



Australian Government

Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

SYDNEY 29-30 NOVEMBER 2018

ATTENDEES	
Members	Representing
Professor Jane Burns	Chair
Dr Andrew Khoo	Psychiatrists
Major Ben Flink	Reservists
Mrs Anne Pahl	Peacekeepers
Ms Heike Dunn CSM	Contemporary Veterans
Mrs Melanie Pike	Partners and Families
Ms Leanne Galayini	Sons and Daughters
Mr Ken Foster	Vietnam veterans
Ex-Officio	
MAJGEN Mark Kelly AO DSC	Repatriation Commissioner (<i>Friday 30th only</i>)
Dr Stephanie Hodson CSC	National Manager, Open Arms
Ms Madeline Makeham	<i>Representative</i> – Defence Community Organisation, NSW/ACT Area Manager (<i>Thursday 29th only</i>)
Associate Professor Andrea Phelps	<i>Representative</i> – Deputy Director, Phoenix Australia
RSM-A, WO Grant McFarlane, OAM	Warrant Officer, Army
Secretariat	
Simon Geraghty	Executive Officer, Open Arms
Amanda Roche	NAC Secretariat, Open Arms
Apologies	
Dr Mike Seah	General Practitioners
WOFF-AF Robert Swanwick	Warrant Officer, RAAF
WO-N Gary Wight	Warrant Officer, Navy
Professor David Forbes	Director, Phoenix Australia
Mr Paul Way	Director General, Defence Communities Organisation
Ms Talissa Papamau	Contemporary veterans

Items 1 & 2: Welcome, Apologies, Acknowledgements and General Business

The Chair opened the meeting acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, the Gadigal of the Eora Nation.

The Chair acknowledged the service of all current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members, and their families. The Chair acknowledged Australia's Vietnam veterans, noting that Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling is their legacy.

Apologies were accepted from Dr Mike Seah, Professor David Forbes, Mr Paul Way, Ms Talissa Papamau, WOFF-AF Robert Swanwick and WO-N Gary Wight. Apologies were also accepted from MAJGEN Mark Kelly AO DSC for Thursday and Ms Madeline Makeham for Friday.

The Chair welcomed RSM-A, WO Grant McFarlane, OAM, Mr Ken Foster, Mr Simon Geraghty and Ms Amanda Roche to their first Committee meeting in their official capacity.

The Chair noted that Ms Heike Dunn CSM completes her two term membership with the NAC today and this will be her final Committee meeting. The Chair, and the Open Arms National Manager formally acknowledged the significant contribution of Ms Dunn to the NAC as a representative of the contemporary veteran cohort.

The Chair sought advice on perceived or actual conflicts of interest, with the following identified:

- Profess Burn noted her on going involvement in Innowell and Solider.ly.
- Dr Andrew Khoo three conflicts of interest; his position at Toowong Private Hospital where he treats veterans daily, his role in current research with Phoenix Australia and Centenary of ANZAC Centre, and his position as the Psychiatric Advisor for the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation.
- Associate Professor Andrea Phelps noted the ongoing involvement of Phoenix Australia in a range of Open Arms activities under contract arrangements including projects such as RESTORE, Group Program Re-Design, SOAR and the Moral Injury Outcome Scale. Dr Phelps also noted her position on the National Suicide Prevention Trial evaluation, led by Professor Jane Pirlais.

The Chair then welcomed the NAC to the final meeting of 2018, and outlined the meeting agenda.

Statement of Objectives

The Chair highlighted three core areas of focus for this meeting:

- 1) Review the Terms of Reference for the Regional Consultative Forums (RCF) and provide recommendations on how these can be purposeful, beneficial and problem-solving forums;
- 2) Provide the NAC an update on recent Open Arms activities including the Invictus Games, the National Intake Service, and the rebrand; and
- 3) Discuss regional challenges facing the NSW/ACT region and opportunities for the peer support network in the region.

Matters from Previous Meeting

Action Item 2018-01: VVCS to request information relating to the GP Health Assessment, including the referral options to VVCS if mental health issues are indicated, and current uptake.

Discussion:

- GP Health Assessment form included in Committee papers.
- Form most beneficial at 6-12 months after discharge. This is when physical and mental health issues that were not addressed on separation begin to arise.
- Partnership is needed with Defence, Open Arms and the GP community to promote the use of the form. Education of the patient-driven nature of the form also needs promoting.
- Consideration could be given to the inclusion of a question on client's rank in any future version.
- The discussion highlighted a range of issues around transition and a desire from the NAC to better understand current initiatives to improve the transition process, with a focus on how Open Arms can contribute.

Status: CLOSED

Action Item 2018-10 Invite Paul Way to provide update on Transition Taskforce at next NAC meeting.

Action Item 2018-03: VVCS to review the structure of RCFs and report back to the NAC at the next meeting.

Discussion/Recommendations: Discussed at Item 11.

Status: CLOSED

Action Item 2018-04: Move the date of the next NAC meeting to November to allow for a briefing on the outcomes from Invictus Games and associated Forum involvement.

Discussion: Nil

Status: CLOSED

Action Item 2018-05: Invite SANE to provide a briefing at the next NAC meeting.

Discussion: SANE were invited to this meeting however a representative was not available. This will be followed-up for the March NAC meeting.

Status: OPEN

Action Item 2018-06: Distribute ESO mapping document to the NAC at the next meeting.

Discussion: Nil

Status: CLOSED

Action Item 2018-07: The Chair will highlight an opportunity to acknowledge the history of VVCS and the legacy of Vietnam veterans, and also include support signs at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in her next meeting with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Discussion:

- Chair met with Minister who agreed to the display.
- Committee recommends the display; be audio/visual, interactive (i.e. touchscreen), share the legacy of the service, include information for families.
- Committee members are welcome to forward images to be included in any potential display to Open Arms.

Status: CLOSED

Action Item 2018-11 – Open Arms to submit brief to Minister regarding Open Arms formal display at AWM and recommendations of how the display should look.

Action Item 2018-08: The NAC will draft a submission for the DVA Productivity Commission Review out of session.

Discussion: Nil

Status: Completed and CLOSED

Action Item 2018-09: Dr Hodson will provide an update on the Functional Review recommendations at the next NAC meeting.

Discussion: Nil

Status: Carried over to next meeting. OPEN.

Previous Minutes:

Previous minutes were not endorsed as tabled.

The following changes will be provided by the relevant persons and incorporated by Open Arms before recirculating the June minutes to the Committee for approval:

- Chair to include information regarding the presentation from Soda Strategy and David Cockram's speech on the meaning behind 'open arms'.
- Dr Phelps to update the representation of Phoenix in Five Eyes.

Action Item 2018-12 – Committee members to provide relevant adjustments for June Minutes to be

Action Item 2018-13 – Open Arms to seek agreement from Secretary of DVA and CDF to approach the Minister to expand the NAC Ex-Officio membership. If agreed Open Arms to write to the Minister.

- The Chair and the NAC revisited the membership of the committee recommending that the Minister be approach to have tri-service representation on the NAC and a representative from Joint Health Command.

Correspondence: Nil

Item 3 & 4: Open Arms National Manager's Report

Open Arms National Manager, Dr Stephanie Hodson, presented her report on current Open Arms activities. The focus of the National Managers update included: clinical case management, staffing movements, National Intake Service (NIS), Clinical Policy Refresh, Open Arms rebrand, and the Invictus Games:

- *Clinical Case Management* – Dr Hodson advised that Open Arms continues to work on enhancing clinical case manage through enhanced policy, staffing levels and training.
- *Staffing movements* – Dr Hodson advised the Committee that Jennifer Veitch is the new Assistant National Manager of Open Arms.
- *National Intake Service (NIS)* – Dr Hodson provided a brief overview of the functions of NIS and stressed this as one of the services' highest priorities over the next 12 months. The Committee recommended Dr Hodson conduct co-design workshops with clinicians and lived experience peers to streamline the NIS process and ensure it is administratively effective as well as customer friendly. Considerations for KPI's should be addressed in these workshops.
- *Clinical Policy Refresh* – Dr Hodson advised Open Arms has contracted HOI to conduct a review and restructure of all clinical policy. The refresh will be complete by January 2019. The Committee recommended the policy be available on the website to ensure transparency in addition to FAQ's relating to policy (e.g. information sharing between DVA and Open Arms) also be made available online.

In addition to the clinical policy refresh, there has been a recent policy changed whereby only a senior clinician will talk to police regarding clients at risk of harming others, with the aim to ensure the right level of information is shared. This policy was unanimously regarded as a positive change for Open Arms.

- *Rebrand* - Dr Hodson provided the following statistics to the Committee which became the focus of discussion;
 - Facebook growth of 2.3% in followers since Open Arms launch,
 - Our 'VVCS Is Changing' video reached 61,767 people,
 - Open Arms brand posts reached 63,176 people,
 - Open Arms has been mentioned at the conclusion of 7 maintain stream newspaper articles (Daily Telegraph, Mercury etc.).

The Committee suggested Open Arms partner with champions to further promote the brand on social media and enhance our reach (for example, Mark from Mind Frame). Finally, the Committee requested that the counselling phone number be included on all Open Arms merchandise.

- *Reports* – Dr Hodson highlighted that two reports will be released soon.

- Firstly, the Senate Inquiry Report into the use of quinoline anti-malarial drugs mefloquine and tafenoquine in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will be released in the coming weeks. Regardless of the outcome of the report, individuals worried about an acquired brain injury are able to seek support and the Open Arms Neurocognitive Pilot will be a key option in providing such support.
- Secondly, the Productivity Commission's Terms of Reference have been published, with submissions due on 5th April 2019.
- The Chair raised that it is worth noting there will be Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health Services.
- *Research* - Dr Hodson provided a high level update on all current research projects underway in Open Arms. Of particular importance was the update on the Community and Peer Pilot. Key discussion points were:
 - An independent report (yet to be published) has reported positive outcomes;
 - Open Arms should consider strategies to partner with other peer programs (e.g. ATDP, Men's Health Peer Education) to increase the reach of the program particularly in large areas such as Sydney; and
 - The challenges that face veterans and the support available varies considerably in different regions.
 - The importance in the ability of welfare officers/peers to have a diverse referral network and refer a client on when they aren't skilled on the issue.

Action Item 2018-14 – Open Arms to circulate the Senate Inquiry Report into the use of quinoline anti-malarial drugs mefloquine and tafenoquine in the ADF when released.

Action Item 2018-15 – Open Arms to distribute evaluation report from Townsville Community Engagement Pilot

Item 5: Invictus Games Update

The NAC discussed Open Arms involvement in the Games, including:

- overview of some of the lessons learnt;
- the benefits of being completely integrated with primary health, the assistance dogs, chaplains and the network of volunteers when providing support to the competitors and their families;
- the utility of noise reducing head phone and resources like iPads to assist with grounding and stress management;
- the opportunity to promote the new brand;
- the creation of genuine partnerships to bridge gaps in service delivery; and

- one of the most valuable outcomes of the Games was the meaningful linkages made between organisations in the aim of helping veterans.

Item 6: With You With Me Invited Guest Presentation

Andrew Dudgeon and Tom Larkin from With You With Me were invited to present to the Committee. Key discussions outcomes were:

- The discussion highlighted the potential benefits of Open Arms building its partnerships with trusted organisations, including profit-for-purpose as well as ESOs.
- With You With Me was established to contribute to solving veteran underemployment and unemployment. Goal is to get veterans who are actively seeking full-time meaningful work and enable them to sustain the job long-term.
- With You With Me will attend the DCO seminars in 2019 to further inform the veteran community of their service.
- Tom Larkin agreed to visit Open Arms and work with Dr Hodson to create a video to advertise both services (Open Arms and With You With Me) together.
- Several NAC members thanked Tom and Andrew and recognised the incredibly important work they are doing, noting the considerable flow on effect of unemployment for the family and individual. The Committee acknowledged the therapeutic strength of finding meaningful, sustainable and purposeful work.

Item 7 & 8: Day 1 Wrap Up and Set Focus for Day 2

Item 9: Regional Insights – Peer Advisor

Kerry Kingma, NSW/ACT Peer Advisor, was invited to present on the challenges and opportunities that face the peer network in her region. Key discussion outcomes were:

- Peers are regarded as a conduit, or the 'bridge', between the veteran and their family and the Department.
- Ms Kingma emphasised the philosophy that there is 'no wrong door' for veterans and their families into the service.
- The NAC noted the number of peers, in such a large region, as a particular challenges for the NSW/ACT.
- The opportunities to establish partnerships with other organisations and peer networks to meet this challenge was highlighted.

Item 10: Regional Insights – Regional Director

Mr Matthew McGuinness, acting NSW/ACT Regional Director, was invited to present on the challenges and opportunities that face his region. Key discussion outcomes:

- The following statistics highlight the heavy workload and dispersed service delivery in the NSW/ACT region:
 - 28% of all unique clients and 29% of all sessions are in NSW/ACT
 - 47 staff in total across four locations
- Intake is a key issue in the region with 38% of intake occurring in NSW/ACT which means significant resourcing go towards intake and therefore fewer resources are available for counselling. This will of course shift when NIS is operating in 2019 and allow a redirection of resources to meet growing client demand.
- The crucial role of the new Assistant Director Clinical Coordination position was emphasised as it allows for greater visibility of high-risk clients and a more hands-on approach with these clients.

Item 11: Regional Consultative Forums Terms of Reference (ToR)

The review of the RCFs ToRs was a critical focus for this meeting. Drivers for change:

- RCFs have become a way to express a voice but only at the regional level.
- If lacking a clear direction the forums can at times be hostile and produce minimal outcomes.
- The RCF needs to strategically feed into the NAC to improve advice being provided to the Minister and Open Arms.

The NAC agreed that the goal is to strengthen the linkage between the RCF and NAC. For example, the NAC could provide a theme/question for each RCF which will be a priority of the NAC.

The RCFs papers, meetings, agenda and membership were discussed and following recommendations agreed.

Papers

- Before each RCF a one-page objective summary to be provided outlining the priorities of the NAC and seeking input. This document will provide questions for consideration at the RCF and will ensure a focused outcome based forum.
- Briefing template to be distributed to organisations prior to meeting. Using the template, attendees provide an update from their organisation. This will allow organisational updates to be circulated out of session.
- Standard Open Arms PowerPoint to be developed and distributed to Regional Directors. This will form the introduction for each RCF.
- After each RCF a one-page summary on the meeting outcomes will be provided to the NAC.

Meetings

- RCFS will meet twice per year.
 - The first RCF must be held between February and June.
 - The second RCF must be held between June and October.

- Meetings will be held in the 9 capital cities only (Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Hobart, Darwin, Canberra, Brisbane, Townsville and Adelaide). Other regions may utilise the videoconference facilities if they are unable to attend in the capital city.
- Locations should be appropriately booked and utilise ESO, Open Arms and DVA facilities.

Agenda

- RCF agenda will align with the NAC agenda and current priorities.
- The structure of the agenda will be as follows:
 1. 5min Regional Director Introduction – acceptable and unacceptable behaviour discussed.
 2. 15min Open Arms Update – standard PowerPoint.
 3. 20min guest speaker – Set tone with guest speaker in line with the pre-determined theme.
 4. 1 hour – Question and answer against the theme
 5. General Business

Membership

- Membership will be invitation only and capped at 15-20 members.
- Invitation for each RCF will differ depending on the theme.
- Critical members are:
 - Joint Health Command
 - DCO
 - PHNs
 - Relevant ESOs
 - Defence Welfare
 - VAN/OBAS
 - Welfare advocates
 - Veteran focused practitioners
 - Local engagement services

In determining the forward plan for the RCFs, the 2019 NAC dates and themes were also decided with the outcomes as follows:

1. March – Brisbane – National Intake Service and Transition
 - Ensure representation from the three services and Joint Health Command.
2. June – Darwin – Peer Network and Families
 - Review the implementation of the Peer Program across the regions – what are the challenges, what are the successes, what can be improved.
 - Consider KPIs of the Peer Program.
3. November – Melbourne – Group Programs and Strategic Partnerships
 - Opportunity to review the group program reform as they will have been operating for several months.
 - Opportunity to identify future partnerships between Open Arms and other organisations.

Action item 2018-16 – Provide letter to the Minister with proposed revised RCF ToRs

Item 12: Presentation from Aspasia Iosifidis, DCO (formerly Open Arms).

Ms Iosifidis from DCO, and an experienced Open Arms clinician, was invited to present on her experience in the Special Operation Forces (SOF) Pilot, particularly in ensuring wrap-around care concurrent with the claims process. She highlighted the critical role of the family during transition and the need for transition be family inclusive. The discussion highlighted the importance of transition being an area of focus at the next meeting.

Item 13: Meeting Summary

The NAC agreed that during this period of significant change, Open Arms will continue to provide the consistent quality care it has provided for the past 35 years. To ensure that this possible this meeting highlighted in a number of areas the challenge of increasing demand and the importance of developing strategic partnership to maximise services for both serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

Open Action Items after NAC Meeting 2018/3

Action Item	Description
2018-05	Invite SANE to provide a briefing at the next NAC meeting.
2018-10	Invite Paul Way to provide update on Transition Taskforce at next NAC meeting.
2018-11	Open Arms to submit brief to Minister regarding Open Arms formal display at AWM and recommendations of how the display should look.
2018-12	Committee members to provide relevant adjustments for June Minutes to be incorporated by NAC Secretariat.
2018-13	Open Arms to seek agreement from Secretary of DVA and CDF to approach the Minister to expand the NAC Ex-Officio membership. If agreed Open Arms to write to the Minister.
2018-14	Open Arms to circulate the Senate Inquiry Report into the use of quinoline anti-malarial drugs mefloquine and tafenoquine in the ADF when released.
2018-15	Open Arms to distribute evaluation report from Townsville Community Engagement Pilot
2018-16	Provide letter to the Minister with proposed revised RCF ToRs