



DFWA National E-News

Issue 1 - July 2019

From the President

Dear Members,

The month of June 2019 has been dominated by three major events. The first of these was the meeting of the National Executive held between 2 - 4 June 19 in Canberra. Comments on this will await the release of the draft minutes to branch committees in the next week, and subsequent discussion.



Pre-Ex-Service Organisation Round Table

The pre-Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) meeting was held in Canberra on Thursday 20 June 2019. The 14 ESOs that are members of ESORT meet to discuss the ESORT Agenda and other issues that members may care to raise to either exchange views or garner support for possible mention the following day. It is up to individual ESOs to prosecute their own issues with, if appropriate, the acknowledged support of others.

[The pre-ESORT agenda is available here \(follow link\).](#) You will note that:

- The Covenant remains an issue despite it now before Parliament. This will remain the lead issue for ESORT/ADSO until it is formally legislated.
- Note all issues that are on the pre-ESORT Agenda are not on the ESORT Agenda. Many are raised for the views of other member ESO, generate discussion or float ideas.
- You will note that Noel McLaughlin (President RAAC) attended the pre-ESORT though not a member of ESORT. He was and remains an intellectual contributor to the various submissions made by ADSO and reports accordingly.
- The Royal Commission into Veteran Suicide—a Resolution was made, from which the Media Release was drafted. Both the [Resolution](#) and the [Media Release](#) are available for download
- Note that there are no DVA representatives in attendance at the pre-ESORT meeting. Additionally, there were no cucumber sandwiches provided or consumed.

ESORT

The ESORT meeting was held at DVA Head Office Canberra on Friday 21 June 2019. It is Chaired by Liz Cosson, as Secretary DVA.

The format/agenda included:

- Briefs and Updates on a range on issues including:
 - Update on Strategic Reviews.
 - Year 3 Transformation.
 - On-Base Advisory Services.
 - Workshop Themes;
 - ESO Ecosystem.
 - Health Pathways
 - Veteran and Family Wellbeing
 - NOTE the outcomes from the Workshop are TBA.
 - Ministers Address.
 - Government Priorities TPI Gold Card Pharmaceutical realigned as compensation – TPI Federation.
 - Grant in Aid, Cataract Surgery and Medical treatment of War Widows overseas – WWG.

- Gold and White Card entitlements for veterans living overseas and ComSuper, Offsetting and Taxation Penalties – RARC.
- Information Items:
 - Need of Younger Veteran
 - National Aged and Community Care Forum.
 - OWP.
 - Kokoda Trail.
 - Stateless Children.
- The members of ESORT are: Air Force Association, Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans Association, Australian Special Air Service Association, Defence Force Welfare Association, Defence Reserves Association, Legacy Australia, Naval Association of Australia, Partners of Veterans Association, Returned & Services League, Royal Australian Regiment Corporation, Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Federation, Vietnam Veterans Association Australia, Vietnam Veterans Federation Australia, War Widows Guild Australia.

The Agenda for ESORT is a work in progress. Increasingly it is the ESOs that are seeking to set the Agenda and to drive the many issues on the table at present. Sometimes hard going but I believe we collectively are getting to a point where it is the ESOs that are being heard.

The Chair, Liz Cosson, runs a good meeting, ensures that all who wish to contribute are heard and are accorded due respect.

ESORT Resolution and Media Release

I have had several media interviews regarding the ESORT Resolution and the Media Release. Initially the coverage focussed on the Daily Telegraph's campaign for a Royal Commission into the veteran suicide issue. The ESORT Media Release in not supporting a Royal Commission has drawn some social media odium and some positive comment.

The Minister's Seminar on Wednesday 26 June 2019 resulted from the ESORT focus on the suicide issue, the [Daily Telegraph comments](#) and the overwhelming need to 'do something'. Something is now being done and I will continue to provide regular updates.

The present situation looks positive. The publicity generated over the issue reflected on DFWA positively in strategic terms. Again, more to follow.

Take care,

Kel Ryan

Injured Veterans v Australian Tax Office—Update

We are now in final stages of the campaign against the retrospective changes to the regulations. These changes adversely affected the veterans appealing against the ATO treating the Invalidity Benefits as an Income Stream pension (lifetime) and taxing them at the marginal rate.

Letters have been sent to most non-government MPs requesting support for a disallowance motion and a debate. Branches have all received copies of the letters. While some government MPs have been briefed, none have been provided with the letter. Media will also be advised. There are about seven sitting days left before the time limit on Disallowance motions expires.

Separately, a motion condemning the ATO treatment of veterans on the lump sum issue is being proposed at the Qld LNP annual convention.

We also put out a notice on the website and Facebook aimed at all those previously or currently on DFRDB or MSBS Class A, B or C Invalidity Benefits. Advice was for them to lodge an objection against earlier

taxation of these payments to “protect their position” in case the veterans win a precedent setting appeals. It is possible that in such a case, the government could pass “remedial” legislation that would only allow refunds of overpaid tax to those who had lodged an objection before the decision was handed down.

Further information can be found at www.badretrolaws.org, by emailing the campaign at info@badretrolaws.org or phoning (02) 5104 3106.

Aged Care Royal Commission—The Veteran Experience

Aged care quality and safety is a matter of significant importance to the veteran community. Although predominantly this relates to elderly veterans, many younger injured veterans are also cared for in aged care facilities due to their high care requirements.

National Office is coordinating a submission to the Royal Commission on Aged Care Quality and Safety, with a focus the experiences of veterans. Of particular interest is the transition from receiving care under Gold and White DVA card entitlements, to that provided by Aged Care Providers or funding arrangements with the Department of Health and Aging.

If you or other veterans would like to assist in our submission by sharing your experiences, both good and bad, then please get in touch, either by email at research@dfwa.org.au or by phoning (02) 6152 9166

National @ Work

In June, National Office:

- Met with ADF officials regarding ADF service, transition, addressing medical support in the ADF.
- Met with National President War Widows Guild regarding the future of the Guild and the development of “Honouring Women United by Defence Service”.
- Met with incoming President RSL National.
- Attended inter-ESO collaboration initiative, organised jointly by AFA and KPMG to facilitate ESO collaboration, particularly with younger veteran groups and individuals.
- Attended pre-ESORT meeting.
- Attended ESORT meeting.
- Attended memorial service for Brigadier Brian Wade.
- Met with ADSO working group to discuss incorporation, including the business plan for separation from DFWA.

[See National President's Detailed Diary](#)

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