



## **Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project Needs & Priorities Workshop 1 Report Transition Services Workshop**

The first Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project Needs & Priorities consultation workshop was held at HMAS Albatross on 16 January 2020. The workshop was co-hosted by Defence and RSL NSW. The focus was on the transition space where veterans and their families are moving towards leaving the ADF. Participants included ADF staff members who have a role in assisting veterans with transitioning, as well as representatives from defence organisations and community organisations who work with transitioning veterans. A number of ADF members who were in the process of transitioning also participated. The transition space, where members of the ADF move from military service into the civilian community, is a vital time for continuity of connection and engagement with wellbeing services.

The outcomes from the 16 January 2020 Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project Needs & Priorities consultation workshop held at HMAS Albatross are reported here. We thank all workshop participants for their willing and constructive contributions. One outcome was clear: all participants could see the proposed veterans' wellbeing centre adding considerable benefit to the veteran's journey. Defining the services to be delivered and modes of operations would be vital as would a close connection with Defence during and after each veteran's transition phase.

The Current State Analysis & Service Profile Report will be derived from analysis of the outcomes from the four Needs & Priorities workshops.

All participants in Workshop 1 are requested to complete and return to the Nowra VWC Project the Feedback Form at attachment E.

### **Phase 2 Consultation Workshops - Develop the Nowra VWC Business Case**

A second round of consultation workshops designed to assist in developing Business Case for funding the Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre will be held at the Nowra RSL sub-Branch on 11 and 12 March 2020, with a third workshop at Anzac House, Sydney on 31 March 2020. Invitations to these workshops will be provided separately.

The first and second workshops will engage key local stakeholders (service providers and ESOs) who provide essential services to transitioning and ex-service veterans and their families. Essential veteran services include health, housing, education and skills, social support and connection, income and finance, recognition and respect.

The third workshop will engage key stakeholders in the process of developing the draft Business Case, and will focus on governance, costings and capital works arrangements.

## **Needs & Priorities Consultation Workshop Outcomes**

A series of consultation workshops were undertaken to identify the needs and priorities of veterans and their families, and explore opportunities to address these through the service profile, modes of delivery and design of the Nowra VWC. Workshops follow a consistent format to enable aggregation and analysis of workshop outcomes both as individual workshops and across all workshops to provide a comprehensive picture.

Background information about the Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Business Case Development Project is provided at [Attachment A](#).

The Consultation Workshop Program is at [Attachment B](#).

A list of workshop participants is found at [Attachment C](#).

A summary of the services provided by agencies who participated in this workshop is provided at [Attachment D](#).

A Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project, Needs and Priorities Workshops: Feedback Form is provided at [Attachment E](#).

## **Snapshots: Nature & Extent of Current Veteran Services**

Workshop participants were invited to provide a five minute snapshot about their current service role in transitioning veterans, and their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements and ways of working. These were shared with the group in turn with discussion and questions around the workshop.

A summary of the nature and extent of current veteran services is at [Attachment C](#).

Points made in relation to veteran needs and design of Nowra VWC included information regarding the establishment of the ADF Joint Transition Authority in response to the Productivity Commission Report on Veterans findings and recommendations, information regarding the transition of ADF members and information regarding rehabilitation and health management arrangements.

## **Workshop Outcomes: Needs & Priorities of Veterans and their Families**

The workshop consolidated the presentations and discussion focusing on the question of the most important veteran needs that could be addressed in the design of the Nowra VWC.

**Key themes** that emerged from this session included:

### ***Sense of Place & Belonging***

- Drop in centre for meeting fellow veterans
- A place where you can have a cup of tea and a chat
- Easy access to the physical centre – public transport, central location
- Physical children's area
- Family, veteran focus – inclusive of all
- Family focused – referral, treatment, support, fun, activities, BBQs
- People in the ADF always being posted are disconnected
- A new veteran 'brotherhood' to replace ADF mates

### ***One Stop Shop***

- Somewhere to go to find out how to get help – a central point
- One door in to a quality customer experience – no ‘wrong doors’
- Access – not just technology – not everyone is online
- A physical centre with outreach services being vital
- Open door – welcoming

### ***Referral and Linkages***

- Referral to appropriate service
- Linkage to support services
- Education about services – referral or provider services

### ***Information***

- Education – what support services are available
- Information – what services are available in the region to access if needed
- Address needs at the generational level – young through to aged
- Language age specific so that veterans can relate
- Common language (with the ADF)

### ***Timeliness***

- Quick access and response
- Someone who will act
- Confidential and non-judgmental environment
- Problem solving of complex issues - crisis support and links

### ***Build on Strengths***

- Member strengths identified and built on
- Facilitate wellbeing initiatives
- Holistic care with diagnosis veteran focused
- Focus on wellbeing
- Safe place – build relationship first and reduce stigma

### ***Effective Staff & Systems***

- Practices, Processes and Systems
- Understanding Chaplaincy services
- Expectation management of Member and Staff
- Forum for ESOs to meet and discuss services
- Communication – between service and non-serving Members, between organisations, general consent arrangements
- Closed loop communication between Centre and Veteran
- Professional quality of service
- Staff Training – consistency, skills/MH training

### **Discussion points** from this session included:

- The DVA wellbeing concept is based on the UN Human Security Framework, which has its origins in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

- Often transitioning veterans do not really know what their needs are until they are back in the community – they may think they do but they really don't
- Needs and priorities can change over a veterans life journey – they will be different when they are younger to when they are middle aged with a family then older
- When ADF members leave the services, they just want to get away and don't think about preparing for transition into the community
- Separation from the ADF can be socially hard as members leave their work/team mates and are isolated from them – it is important to form new 'mateship' groups
- Separation from the ADF can bring identity difficulties – who am I?
- The ADF has established a Joint Transition Authority (JTA) to strengthen its focus on ex-service personnel who are leaving the ADF (in response to the Productivity Commission Report on Veterans)
- The links for transitioning Members between the ADF and community support arrangements needs to be strengthened to minimise the risk of individuals falling through the cracks. There is still no formal process to pass transitioning Member details to DVA at their separation date.
- Generational differences and expectations mean that the delivery of support needs to be tailored. For instance, older serving Members often go looking for services themselves whereas younger Members expect it to be done for them. They often look to older veterans for this support.

### **Workshop Outcomes: Opportunities for Nowra VWC to Address Veteran Needs**

The workshop consolidated the opportunities to address needs and priorities of veterans and their families in building a Service Profile for the Nowra VWC.

**Key themes** that emerged from this session included:

#### ***Welcoming and Trusted Place***

- Trusted place to access services
- People friendly, independent and accessible
- Welcoming place
- Over 10 years build a profile of trust
- Members do not want to engage with ESOs due to adverse mental health triggers
- Networking

#### ***'Planning Futures' Approach***

- Create hope!
- Someone who will listen
- Understand veterans' journey through standard network linkages
- Post separation planning and build identity for veterans
- Educate veterans to self-care/manage – ADF tend to hold a person's hand through all processes
- Expectation management of services

#### ***Seamless Transition from ADF***

- ADF Rehabilitation Program (ADFRP) working with DVA and VWC during handover
- ADFRP direct link to VWC – handover for continuity of assistance after transition
- A network linking VWC with ESOs and Defence
- Feedback loop between services, veterans and community while preserving veteran privacy where appropriate

### ***Accessing Services***

- Accessing new services
- 100% information about what services available and how to access them
- What health services can be accessed under Medicare
- Ease of access to a comprehensive service
- Someone who knows services and support that is available
- Co-ordinate services – ESOs, Government (Commonwealth and State), NGOs, etc

### ***Service Delivery***

- Provide a concierge service
- Face to face contact
- Internet and apps
- Mobile service – travel will be essential in our area
- Outreach services vital
- Face to face and media engagement – marketing and promotion
- Hold remote virtual meetings
- Podcasts and Twitter community – use social media
- Media engagement – multi-media strategy
- Provide a referral service
- Referral and follow up, with feedback on outcomes - close the loop
- Anonymous text for help service using ex-ADF volunteers (see [crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org))
- Monthly newsletter – what's coming up, articles on ESOs and services
- Enable VWC referral history to be transferred to other VWCs for travelling/migrating veterans

### ***Sharing Knowledge & Research***

- Data collection and analysis to 'reach out' to missing veterans, and build a better quantitative picture of veteran needs
- Identify issues and trends
- Provide opportunities for presentations, guest speakers on topics of veteran interest in the community
- Presentation gallery or auditorium
- Connect with other veterans Centres

### ***Structure and Governance***

- Governance
- Connection between all Centres
- Identity – mission statement, values, who we are
- A management structure that has oversight (what does this look like?) and is voted in on a yearly basis
- Performance management
- What is post 2023 – dependency
- Sustainable
- Public Relations Plan
- Have quality assurance measures in place

**Discussion points** from this session included:

- Nowra VWC could provide a vital linkage for transitioning ADF members into the community
- The Joint Transition Authority is moving towards preparing ADF members for transition from the start of their appointment in recognition that separation occurs on average earlier than in the past, around 7 years (at the end of their first contracted period of service)
- Close working relationships with the ADF and Nowra VWC could help make a seamless transition into the community
- Perception management will be important, as evidenced by several existing veteran support agencies being avoided by younger veterans due to adverse history/media coverage

### **Workshop Conclusion**

The workshop concluded with a summary overview of the workshop outcomes and follow up documentation of workshop outcomes to follow.

There are four workshops scheduled to discuss needs and priorities in terms of transition, key service provider, ex-service organisations and RSLNSW Central Southern Districts sub-Branches.

The next steps in the process were outlined as the preparation of the draft Current State Analysis and Service Profile Report, which would be provided for feedback and validation.

The project sponsor thanked all participants for attending the workshop and providing valuable input early in the process of establishing the Nowra VWC. We look forward to and value your feedback. The lines of communication between the Nowra VWC Project and key stakeholders and service providers will remain open as the project progresses into implementation.

## Background Information about the Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Business Case Development Project

The Commonwealth Government is moving towards a *wellbeing model* that seeks to enable and empower veterans to achieve greater independence for themselves and their families. All current and former serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members (veterans) and their families should have convenient access to affordable, high quality, comprehensive wellbeing services. Good support through accessing a range of wellbeing services provided in local communities will help veterans and their families live their best lives during and after their service.

Access to a broad range of support services for veterans and their families at a local level is important. It can be fostered through Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs), business, community, non-government organisations, local, state and federal governments working in partnership in locations where there are significant numbers of still serving veterans living in the community, transitioning from military to civilian life, and living and working in the community after completing ADF service.

In honouring its 2019 election commitment, the Commonwealth Government has announced an investment of \$30m to pilot a national network of six Veterans' Wellbeing Centres (VWCs) to be located in Townsville, Perth, Adelaide, Wodonga, Darwin and Nowra. The Nowra VWC has been allocated \$5M in funds for its establishment over a 3 year period from July 2019 to June 2022. The Project will need to demonstrate how the VWC will be sustained over the next 10 years.

### Role of the Nowra VWC

Currently there are many businesses, government, ESOs and community organisations involved in supporting key elements of support in fostering the wellbeing of veterans and their families. The **role** of the Veterans' Wellbeing Centres is to **facilitate, co-ordinate and enable integrated support** to local veterans and their families, while helping DVA to reach out with core services. It provides an opportunity to leverage complementary service channels and **link support services together** to create streamlined access to them.

RSLNSW is the lead ESO in NSW established under legislation (*RSLNSW Act 2018*) with its Constitution focused on the Charitable Purpose of respecting, supporting and remembering veterans and their families. In accordance with its welfare charter, RSLNSW embraces a holistic approach to wellbeing of veterans through its programs and services.

DVA, with advice from NSW Office of Veterans' Affairs (OVA), identified RSLNSW as the lead organisation for the formation of a VWC in Nowra NSW. RSLNSW appointed its Central Southern Districts Council (CSDC) to develop a Business Case for the establishment, development and sustainable operation of the Nowra VWC.

### Development of Business Case for the Nowra VWC

This project aims to prepare a Business Case and related documentation to obtain Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) funding which seeks to achieve the vision and objectives of the Veterans' Wellbeing Centre (VWC) Program through the establishment, development and sustainable operation over 10 years of the Nowra VWC within an establishment budget of \$5M budget to be expended by 30 June 2022, and will form part of a national network of Veterans' Wellbeing Centres.

It is important that key service providers delivering the wellbeing elements of *health, education and skills, housing, social support and connection, employment, income and*

*finance, recognition and respect* and the ex-service veteran community are informed, involved and updated on progress with the Project.

Through this project, key service providers and key stakeholders (including clients) are encouraged to engage and participate throughout the process to inform the design and development of a Business Case for funding the establishment of the Nowra VWC. Contact us to register interest at [NowraVWCProject@rslnsw.org.au](mailto:NowraVWCProject@rslnsw.org.au).

## **Consultation Process**

The Business Case for funding the establishment of the Nowra VWC is being developed in consultation with key service providers and key stakeholders. It aims to build broad community support. A Steering Committee, Working Group and Reference Group comprising key service providers and key stakeholders have been formed to facilitate the project.

The first phase of consultation requires a current state analysis of service delivery, identification of gaps and synergies, and an assessment of needs and priorities of local veterans and their families. This analysis informs future service model options to recommend a service profile, modes of service delivery and design concept for the Nowra VWC is based on best available information. From this, a Business Case for funding the establishment of the Nowra VWC will be developed involving a second phase of consultation.



**Attachment B**  
**Consultation Workshop Program**

**Needs & Priorities Workshop Program**

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Presenter/Facilitator</b>
1245-1300 15 minutes prior	<b>Workshop Registration</b>	Introductions Check attendance and details on contact sheet	CSDC Secretary
1300-1310 10 minutes	<b>Welcome Introduction and Overview</b> of Workshop Agenda	Presentation Questions of Clarification	Working Group Facilitator Lynn Webber
1310-1330 20 minutes	<b>Background and Purpose</b> of the proposed Nowra VWC	Presentation on Background Info Paper Questions of Clarification	Project Sponsor Lee Corder
1330-1430 60 minutes	<b>Nature and Extent of Current Veteran Services</b> , strengths and weaknesses	Five Minute Snapshot from each organisation represented Snapshot Form (Att)	Facilitator Nominated representatives
1430-1440 10 minutes	<b>Break</b>		<i>Facilitator</i>
1440-1520 40 minutes	<b>Most Important Veteran Needs</b> that could be addressed in the design of the Nowra VWC. What are the priorities?	What do you see as the most important Veteran needs? Build a framework of key needs. Overall priorities are identified.	Facilitator Workshop Participants
1520-1550 30 minutes	<b>Key Opportunities</b> to address these identified Veteran needs and priorities in building a service profile for the Nowra VWC?	List key opportunities and share these with the group. Discussion about what may impede these opportunities.	Facilitator Workshop Participants

<p>1550-1600 10 minutes</p>	<p><b>Workshop Conclusion</b></p> <p><b>Next Steps in Consultation Process</b></p> <p><b>Thank you for attending</b></p>	<p>Summary overview of workshop outcomes</p> <p>Documentation of Workshop Outcomes</p> <p>Opportunities for further contribution</p> <p>Next step draft Current State Analysis &amp; Service Profile Report provided for stakeholder feedback and validation.</p>	<p>Project Sponsor Lee Corder</p>
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**Attachment C**  
**Consultation Workshop Participant List**

**Needs & Priorities Workshop @ HMAS Albatross on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020**  
**Representative List – Transition Services**

HMAS Albatross (Nowra) – Personnel Services Unit (PSU)  
Shoalhaven

- CMDR
- Staff

HMAS Albatross (Nowra) – Command Warrant Officer  
(CWO)  
Case Member - PSU Shoalhaven

HMAS Albatross Health Centre

- LT CMDR
- Staff

Defence Community Organisation (DCO) Shoalhaven

- DCO Designate
- CPO Designate Div Offr
- ADF Transitions

ADF – Deputy Director Joint Transition Agency, Defence  
Canberra

NSW Health - Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

NSW Office of Veterans Affairs

Open Arms Community Engagement Coordinator  
Open Arms – Sydney

University of Wollongong

## Summary of Nature and Extent of Services Transition Services

### Personnel Services Unit (PSU) Shoalhaven

The Unit manages serving personnel who need to help accessing information and services internal to the ADF. It can also refer members to specific units as required. The PSU Shoalhaven is a lodger unit within HMAS Albatross.

### HMAS Albatross – Command Warrant Officer (CWO)

The HMAS Albatross CWO is a member of the Command Team. One responsibility is the ongoing welfare of personnel serving on the base.

### HMAS Albatross Health Centre

The Health Centre is the primary health facility on the base to service the needs of serving personnel. It provides multiple levels of care in the medical and dental fields, as well as a range of ancillary and referral services.

### Defence Community Organisation (DCO) Shoalhaven

The DCO provides community support services for serving members and their families. Specifically, they conduct Transition Workshops for members leaving the ADF, manage several programs including the:

- Personalised Career and Employment Program
- Transition For Employment Program
- Partner Employment Assistance Program.

### ADF – Deputy Director Joint Transition Agency (JTA), Defence Canberra

The JTA is an agency that is in the advanced stages of being stood up within the ADF. It is in response to the recognised need to better support serving members transitioning to civilian life. Final approval to commence operations is expected in the first half of 2020.

### NSW Health - Illawarra Shoalhaven LAHD

This Local Area Health District management unit manages and coordinates the delivery of health services in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas.

### NSW Office Veterans Affairs

This NSW Government Department manages and coordinates veteran issues at the state level and is separate from the federal level Department of Veteran Affairs.

### Open Arms

This civilian organisation, connected to but not part of DVA, primarily provides mental health counselling services to both serving and transitioned ADF members. It was formally known as the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service, then the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service. It has now broadened both its services and variety of client base.

### University of Wollongong

The University is supporting a research project examining veteran support services and their efficacy.

**Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project  
Needs and Priorities Workshops: Feedback Form**  
(Document Open for Unrestricted Completion)

**Organisation Name:**

**Contact Name:**

**Contact Email:**

**Contact Phone:**

**Website:**

Thank you for attending the Nowra VWC Consultation Workshop to establish current services, needs and priorities of veterans and their families, and opportunities to address these through the Nowra VWC project. We appreciate your time and commitment to the project and would welcome your feedback on the workshop.

**What were some of the key benefits of the workshop in your view?**

**What were some of the concerns from the workshop in your view?**

**How useful were the workshops to your understanding of the Nowra VWC project?**

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 not very helpful to 5 extremely helpful) please circle:

1      2      3      4      5

*Comment:*

**Have the workshop reports helped inform the Nowra VWC project?**

On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 not very helpful to 5 extremely helpful) please circle:

1      2      3      4      5

*Comment:*

**Other Comments and Suggestions are welcome:**

Please send in your Feedback Form and Snapshots to [NowraVWCProject@rslnsw.org.au](mailto:NowraVWCProject@rslnsw.org.au)  
Workshop Reports are available on line at <https://www.nowrarslsb.org.au/nowra-veterans-wellbeing-centre/> .

***We look forward to your continued involvement in the Nowra VWC Project***