

SERVICE CHARTER

**CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE AND THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS'
AFFAIRS**

FOR THE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VETERAN AND FAMILY WELLBEING AGENCY

Preamble

The establishment of the Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency (VFWA) represents a significant reform to improve how serving members, veterans and families of veterans' access wellbeing support. The VFWA responds to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide by addressing fragmentation across veteran support services, improving access to support, and strengthen continuity of care throughout transition and the post-service journey.

The VFWA represents a significant shift towards a coordinated, person-centred and preventative approach to supporting the wellbeing of serving members, veteran and families of veterans. Success will be reflected in improved transition experiences, stronger connections to services and community, increased confidence in navigating available supports, and measurable improvements in wellbeing outcomes for veterans and families.

This Charter formalises the shared commitment of the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (the Secretary), and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Agency to work collaboratively to achieve these outcomes.

Purpose

This Charter establishes the shared strategic intent, guiding principles, governance arrangements and respective responsibilities that will underpin the establishment, operation and ongoing maturation of the VFWA.

The Charter provides the framework through which Defence, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the VFWA will collaborate to:

- Improve wellbeing outcomes for veterans and families.
- Strengthen coordination across the veteran and family wellbeing system.
- Improve access to wellbeing information, navigation and referral pathways.
- Strengthen continuity of support throughout transition from military service, and into post service life.
- Lead continuous improvement through evidence, evaluation and lived experience.

Strategic Intent

The CDF and Secretary jointly commit to enabling the VFWA to serve as a trusted and visible entry point for wellbeing information, navigation and referral across Defence, DVA, government agencies, community providers, Veterans' and Families' Hubs and the broader veteran support ecosystem.

The VFWA will contribute to the achievement of the following strategic outcomes:

- **Improved Transition Experiences.** Serving members and families experience timely, coordinated support and seamless access to wellbeing services before, during and after separation or transfer from the ADF.
- **Greater Access to Wellbeing Support.** Veterans and families can readily access wellbeing information, navigation and referral pathways through a trusted, accessible and person-centred service model.
- **Integrated Service Delivery.** Defence, DVA, Veterans' and Families' Hubs, ex-service organisations, community providers and relevant government agencies work together as a coordinated wellbeing system that reduces fragmentation minimises duplication and improves service continuity.
- **Improved Wellbeing Outcomes.** Individuals and families experiencing emerging, complex or higher-risk wellbeing needs are identified earlier and connected to the right support at the right time.
- **Continuous Learning and Reform.** Evidence, evaluation and lived experience continuously inform service delivery, system improvement and future reform.

Guiding Principles

The VFWA and its partners will operate in accordance with the following principles:

- Person-centred and family-inclusive service delivery.
- Respect, trust and recognition of service.
- Prevention, early intervention and proactive engagement.
- Seamless navigation and coordinated access across services and providers.
- Shared stewardship, accountability and collaboration.
- Evidence-informed decision-making and continuous improvement.
- Inclusion of lived experience in service design, delivery and evaluation.
- Transparency, integrity and responsible stewardship of information.

Shared Commitments

The parties commit to:

- Support an integrated wellbeing system for serving members, veterans and families.
- Promote early engagement and coordinated support throughout transition from military service and into post-service life.
- Enable secure and timely information IAW Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework and Privacy Principles.
- Strengthening collaboration across Defence, DVA, Veterans' and Families' Hubs, ex-service organisations, government agencies and community providers.
- Identify and address systemic barriers affecting wellbeing outcomes and access to services.
- Use evidence, evaluation and lived experience to continuously improve service delivery and inform future reform.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chief of the Defence Force

The CDF will:

- Support the wellbeing of serving members and their families throughout military service.
- Enable early engagement with the VFWA for serving members and families preparing for transition from the ADF.
- Maintain agreed referral, notification and information-sharing arrangements that support continuity of care and wellbeing outcomes.
- Promote prevention, early intervention and proactive wellbeing support across the ADF.
- Ensure the ADF work collaboratively with the VFWA and DVA to identify and support individuals and families who may be at increased risk during transition.
- Ensure the ADF continues to prepare members for separation from military service, recognising Defence's ongoing responsibility for transition readiness.

Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Secretary will:

- Provide strategic leadership for the establishment, operation and ongoing maturity of the Agency.
- Ensure appropriate funding, corporate services and enabling capabilities are available to support Agency.
- Promote alignment between the Agency and the broader veterans' support system.
- Support information sharing, data stewardship, evaluation and evidence-based decision-making.
- Foster collaboration between the Agency and government and community partners.

Chief Executive Officer, Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency

The CEO will:

- Lead the VFWA to achieve its purpose and strategic objectives.
- Deliver the functions of the VFWA consistent with this Charter and Annex A.
- Establish and maintain effective partnerships across Defence, DVA, government agencies and community organisations.
- Ensure the Agency operates efficiently, manages strategic and operational risk, and delivers high-quality services.
- Monitor organisational performance and advise on outcomes, emerging issues and strategic risks to the CDF and Secretary.
- Lead continuous improvement, innovation and reform informed by data, evaluation and lived experience.

Governance and Accountability

The CDF and Secretary will maintain joint governance arrangements that provide strategic oversight of this Charter, monitor implementation, and support the ongoing maturity of the VFWA while respecting the statutory responsibilities of each organisation.

Governance arrangements will:

- Monitor performance against agreed strategic outcomes and performance measures.
- Consider strategic risks, opportunities and emerging priorities.
- Review implementation of the Charter and associated governance arrangements.
- Promote collaboration and shared accountability across Defence, DVA and the VFWA.
- Guide future development of the Agency and associated reform initiatives.
- Support continuous improvement informed by evidence, evaluation and lived experience.

Performance, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Success under this Charter will be assessed against agreed strategic outcomes and performance measures endorsed through the governance arrangements established under this Charter and detailed in Annex A. Performance reporting will support oversight, accountability and continuous improvement.

The VFWA will maintain an evaluation capability that uses data, evidence, performance information and lived experience to assess effectiveness of its services, inform continuous improvement and support future policy and service reform. Detailed performance and evaluation arrangements are set out in Annex A.

Reporting

Evaluation findings and performance information will be reported by the CEO, to the CDF and Secretary through governance arrangements to support transparency, accountability

and evidence-informed decisions making. Detailed reporting requirements and reporting schedules are set out in **Annex A**.

Duration and Review

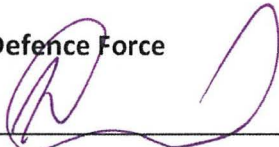
This Charter commences on 19 October 2026 and remains in effect for three years unless amended or replaced by agreement of the signatories.

This Charter will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and continues to reflect the evolving role, functions, capability and operating environment of the Agency to support the shared strategic intent of the parties.

Signatories

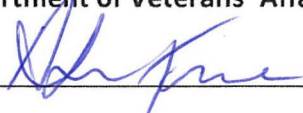
By signing this Charter, the parties affirm their commitment to the vision, principles and shared responsibilities outlined herein and to improving wellbeing outcomes for serving members, veterans and families.

Chief of the Defence Force

Signature:  _____

Date: 22 October 2026

Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs

Signature:  _____

Date: 22 October 2026

Annex

A. Operating arrangements and performance framework

ANNEX A

OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

This Annex supports the Charter by outlining the operating arrangements, performance framework, service expectations and reporting requirements that will guide implementation of the Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency (the VFWA). This Annex may be reviewed and amended by agreement of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and Defence representatives without requiring amendment of the Charter.

This Annex applies to all Agency functions relating to the following.

- Wellbeing navigation services
- Transition support services
- Referral and coordination services.
- Case coordination for complex clients
- Veteran and Family Hub integration
- Service directory and information services
- Outreach activities
- Evaluation and performance reporting.

Service model

The VFWA will operate a coordinated service model comprising of the following.

- **Navigation Services.** Providing information, guidance and support to assist serving members, veterans and families identify and access appropriate services.
- **Transition Support.** Supporting members and families before, during transition from the ADF through proactive engagement and referral pathways, and through post service life.
- **Referral and Connection.** Facilitating warm referrals to Defence, DVA, government, community and ex-service organisation services. The VFWA will not prioritise clinical matters; this remains the responsibility of the relevant Health (medical) authorities.
- **Case Coordination.** Providing additional support for clients, experiencing complex wellbeing needs requiring coordinated engagement across multiple services.
- **Service Integration.** Working with Veterans' and Families' Hubs, ESOs, community providers and government agencies to improve system connectivity and reduce duplication.

Operational principles

The VFWA will deliver services in accordance with the following operational principles.

- No wrong door
- Person-centred service delivery
- Family-inclusive engagement
- Trauma-informed practice
- Early intervention
- Timely response
- Evidence-informed decision-making
- Continuous improvement
- Privacy, security and information stewardship.

Priority cohorts

The VFWA will prioritise engagement with the following cohorts.

- **High-Risk Transitioning Members.** Including members identified through Defence notification processes.
- **Medically Transitioning Members.** Members transitioning following illness or injury.
- **Involuntary Separations.** Members separating through medical, administrative or workforce management processes.
- **Families.** Families experiencing challenges associated with service, transition or post-service adjustment. Where families are experiencing difficulties with service they will be referred to DMFS and the VFWA will work collaboratively to ensure coordinated support.
- **Other Vulnerable Cohorts.** As identified through Agency risk assessment and referral pathways.

Transition support arrangements

To support implementation of Royal Commission recommendations, the VFWA will:

- support proactive engagement of members and families commencing transition
- maintain arrangements for referral and notification from Defence
- collaborate with Defence to identify individuals requiring additional wellbeing support
- support early intervention and wellbeing education activities
- facilitate connection to DVA, community and government support services
- develop culturally informed transition support approaches
- consider pilot initiatives designed to strengthen social and cultural transition outcomes.

Veterans' and Families' Hubs

The VFWA will maintain partnership arrangements with Veterans' and Families' Hubs. Partnership arrangements should support the following.

- Mutual referral pathways
- Navigation support
- Shared understanding of local service availability
- Access to place-based services
- Community engagement and outreach
- Identification of local service gaps and emerging needs.

Data and information sharing

Defence, DVA and the VFWA will:

- share information lawfully and securely
- support continuity of care and wellbeing outcomes
- use consistent data definitions wherever practical
- develop performance reporting arrangements
- support evaluation and research activities
- protect privacy and confidentiality in accordance with relevant legislation and policy.

Performance Framework

Performance reporting will be aligned to 6 outcomes. The reporting will be shared with the Defence/DVA Links Steering Committee (DLSC) and will draw on the agreed Transition System Performance Report metrics to support a whole of transitions support system performance approach. VFWA specific performance requirements are at Appendix 1.

Evaluation Framework

An Evaluation Framework is under development and is expected to feature the following forms of measurement.

- The evaluation approach will utilise and build on inputs from the Defence Transition Preparedness Questionnaire, Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) data and Orima Transition questionnaire.
- Long term impact measurement via commissioned academic research to assess whether wellbeing of veterans and families (including suicide rates) are changing for the better (given attribution issues, this may not be tied to formal performance measurement).
- Annual Client Satisfaction Survey to assess client experience of service, satisfaction and trust in agency.
- Ongoing program of customer experience research (qualitative) across a targeted sample of participants throughout the first year to pick up early signals of service experience and effectiveness, to drive service improvement.

- Customer feedback via a proportionate set of questions at each point of customer interaction (Helpline, Veteran and Family Support Officer (VFSO), Case Coordination).
- Feedback channels built into website to capture usefulness and relevance of wellbeing materials and service directory.
- Complaints and feedback channels across all aspects of service delivery.

The Evaluation Framework will be used to inform the following.

- Service design improvements
- Resource allocation decisions
- System reform activities
- Annual Service Charter reviews.

Reporting requirements

In addition to engaging with the DLSC as a member, there will be the following reporting requirements.

Quarterly Performance Report

The CEO will provide a report addressing the following points.

- Performance against outcome measures
- Service demand and utilisation
- Emerging risks
- Priority cohort outcomes
- Stakeholder engagement activities
- Improvement initiatives underway.

Six-Month Strategic Report

The CEO will provide a strategic assessment covering the following points.

- Progress against Service Charter outcomes
- Evaluation findings
- System integration achievements
- Emerging trends
- Strategic risks
- Recommendations for future development.

Review of Annex

This Annex will be reviewed annually by Defence, DVA and VFWA and may be amended to reflect evolving operating arrangements, performance expectations and VFWA maturity.

Appendix

1. VFWA specific performance requirements

AGENCY SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

Performance Outcomes	Candidate Indicators
Transition outcomes: improved preparedness and engagement during transition.	VFSOs making first contact attempt with the high-risk transitioning veteran within 7 calendar days of the Defence Notification being input into the Single View of Person (SvoP) case by the Information Operations (IO) VFSO. From the date the Defence Notification is entered into the SVoP case, the VFSO has 30 calendar days to make three separate contact attempts to the veteran to offer an appointment and/or DVA support. Veteran and Family response to proactive outreach Veterans and families who engage with the VFWA feel more confident to navigate transition to civilian life Aggregate index across programs indicating that they were better equipped to find relevant services Self-reported preparedness for transition (pre/post engagement change)
Access and timeliness: improved response times, navigation and referral completion.	Percentage of veteran and family wait times access navigation and case coordination services are within agreed timeframes Client-reported timeliness and ease of navigation (from surveys/qualitative research)
Continuity of care: effective handovers and reduced duplication across Defence, the Agency, DVA and community providers.	Client-reported experience of continuity (e.g. "did not have to repeat my story") Veterans' and Families' Hubs data
Client experience and trust: service experience indicators.	Engagement with Service Directory, including negative reporting on services and experience Overall satisfaction score (from Orima Transition Survey)

	Percentage of veterans and family members who engage with the VFWA reporting high levels of trust in the VFWA and services Sentiment trends from qualitative research and feedback channels
Support for at-risk cohorts: proactive outreach, follow-up and coordinated support for high-risk presentations.	Proportion of identified high-risk clients seeking ongoing support post-separation Time from risk identification to pro-active reach out for involuntary separations
Continual system improvement: identification of service gaps and evidence of pathway improvements over time.	Regular and consistent staff retrospectives held Client satisfaction with relevance of services Increasing satisfaction and trust in the VFWA over the first year