



Commissioner's Advisory Group Meeting Communique – August 2026

The Defence and Veterans' Service Commissioner convened the inaugural meeting of the Commissioner's Advisory Group in Canberra on 7 August 2026. The Advisory Group has been established to support the Commissioner's work to improve suicide prevention and promote wellbeing across the Defence and veteran ecosystem.

The Advisory Group brings together individuals with diverse lived and living experience, military service, professional, academic, and research and data expertise.

Trauma-informed engagement

Members considered a Wellbeing Protocol for the Group and discussed the importance of ensuring participation remains safe, inclusive and supportive. The Advisory Group affirmed the value of establishing clear wellbeing principles and practical supports when discussing potentially distressing subjects relating to suicide, suicidality, trauma and veteran wellbeing. The Group's discussions will inform the DVSC's approach to engaging more broadly with community groups and individuals in the course of the Commission's work.

Commissioner's update

The Commissioner provided an update on the establishment and current priorities of the DVSC, including the upcoming Inquiry into military sexual violence requested by the Minister. Members discussed the Commissioner's role in:

- monitoring implementation of the Australian Government response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommendations
- promoting understanding of suicide risks and wellbeing factors affecting veterans, and
- inquiring into matters where the Commission can influence system-wide reform.

Environmental scan

An environmental scan session provided members with an opportunity to share observations from across the Defence and veteran ecosystem. Members discussed emerging challenges and concerns.



The discussion reinforced the value of the Advisory Group in identifying issues that may not otherwise be visible through other channels, and for providing early advice on areas that may benefit from further attention. Key areas noted included:

- transition support for veterans and families
- continuity of health care between Defence and civilian life
- veteran interactions with civilian criminal justice systems, and
- recognition of families as an integral part of prevention, early intervention, rehabilitation and long-term veteran wellbeing.

Research

The Advisory Group considered the DVSC Research and Analysis Framework. This framework provides a structured approach to capturing, storing and analysing information relevant to DVSC objectives. Members discussed the importance of drawing upon multiple sources of information, including:

- lived and living experience perspectives
- research
- stakeholder engagement
- submissions
- inquiry evidence, and
- research and administrative data sources.

This discussion also focused on emerging trends and areas of interest in Defence and veteran-focused research and data. Areas of interest identified included:

- families as a protective factor for wellbeing
- moral injury
- intergenerational impacts on children and adult children of veterans, and
- mental health stigma affecting help-seeking behaviour.

First progress report

The Advisory Group discussed the DVSC's current Inquiry into the Implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations (the first Progress Report). Members discussed ways to communicate the findings and influence the impact of the first Progress Report.

This conversation also included a deeper examination of the Royal Commission's Recommendation 71. This recommendation was directed at addressing the challenges faced by veterans in accessing health care by increasing the DVA fee schedule. This recommendation was noted by Government. Members shared their insights into the administration of the proposed \$5,000 cap on allied health services and the administrative complexities of Department of Veterans' Affairs forms for both service users and health practitioners.

Members will meet again in December 2026.