



## Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project – Design Phase

### Current State Analysis & Service Profile Report - Executive Summary

The Current State Analysis & Service Profile Report provides an evidence and validation base to inform the development of the Business Case for funding the establishment of the Nowra Veterans' Wellbeing Centre (VWC). The Report is presented in two parts: Part I – Current State Analysis, and Part II – Service Profile. The Report addresses Stage 2: Establish Service Needs, and Stage 3: Future Design State of the Nowra VWC Project Design Phase.

The Report presents outcomes from execution of the Nowra VWC Project Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Version 4.0), in particular the overarching objective of stakeholder engagement to raise awareness, understanding and support for the establishment of the Nowra VWC which meets the needs of local veterans and their families. The Report reflects the analysed outcomes of four stakeholder engagement workshops.

#### Veterans Centre Case Studies

Seven veterans' centre case studies were considered that provided the following key messages:

- Determining the core services to be delivered is important.
- Deriving the most appropriate operating model for the context is important, noting that each context is significantly different.
- In rural settings hub and spoke with a significant emphasis upon outreach will be an important consideration.
- Branding, governance and building perceptions of independence, and therefore dedication to working in favour of veteran clients' interests are essential to effectiveness.
- Capable, well-trained, motivated and veteran empathetic salaried staff, supported by volunteers is required.
- A knowledgeable concierge and facilitation service that is well connected to and can direct veterans to a broad range services is necessary. The VWC will never be able to 'do it all' and while a 'one stop shop' concept is desirable targeted connections and working networks are a realistic approach.
- The physical location of the VWC is less important than the staff, systems, services and reputation.
- Obtaining reliable, sustainable funding for OPEX presents significant challenges and risks and must be a core consideration.
- Networking and collaboration between veterans centres nationally and within each state offers benefits.

- Where State Governments underwrite or provide OPEX centres are more likely to be able to concentrate on service delivery with less time and energy devoted to charitable fund raising.
- For the concept of a National network of VWCs to really work DVA will need to commit long-term funding and other support. Pretending that VWCs are going to effectively operate without DVA being integrally involved is unrealistic, and unhelpful to veterans. If DVA does not overtly support these centres and they fail, or some of them fail, it will represent a systemic failure for DVA and the Commonwealth Government and an abrogation of their responsibility to care for veterans.

### **Veterans Needs and Priorities Summary**

The overarching themes from the veterans' needs and priorities workshops are summarized as:

- Sense of Community and Belonging: A Welcoming Place
- Strengthen Wellbeing: Focus on the Individual
- One Stop Shop: A Concierge Service
- Outreach: Servicing a Large Rural Region
- Information and Advice: High Quality Staff and Systems
- Staff and Professional Networks: Navigating the System
- Referral and Linkages: Connected and Networked
- Health Services Assistance: Facilitated Access
- Housing Assistance: Finding the Right Place
- Training and Employment Assistance: Finding the Right Job
- Financial Assistance: How to Balance the Budget
- Family Services and Support: Family Focused
- Advocacy and Legal Support: Seeking Justice and Entitlements
- Crisis Support Coordination: Help when Needed

The central findings are that an effective veterans' centre:

1. Must be absolutely focused upon and tailored to meeting the holistic wellbeing needs and priorities of veterans and their families, noting that these will vary with the individual and will evolve over time.
2. Staff members need to be knowledgeable, professional, highly trained, motivated, empathetic and well-tuned to the needs of the veterans' community; they must be able to build trust with individual veterans and family members.
3. High quality, networked systems will be essential to delivering the high quality facilitated access services required.
4. Offering an accessible and welcoming environment is also a significant priority as is the capacity and wherewithal to deliver outreach services across a vast and diverse geography.

### **Service Profile and Service Delivery Model Summary**

The overarching themes to inform service profile and service delivery model preferences are summarized as:

- Create a welcoming and trusted place to access services: Friendly, accessible, relevant
- Use a 'Planning Futures' approach: Build Veterans Resilience
- Make a seamless transition from ADF: Part of the Veterans Life Journey
- Accessing Services: Available and Easy
- Service Delivery: Employ all Options – Broad Range of Clients Abilities, Needs and Expectations

- Staffing: Professional, Approachable, Dedicated, High Quality, Knowledgeable
- Information Technology Support Systems: Integrated and Effective
- Knowledge and Research: Build Data and Connect
- Structure and Governance: Independence, Leadership, Networked
- Marketing and Branding: Words and Perceptions are Vital
- Facilities: Functional, Accessible, Flexible

The central findings are that an effective veterans' centre:

1. Must be welcoming and accessible and very clearly independent (there to serve veterans needs rather than DVA, Defence, RSL etc).
2. Systems and connections must be targeted to assisting veterans' transition and to developing self-help and resilience.
3. Getting the right staffing model and engaging the right staff will be essential.
4. High quality, networked systems will be essential to delivering the high quality facilitated access services required.
5. Marketing, branding and perception management are matters that require serious attention. The centre needs to be trusted and relevant.
6. Finding the right location will be important: accessible, workable and flexible facilities. In the Nowra VWC context a rural or semi-rural environment would be consistent with wellbeing objectives.

### **Service Delivery Model**

The Nowra VWC hub veteran support services are to be delivered in coordination and linkage with a full range of local wellbeing service providers facilitated through both physical and virtual co-location of services as required. The intention of the hub is to provide a place for a holistic approach to support and assistance with appropriate and relevant multi-disciplinary care that strengthens individual well-being and community connectedness.

The Nowra VWC will provide referral services to a range of health professionals and encourage the use of its facilities by allied health services and other well-being service providers. The facility is envisaged to operate as a hub for veteran support programs and activities but not provide onsite medical/clinical consulting rooms or facilities that require additional legal and regulatory compliance. Health services that can be provided from a Class 5 Building could be accommodated. Linkages and referrals to specialist medical professionals and facilities are to be the mode of providing access to other health services.

Service delivery is to include outreach services to strengthen the operating infrastructure for supporting veterans and their families in a rural-regional context comprising several small cities, and large numbers of towns, villages and hamlets in the surrounding landscape. This service is envisaged to operate on a planned scheduled basis, including opportunities for appointments with advocates involving travel out to 'host facilities' with the requisite functionality (location, accessibility, technology) to provide more local support services to veterans and their families. Potentially, every Central Southern District RSL sub-Branch and possibly some other ESOs can act as agencies and provide access to local facilities to accommodate outreach visits.

The proposed Nowra VWC 'hub' facility is envisaged to act as a focal point for a range of veteran community programs and activities delivered by a range of service providers.

### **Nowra VWC Decision Matrix Table**

The Decision Matrix Table presents an evidence-based and condensed summary of the priorities, features, and essential and desirable criteria for the Nowra VWC. The requirements listed in the Table reflect the results of the stakeholder consultations and analysis presented in this Report.

Priority	Nowra VWC Features: Essential/Desirable Criteria	Met? Y/N/Partial
1	<p><b>Staff – Getting the Right People</b></p> <p>Essential Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full time centre manager</li> <li>• Core of permanent full time staff</li> <li>• Selected for veteran focus and empathy – welcoming and considerate</li> <li>• Able to deliver social worker model and case management model</li> <li>• Appropriately trained and experienced</li> <li>• Resourced and supported to deliver outreach services</li> <li>• Able to work with a broad range of clients: veterans of all ages, disabilities, families</li> <li>• Able to build trust and confidence with clients</li> <li>• Able to build and sustain networks with service providers, ESOs and other stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>Desirable Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff with ADF backgrounds and experience</li> <li>• Volunteer staff to be accommodated and included</li> <li>• Some part-time staff</li> <li>• Staff funded and supported by linked organisations to be accommodated (for example: DVA, Open Arms, RSL Defence Care, Legacy, RSL LifeCare, allied health and other health service providers)</li> <li>• Visitor service providers welcome, for example, finance and career/ employment advisors, health and welfare advisors</li> <li>• High quality support services for staff</li> </ul>	
2	<p><b>High Quality, Tailored Support Systems</b></p> <p>Essential Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onsite IT systems able to support case management model</li> <li>• Linked and connected with a broad range of other systems in the veterans’ wellbeing space (i.e. DVA, Open Arms, RSL, Commonwealth and State service providers)</li> <li>• Able to support the ‘One Stop Shop’ notion with facilitated access and referrals to service providers</li> <li>• Able to support onsite and outreach service delivery</li> <li>• Accessible to clients seeking self-help</li> <li>• Support client confidentiality requirements</li> <li>• Kept up to date and maintained</li> <li>• High speed IT connectivity</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web and social media connectivity</li> </ul> <p>Desirable Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and accessibility for clients without good IT skills</li> <li>• IT kiosk for client use, with links to services</li> <li>• Able to build knowledge and capture data</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>Operating Model</b></p> <p>Essential Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A social worker, case management model</li> <li>• Facilitated access to the full range of veterans wellbeing services</li> <li>• Welcoming and client focused environment</li> <li>• Able to maintain connections with clients</li> <li>• A ‘hub and spoke’ model supporting onsite and outreach service delivery</li> <li>• Mobile, virtual and onsite service delivery</li> <li>• Networked with other service providers and agencies</li> <li>• Focus on core service delivery and doing it well</li> <li>• Networked with other veterans centres (State and Nationally)</li> <li>• Connected with Defence and DVA to provide integrated and seamless services to ADF members during and after transition</li> </ul> <p>Desirable Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for and connection to outreach agencies</li> <li>• Keep it simple</li> <li>• Needs to be flexible and agile</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b>Funding for Operations</b></p> <p>Essential Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assured, sustainable long-term funding identified</li> <li>• Able to provide staff with certainty of employment and clients with certainty of service provision</li> <li>• Funding to support outreach and remote service delivery – including travel and other operating expenses</li> <li>• Lodger and visitor service providers (from other agencies) fully funded and supported by their parent entities</li> </ul> <p>Desirable Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to ad hoc grants and funding for specific ancillary activities</li> <li>• Able to conduct fundraising activities</li> <li>• Simple and reliable financial management system</li> </ul>	

5	<p><b>Site and Facility Considerations</b></p> <p>Essential Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In or near Nowra – could in rural or semi-rural setting within reasonable proximity of the CBD (20 minutes' drive)</li> <li>• A Class 5 building</li> <li>• Location to have approved permissible use by local council and be appropriately zoned</li> <li>• Between 200 and 250m<sup>2</sup> of space to allow for some expansion</li> <li>• 'Family friendly' and welcoming to younger veterans and their families, as well as older veterans</li> <li>• General administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Office for a manager</li> <li>○ Reception/concierge area – welcoming and where people can sit and relax. Child friendly.</li> <li>○ A meeting room that can be used for staff meetings, debriefing, training for small groups, presentations by visiting service providers, also for management committee/board meetings etc</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Privacy and confidentiality an important consideration</li> <li>• 3 or 4 reasonable-sized interview rooms. Can double as offices for full or part-time salaried case managers and be available for use by volunteer case managers or advocates and other service providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need to accommodate a working desk (for staff) plus a sitting space for meetings with clients</li> <li>○ Do not envisage rooms need to be able to meet medical, clinical standards; they would be general meeting rooms</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A communal space - a good-sized common area that is accessible and welcoming, where veterans (young and old) and their families (perhaps with children), would feel comfortable</li> <li>• Accessible (parking and public transport will be considerations)</li> <li>• Emergency and exit lighting, passive fire protection ie Extinguishers, fire blankets, compliant paths of travel and door hardware</li> <li>• A wet area (tea and coffee etc)</li> <li>• Disabled access</li> <li>• Access to a small staff kitchen and bathrooms</li> <li>• Good climate control</li> <li>• Separate or shielded from gambling or alcohol service facilities</li> </ul> <p>Desirable Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take advantage of rural environment: a rural or semi-rural</li> </ul>	
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	<p>setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre able to offer visiting service provider access to facilities</li> <li>• Access to emergency accommodation</li> <li>• Given the ‘experimental’ nature of early operations scope for change/expansion will be important.</li> <li>• ‘Drop in’ facility or area</li> <li>• Access to recreational facilities either onsite or nearby – for Yoga classes and other group wellbeing activities</li> <li>• Access to sporting facilities</li> <li>• Access to a coffee shop</li> <li>• Separate access to the VWC from other offices in a shared building</li> </ul>	
6	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>Essential Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent (from DVA, Defence, RSL)</li> <li>• Incorporated (either incorporated association or company limited by guarantee)</li> <li>• Not for profit</li> <li>• Deductible gift recipient</li> <li>• Strong commitment to veterans’ service delivery</li> <li>• Totally compliant with ACNC and other charitable entity probity requirements</li> <li>• Volunteer board, or advisory board, or committee of management</li> <li>• Keep administration simple</li> </ul> <p>Desirable Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat and simple operating structure</li> <li>• Board and management to be reflective of key stakeholders, including veteran clients</li> <li>• Able to be agile</li> <li>• Well connected to and representative of the wider community</li> <li>• Able to support fundraising</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Reputation and Marketing</b></p> <p>Essential Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branding to attract veterans – independent and veteran centric – need to be very mindful about perception and ‘messages’</li> <li>• Highly visible and easily accessible to the veterans community</li> <li>• Build awareness and enable connection to the wider veterans community</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build trust through high quality service delivery</li> </ul> <p>Desirable Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise all forms of communication cognizant of the broad range of clients and their abilities: printed communication, on-line services, social media, public media</li> </ul>	
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