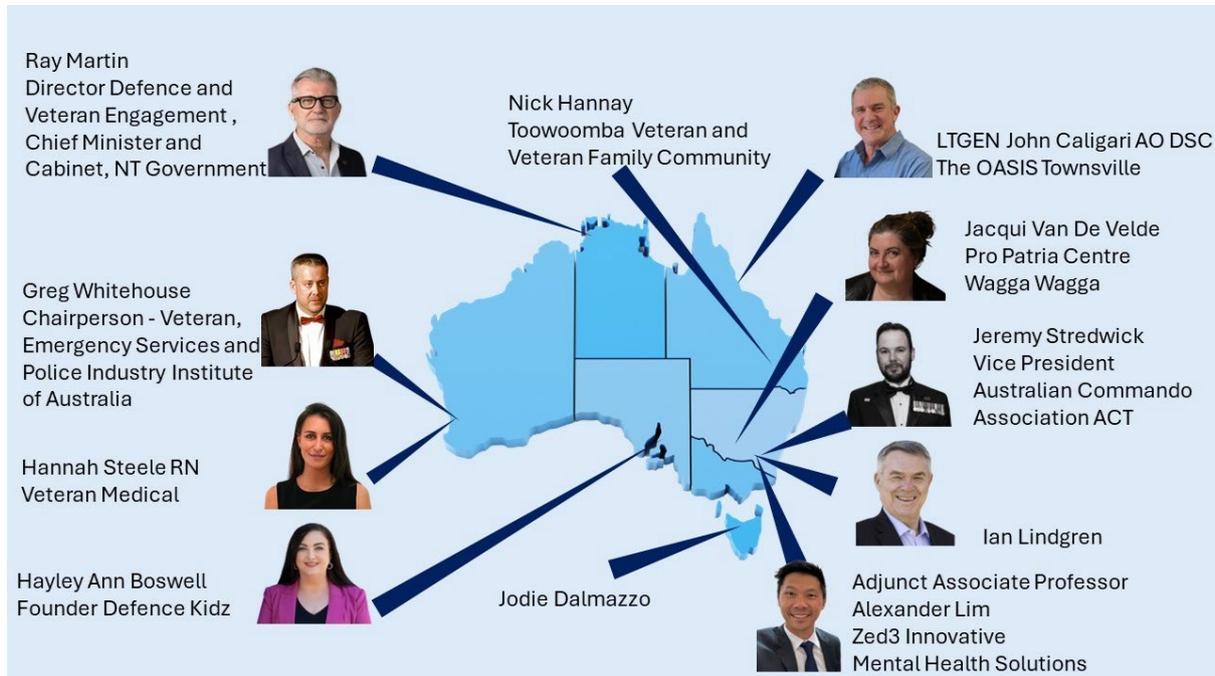


This is the text of this LinkedIn Article: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/outcomes-from-24-may-2024-national-veteran-family-support-lindgren-yrcc/?trackingId=Pf2Zp234Rc6gkL%2BtJh8IdA%3D%3D>



## Outcomes from the 24 May 2024 National Veteran, Veteran Family and Veteran Support Network Issues Meeting



### [Ian Lindgren](#)

Executive Chairman - PayMe Group | Chairperson Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association

It was great to have grass roots veteran organisations attend and participate in the National Veteran, Veteran Family and Veteran Support Network Issues Meeting of 24 May 2024 as depicted in the

image above. Perth based Greg Whitehouse the Chairman of Veterans, Emergency Services, Police and Industry Institute of Australia (VESPIIA) co-chaired the meeting with me.

While we wait to circulate the minutes of the meeting the purpose of the post is to make all attendees, and all interested people, aware of the outcome of the meeting.

The next time DVA sits in on these meetings is August 2024. Therefore, our aim was to:

- By 1 August 2024 to define and understand the most pressing veteran, veteran family community and veteran support network needs in order to present them to DVA in a manner that is sufficiently compelling it leaves no option but to resolve them.

We are taking this approach because DVA is working exceptionally well at the senior levels, but we do not see as much change as we would like in the areas that are most damaging to our community.

### **Who Benefits from this Activity and Corporate Funding Needed**

The most significant issue up front is that this activity is not run for the benefit of any ex-service organisation. It is privately funded by Ian and Maria Lindgren for the benefit of our who community and those who look after our health. Ian Lindgren uses his membership to the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) as a mechanism to take grass roots information direct to the Secretary DVA and also to the other members of ESORT. The ESORT is the key representational body for the veteran community through 15 veteran organisations, DVA, JTA, ADF and others as invited to share and coordinate issues.

# CORPORATE FUNDING NEEDED

- a lot to do
- no funding
- We are going to hit a brick wall unless we secure funding so do your best to convince companies

This initiative, and a recently started activity in The Oasis Townsville, are the only known organisations that such broad-based veteran issues are discussed and corporate funding is needed. All were asked to seek out funding and ask willing companies to contact Ian Lindgren on 0414 245 254.

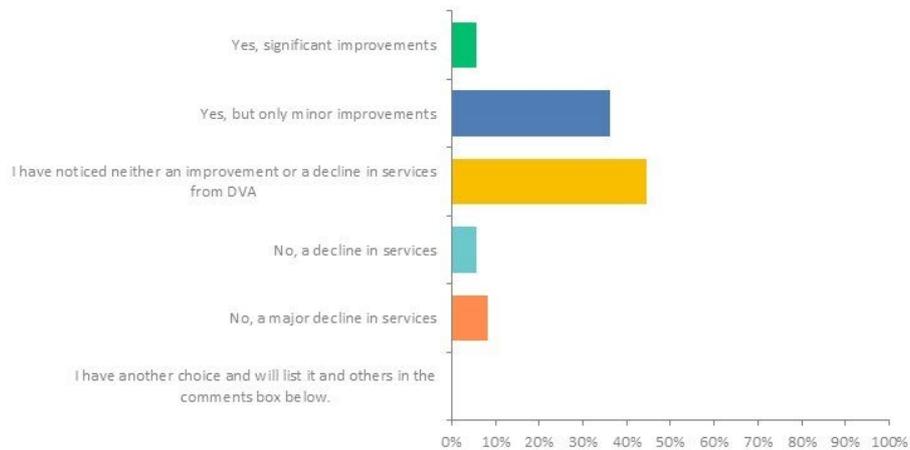
## Survey

The Recent Survey will remain live for at least the next three months and the link is here:

<https://bit.ly/3V5UXRs>

This is not a DVA bashing activity; rather it needs to be balanced, so DVA and our community can work on it together.

### Q3: Have you noticed any improvements in DVA services recently?

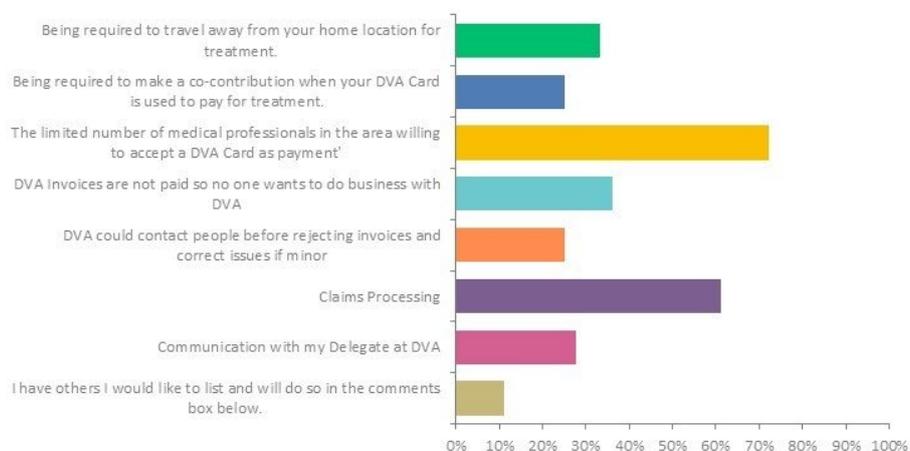


Powered by  SurveyMonkey

Whilst not a large enough sample population, the two key results were as follows:

- 41% of respondents indicated that improvements had been noticed in DVA Services and this was consistent across all states and territories. The improvements focussed on calls immediately after claims were lodged, and other communication processes. At the same time, it was emphasised that these were not major in anyway. They were improvements, nonetheless.
- The concern about claims processing, whilst still significant is now overshadowed by the limited number of medical professionals willing to accept a DVA card, and this includes Gold Cards.

**Q4: Select all that apply: Which areas of Veteran Health Care negatively impact you and your family most frequently?**



Powered by SurveyMonkey

- Then at third place it was the continual grind we find when we visit medical facilities and the provider has not been paid by DVA for many months. This does nothing to encourage business to support veterans. My own experience in following this up is it is always everyone else's fault that DVA, but that is beginning to fall on deaf ears and our Repatriation Commissioner, Kahlil Fegan DSC, AM, is taking the lead to investigate it with Deputy Secretary Teena Blewitt PSM.
- Running a close fourth were concerns about why strict adherence to DVA fee schedules were forcing veterans to travel often interstate to seek medical treatment. No logic to this inflexibility could be found because it seemed that the inconvenience to veterans and their families was justified by sheer bloody mindedness and adherence to a schedule of fees without sensible flexibility.

It was uniform across states and territories that fewer medical professionals accept the veteran cards because they do not cover costs. It was clear that the DVA contract clause:

*"When a provider cares for a veteran and agrees to accept the DVA fees and conditions of treatment under the DVA white or gold card, they agree that no charge was or will be levied against an entitled person for the service."*

Has little meaning because a company's directors first duty is to ASIC and not DVA, in that it must do all it can, not to trade insolvently. Attempting to threaten companies with this clause is causing them to turn veterans away as it has in the Canberre CapsCLINIC here: <https://www.capsclinic.com.au/360uv/dva-patients/>

Of Note in Darwin and Toowoomba almost no medical professionals accept the veteran cards because they do not cover costs and all women's health was conducted outside the Territory despite providers being available above the DVA fee schedule.

LTGEN John Caligari AO DSC (Ret'd) made the comment that from Garrison Cities and regional areas grant funding was confusing, duplicated and had no overall coherent purpose. John also spoke of the need for Veteran and Family Hubs to exist under governance originating in DVA, but delegated to hubs so they can make relationships locally and within the states.

This lack of governance came close to home over the weekend where it was clear that the former throwaway line that *“Despite the important role advocacy plays to assist and support veterans it is not something which is currently governed by any one party or entity”* has no place in the emerging environment where we all need a single source of truth and where DVA outsourced functions are governed by DVA, but carried out of ESOs. Just this week an ESO used as resource to advise a family that funeral costs would be covered, but DVA denied them. Who is right? How can an important issue like that be interpreted two ways?

Those in receipt of aged care services indicated that quite often they are not allowed to receive DVA services and sometimes assets like wheelchairs and beds are removed.

Children are often overlooked in terms of working with children certifications and also because within Open Arms children under 16 must have their parents present when it could be a parent that is the issue.

From the medical community we had examples of continually being hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt and questionable pathways to clinical decisions. There was also a lack of transparency in decision making and concern that if you spoke out you would be removed.

### **On a Positive Note**

On a positive note, I have spoken to the Deputy Secretary Policy and Programs, Andrew Kefford PSM, and if we can get examples to him and they are correct, he will do his best to solve them rapidly and before August. This is typical of the new leadership immediately below Alison Frame. So that falls on us, the veteran and veteran family community to undertake. We need volunteers to do this. I'll be contacting you, or please beat me to it.

### **A Veteran Banner**

Jeremy Stredwick put forward a paper that many veterans do not participate in marches on Anzac Day. One of the reasons is that they do not feel alignment to a singular banner that is at their location of service. The recommendation was for a “Veterans’ Banner” representing the service of all veterans regardless of era, branch, rank and operational service and this was positively received.

### **Conclusion**

It was a lively discussion that made two hours disappear in seconds and the next meeting in on Thursday 20 June 2024.