noted that the review into the regulations governing court martial panels was included in the Military Justice Steering Group Forward Work Plan in both 2024 and 2025 demonstrating that it was a priority activity. The Board also noted the significant body of work undertaken to review court martial sentencing processes. As a result of this review, legislative amendments have been proposed through the Defence Force Discipline Amendment (RCDVS Implementation and Related Measures No. 1) Bill 2026. Board Outcome: The Board approved <i>Recommendation Achieved</i> status. Board oversight will continue through regular progress reporting and further Milestone achievement related to additional reform activities.
Governance and accountability		
Recommendation 55 : Conduct an audit into Defence workplace health and safety risk management	Recommendation Achieved and Additional Reforms Achieved	The Board noted both the conduct of the audit and the mechanisms established to ensure the findings are reflected in the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Strategy and WHS Implementation Plan. Board Outcome: The Board approved <i>Recommendation Achieved</i> and <i>Additional Reforms Achieved</i> status for Recommendation 55. The Board requested six-monthly updates until the WHS Implementation Plan is finalised.
Transition and support for ex-serving members		
Recommendation 84 : Issue separating members with a reference that states their skills, experience and capabilities	Recommendation Achieved	The Board noted that a service testimonial process has been established across the ADF. This provides a standardised approach to recognising and documenting the skills, expertise and capabilities of ADF personnel at the point of separation and supports personnel to effectively communicate their military acquired skills in a civilian context. Board Outcome: The Board approved <i>Recommendation Achieved</i> status. Board oversight will continue through regular progress reporting and further Milestone achievement related to additional reform activities.

Implementation Progress

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
Serving the Nation		
Recommendation 13 : Co-design a new doctrine recognising that operational readiness depends on a healthy workforce	On track	The Board noted that the co-design process has been completed and the <i>People Capability and Service Joint Warfare Note (doctrine)</i> is being written from the co-design process outcomes. The doctrine is on track to be finalised by the end of 2026. The Board discussed the importance of the doctrine shaping policy positively and having a meaningful impact on ADF personnel. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update.
Governance and accountability		
Recommendation 56 : Improve guidance and understanding of Defence's "if in doubt, notify" policy	Implemented, subject to further assurance processes	The Board noted that the recommendation has been implemented, subject to further assurance processes. Defence has taken steps to strengthen guidance and organisational understanding of the "if in doubt, notify" principle through policy refinement. Defence consulted the development of the Service Nexus definition with Comcare and DVA. Defence has worked closely with Comcare through established engagement forums to strengthen its approach to reporting notifiable incidents, including refinement of existing policy, guidance and reporting process. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update.
Recommendation 59 : Defence to participate in Comcare's Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program	Implemented, subject to further assurance processes	The Board noted that the recommendation has been implemented, subject to further assurance processes. Defence participated in Comcare's Psychosocial Proactive Inspection Program through a pilot at 23 Squadron RAAF Base Amberley between April and June 2026. Insights from the pilot will inform ongoing WHS governance, risk management and continuous improvement activities. Comcare commenced the three year inspection program from 1 July 2026. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update.
Recommendation 60 : Improve strategies for harm prevention and early intervention by sharing quality data with Comcare	Implemented, subject to further assurance processes	The Board noted that the recommendation has been implemented, subject to further assurance processes. Defence and Comcare have agreed on the aggregated data requirements and quarterly data sharing arrangements. Defence and Comcare have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise ongoing data sharing arrangements. Defence will provide further data to Comcare through the next Suicide and Self Harm Working Group. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update.

Recommendation	Status	Board consideration
Transition and support for ex-serving members		
Recommendation 79 : Ensure that respect for and recognition of service are embedded throughout Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs	On track	The Board noted that the majority of activities for the recommendation are complete or progressing in line with the approved schedule. Defence has delivered reforms relating to service testimonials, service medallions, certificates of appreciation, and certificates of service for transitioning members. Work is underway to consolidate recognition policies into a single Personnel Standing Instruction. It was noted that close collaboration with DVA has occurred as part of implementing this recommendation. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update.
Recommendation 80 : The Department of Veterans' Affairs to take responsibility for supporting members to transition out of the Australian Defence Force	On track	The Board noted that the Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency (VFWA) was established on 1 July 2026. Defence and DVA signed a new Memorandum of Understanding to enable the VFWA to refer members to the Transition for Meaningful Engagement (T4ME) program and Personalised Career and Employment Program (PCEP). Defence communicated the launch of the VFWA and its services to the workforce on 1 July 2026. It was noted that there is a phased implementation for this recommendation as the VFWA will continue to build capability progressively over time. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update.
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	On track	The Board noted that phase one of delivery has been completed with the development of a mock-up dashboard using synthetic data. Phase two involves building the dashboard within the One Defence Data Platform which remains under consideration due to system security and architecture reasons. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update and requested that a future update be provided regarding other data sources that can be used by Commanding Officers while the One Defence Data Platform is being finalised.
Recommendation 116 : Improve the quality, evaluation, translation and sharing of research findings	On track	The Board noted the establishment of the People Research Hub in January 2026 and that the Human Research and Evaluation Governance Board has met twice. Common evaluation standards have been developed, the Research and Evaluation Governance Index is operational, a Research Translation Community of Practice has been established, and collaboration with DVA has been strengthened through increased information sharing and alignment of future initiatives. Board Outcome: The Board noted the update.