

Audit report of the 2021–22
annual performance statement

Department of Veterans' Affairs



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for Finance

Qualified Conclusion

I have undertaken a reasonable assurance engagement of the attached 2021–22 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (the Entity).

In my opinion, except for the effects of the matters described in the Basis for Qualified Conclusion section of my report, the attached 2021–22 Annual Performance Statements of the Entity are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act), including accurately presenting the Entity's performance in achieving its purposes in the reporting period.

Audit criteria

In order to assess whether the Entity's annual performance statements complied with Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the Act, including accurately presenting the Entity's performance in achieving its purposes in the reporting period, I applied the following criteria:

- whether the annual performance statements comply with Division 2 of Part 2-3 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (the Rule);
- whether the performance measures and targets in the annual performance statements are appropriate as required by Division 1 of Part 2-3 of the Rule to accurately measure the Entity's performance in achieving its purposes in the reporting period; and
- whether the results reported against the performance measures in the annual performance statements and accompanying supporting analysis are accurate and complete, and supported by appropriate records.

Basis for Qualified Conclusion

Program 3.1: Provide and maintain war graves

Performance measures 3.1.1 and 3.1.2

The Entity has reported that due to incomplete data, results for performance measures 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 are unable to be reported. These are the only measures in the performance statements for Program 3.1 *Provide and maintain war graves*, which is material to Outcome 3 and the Entity's purpose. Accordingly, the statements do not provide an accurate basis to measure and assess the Entity's performance with respect to Outcome 3 for the reporting period.

Accountable Authority's responsibilities

As the Accountable Authority of the Entity, the Secretary is responsible under the Act for:

- the preparation and fair presentation of annual performance statements that accurately reflect the Entity's performance and comply with the Act and Rule;
- keeping records about the Entity's performance in accordance with requirements prescribed by the Act; and

- establishing such internal controls that the Accountable Authority determines is necessary to enable the preparation and presentation of the annual performance statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor-General's responsibilities

My responsibility is to conduct a reasonable assurance engagement to express an independent opinion on the Entity's annual performance statements.

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which include the relevant Standard on Assurance Engagements (ASAE) 3000 *Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information* issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. In accordance with this standard, I plan and perform my procedures to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the performance measures and accompanying results presented in the annual performance statements of the Entity accurately reflect the Entity's performance in achieving its purpose and comply, in all material respects, with the Act and Rule.

The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures depend on my judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, in the annual performance statements. In making these risk assessments, I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the preparation of the annual performance statements in order to design procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my qualified conclusion.

Independence and quality control

I have complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements, and applied Auditing Standard ASQC 1 *Quality Control for Firms that Perform Audits and Reviews of Financial Reports and Other Financial Information, Other Assurance Engagements and Related Services Engagements* in undertaking this assurance engagement.

Inherent limitations

Because of inherent limitations of an assurance engagement, it is possible that fraud, error or non-compliance may occur and not be detected. An assurance engagement is not designed to detect all instances of non-compliance of the annual performance statements with the Act and Rule as it is not performed continuously throughout the period and the assurance procedures performed are undertaken on a test basis. The reasonable assurance conclusion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Australian National Audit Office



Rona Mellor PSM
Deputy Auditor-General

Delegate of the Auditor-General
Canberra

6 October 2022

Appendix A — Referencing Outcome 3 measures to the Entity’s purpose

<p>The Purpose of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs is to support the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and their families, by: partnering with organisations and individuals to help design, implement and deliver effective programs and benefits, which enhance wellbeing of veterans and their families; and providing and maintaining war graves and delivering meaningful commemorative activities to promote community recognition and understanding of the service and sacrifice of veterans.</p>			
<p>Outcome 3: Acknowledgement and commemoration of those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations through promoting recognition of service and sacrifice, preservation of Australia’s wartime heritage, and official commemorations</p>			
<p>Program 3.1 Provide and maintain war graves</p>			
	<i>Performance criteria</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>2021–22 Result</i>
Measure 3.1.1	Official commemorations, war cemeteries, war plots and gardens of remembrance are maintained in accordance with Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) specifications 95% of official commemorations are inspected at least once annually to ensure they continue to meet the CWGC standards	95%	Not able to report
Measure 3.1.2	Percentage of official commemorations that meet the standard compared to the previous year	Percentage is the same or greater than the previous year	Not able to report
<p>Program 3.2 Deliver commemorative activities¹</p>			
Measure 3.2.1	Commemorative event quality: Commemorative events are conducted to commemorate veterans’ service in a dignified, solemn and respectful manner	The number of discrete complaints is less than 1% of the estimated audience for any one event	Achieved

¹ This program was not subject to qualification and has been included for completeness.



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**Annual
performance
statements**

Statement by the accountable authority

I, as the accountable authority of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, present the 2021–22 annual performance statements of the department, as required under paragraph 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

In my opinion, these annual performance statements accurately reflect the performance of the department, and comply with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liz Cosson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Liz Cosson AM CSC

Secretary

6 October 2022

Overview

The annual performance statements present our achievements against the outcomes, key activities, programs, performance measures and targets set out in the DVA 2021–22 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) and the 2021–22 Corporate Plan (CP).

DVA has improved business processes underpinning its reporting, and is continuing to improve and evolve the way it reports on performance. While this is an ongoing maturity process, we continue regularly reviewing our performance measures and reporting framework to ensure they can better support decision-making and drive continual improvement of our services.

Updates were made in the 2021–22 Corporate Plan to streamline the PBS Program descriptions, and this simplified wording is reflected in the 2021–22 Annual Performance Statements. Updates have also been made to key activities in the annual performance statements since the 2021–22 Corporate Plan to be more reflective of activities undertaken by DVA. As part of our ongoing systematic review of performance measures, and in developing the corporate plan, we have also revised and updated some of the performance measures information that appears in the PBS.

Changes to DVA's performance measures

In early 2022, DVA undertook a review of its 2021–22 Corporate Plan and performance measures. The review identified areas of improvement for DVA's key activities and performance measures to facilitate a clearer read and better reflect the alignment between performance measures and programs. As a result, DVA reissued the corporate plan in May 2022, with minor amendments to several performance measures and the removal of 5 performance measures as reported in the PBS. Amendments are explained in footnotes throughout these annual performance statements and reasons for the removal of certain performance measures are detailed below:

Program 1.5 – Measure 1.5.4 – Quality (achieving the Schemes' outcomes): Percentage of students progressing through each level of their education or career training

This measure used progression through education or training to demonstrate the achievement of the Veterans' Children Education Scheme and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme outcomes. This is no longer considered a suitable indicator due to the range of possible reasons for or factors contributing to a student not progressing through their education. Parents and educational institutions generally make decisions like this together, and in some cases holding a student back can be with the aim of helping them build confidence and excel in the educational environment. External factors such as relocation, illness and other personal factors can impact on a student's progression through formal education, and have no bearing on the quality or outcomes of the schemes. Measure 1.5.3 directly measures the impact of the schemes through a survey asking students or their parents to what extent the scheme has helped them reach their academic potential.

Program 2.5 – Measure 2.5.6 – Open Arms Client Assist Contact Centre responsiveness capability

This measure assessed the average time taken to answer phone calls to Open Arms Veterans & Families Counselling services. It was removed due to issues surrounding the verifiability of data. Two other Open Arms performance measures in the current reporting suite (2.5.4 and 2.5.5) assess Open Arms performance in terms of timeliness of service and client satisfaction.

Program 2.5 – Measure 2.5.7 – Clients with successful return to work (following participation in the Veterans’ Vocational Rehabilitation Scheme (VVRS))

VVRS uptake is decreasing due to the ageing demographic of the eligible cohort, and growing eligibility for the more comprehensive support available through the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) and *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) rehabilitation programs (measured by 2.6.1–2.6.3). This measure is no longer considered a suitable indicator of performance as it relates to a very small program with low client numbers, which will continue to decrease over time.

Program 3.2 – Measure 3.2.1 (sub measure 2) – Grant applications for the Saluting Their Service program

In reviewing DVA’s performance measures against the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 it was determined that this measure was inwardly focused and therefore not considered an appropriate measurement of DVA output.

Program 3.2 – Measure 3.2.1 (sub measure 3) – Minister’s satisfaction with the outcome of commemorative activities

DVA works closely with the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs to deliver respectful and meaningful commemorative activities that help raise community awareness and understanding of the service and sacrifice of our military personnel and families. This measure was not considered to be the best way to assess the outcomes of commemorative events or perceptions of event quality. Commemorative event quality continues to be assessed through measure 3.2.1.1.

FIGURE 2: PERFORMANCE REPORTING ALIGNMENT ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO BUDGET STATEMENTS, CORPORATE PLAN, AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS

CORPORATE PLAN PURPOSE	Our Purpose		
	<p>The purpose of the Department of Veterans' Affairs is to support the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and their families, by:</p> <p>Partnering with organisations and individuals to help design, implement and deliver effective programs and benefits, which enhance wellbeing of veterans and their families.</p> <p>Providing and maintaining war graves and delivering meaningful commemorative activities to promote community recognition and understanding of the service and sacrifice of veterans.</p>		
PORTFOLIO BUDGET STATEMENTS	ENHANCE WELLBEING		RECOGNITION AND RESPECT
	Outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: Maintain and enhance the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of eligible persons* and their dependants through access to income support, compensation and other support services, including advice and information about entitlements.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Maintain and enhance the physical wellbeing and quality of life of eligible persons* and their dependants through health and other care services that promote early intervention, prevention and treatment, including advice and information about health service entitlements.</p>	<p>Outcome 3: Acknowledgement and commemoration of those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations through promoting recognition of service and sacrifice, preservation of Australia's wartime heritage, and official commemorations.</p>
	Budget programs	<p>1.1 Veterans' Income Support and Allowances</p> <p>1.2 Veterans' Disability Support</p> <p>1.3 Assistance to Defence widow/ers and Dependants</p> <p>1.4 Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependants</p> <p>1.5 Veterans' Children Education Scheme</p> <p>1.6 Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Acts Payments – Income Support and Compensation</p>	<p>2.1 General Medical Consultations and Services</p> <p>2.2 Veterans' Hospital Services</p> <p>2.3 Veterans' Pharmaceutical Benefits</p> <p>2.4 Veterans' Community Care and Support</p> <p>2.5 Veterans' Counselling and Other Health Services</p> <p>2.6 Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Acts – Health and Other Care Services</p>
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS	Report against performance measures		
	Performance information	<p>Performance Criteria</p> <p>Performance measures established to assess that DVA is enhancing the financial wellbeing of eligible persons and their dependants through access to income support, compensation and other support services.</p>	<p>Performance Criteria</p> <p>Performance measures established to assess that DVA is enhancing the physical wellbeing of eligible persons and their dependants by having arrangements in place for all of our clients to have timely access to high-quality health care, counselling and rehabilitation services.</p>
			<p>Performance Criteria</p> <p>Performance measures established to assess that DVA cares for and maintains official commemorations and sites of collective official commemoration to the standards and acknowledges and commemorates those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations.</p>

*An eligible person as defined by the relevant legislation.

How we measure performance

DVA's performance measures assess all aspects of the department's performance. The annual performance statements show what the department has achieved under its performance measures and against the purpose set out in the 2021–22 Corporate Plan, noting the changes to DVA's performance measures discussed above. The DVA annual performance statements were developed in accordance with the PGPA Act and Department of Finance guidelines and mirror the performance measures in the corporate plan.

For outcome 1 and 2 performance is measured through assessing timeliness, quality and client satisfaction. For Outcome 3, performance is measured for War Graves and Commemorations.

Refer to tables 1, 2 and 3, or the 2021–22 Corporate Plan (page 17) for more information.

TABLE 1: OUTCOME 1 PERFORMANCE CRITERION CATEGORIES

Performance criterion category	Performance criterion number
Timeliness	1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 1.4.1.1, 1.5.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.6.1.2, 1.6.1.3, 1.6.3.1, 1.6.3.2, 1.6.3.3
Quality	1.1.2.1, 1.1.2.2, 1.2.2, 1.3.2, 1.4.1.2, 1.5.2, 1.6.2.1, 1.6.2.2, 1.6.2.3, 1.6.4.1, 1.6.4.2, 1.6.4.3
Client satisfaction	1.1.3, 1.2.3, 1.3.3, 1.4.1.3, 1.4.2, 1.5.3, 1.6.5

TABLE 2: OUTCOME 2 PERFORMANCE CRITERION CATEGORIES

Performance criterion category	Performance criterion number
Timeliness	2.5.2, 2.5.4, 2.6.1
Quality of service	2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.4.1, 2.5.1, 2.6.2
Client satisfaction	2.5.3, 2.5.5, 2.6.3

TABLE 3: OUTCOME 3 PERFORMANCE CRITERION CATEGORIES

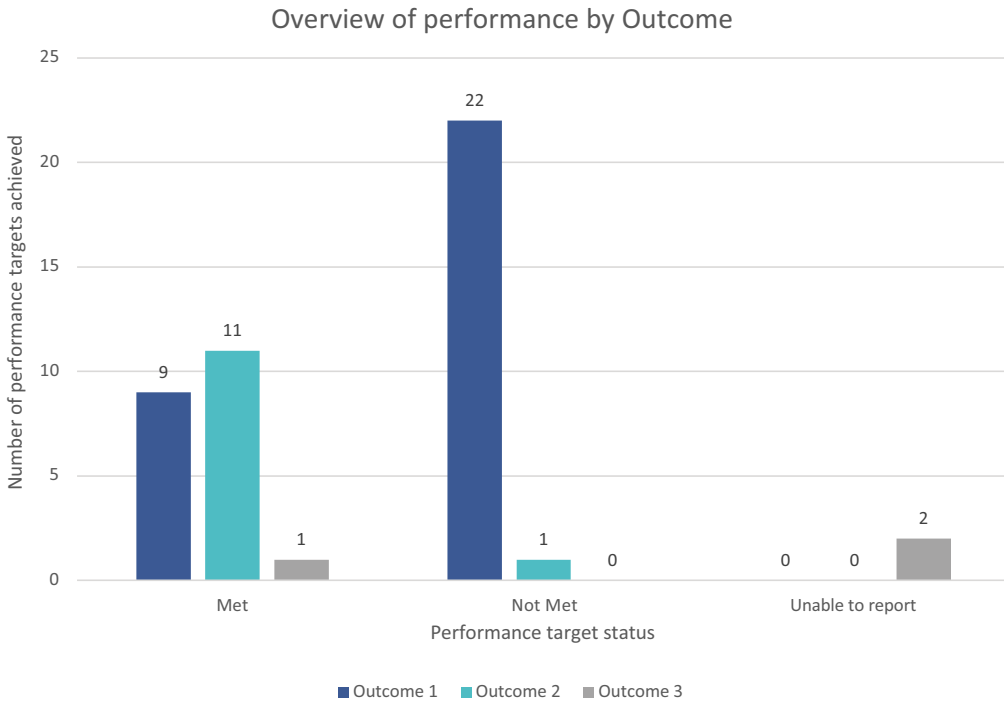
Performance criterion category	Performance criterion number
War graves	3.1.1, 3.1.2
Commemorations	3.2.1

Overview of performance

Of DVA's 46 performance measures, we achieved 21 of the targets set, 23 were not achieved, and two are unable be reported during the 2021–22 reporting period.

Figure 3 provides a snapshot of our overall performance, summarising the number of targets met across our 3 key outcomes.

FIGURE 3: PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT, 2021–22



For Outcome 1, DVA met 2 out of 12 timeliness measure targets, 6 out of 12 quality measure targets, and 1 out of 7 client satisfaction targets. Significant effort has been made in recruiting and training new staff throughout 2021–22 (and ongoing into 2022–23) to increase DVA's workforce capacity and capability.

From May 2021 until June 2022, the Client Benefits division increased by approximately 300 Australian Public Service (APS) staff with the vast majority working on claims processing. Across the year, DVA stabilised its claims processing workforce through permanent and non-ongoing recruitment processes, helping to retain subject matter expertise. Labour hire staff who completed their training to achieve accreditation were offered non-ongoing APS contracts, with a large proportion converting to become non-ongoing APS staff.

The recruitment of staff has been challenging at times during the past 12 months, with pandemic lockdowns and tight labour markets impacting on recruitment across the department. In addition, pandemic restrictions also affect the training of staff, with in-person training needing to be conducted in accordance with restrictions. DVA continues to deliver a comprehensive blended training program (e-learning, classroom, coaching and networking) for claims processing delegates with an emphasis on on-the-job training. On-the-job training ensures staff members are supported while undertaking different activities, reinforcing their learning and building capability.

For Outcome 2, DVA met 5 out of 6 quality measure targets, 3 out of 3 timeliness measure targets, and 3 out of 3 client satisfaction targets. Throughout 2021–22 veterans and their families were connected to high-quality, evidence-based and responsive services funded through Outcome 2. DVA remains committed to ensuring that clients have timely access to high-quality health care, counselling and rehabilitation services; and to maintaining and developing services that support a level of independence. DVA continues to review and improve business practices and enabling systems to ensure that programs are delivered efficiently and effectively.

For Outcome 3, DVA met 1 out of 3 commemorations targets, with 2 results from Program 3.1 unable to be reported against (performance measures 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). It has been identified that limitations of the War Graves System, data upload and assurance processes have impacted the integrity of data sources underpinning these measures. DVA will consider what alternative performance measures may be suitable to include in the Outcome 3 performance measure suite into the future. In 2021–22, DVA delivered a number of commemoration events and activities that were well received by the Australian community, and it is committed to improving its services in care and maintenance of official commemorations and memorials.

Enhance wellbeing

Support the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and their families, by partnering with organisations and individuals to help design, implement and deliver effective programs and benefits, which enhance wellbeing of veterans and their families.

Enhance wellbeing – Outcome 1

Outcome 1

Maintain and enhance the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of eligible persons and their dependants through access to income support, compensation and other support services, including advice and information about entitlements.

Key performance results

DVA's performance under Outcome 1 is measured by our achievements in 3 categories: timeliness, quality and client satisfaction.

Our PBS and the 2021–22 Corporate Plan set out performance measures and targets for each program under Outcome 1. The following tables show our results against our targets for each criterion in 2021–22.

Outcome 1 performance measures and results

Program 1.1: Deliver veterans' income support and allowances

This program delivers means-tested income support pensions and other allowances to eligible veterans and dependants under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*. Income support provides a regular payment for eligible veterans and their dependants with limited means.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.

TABLE 4: PROGRAM 1.1 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
1.1.1.1	Timeliness: The percentage of new claims processed within 30 days ^{1,2}	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	76%	68%	No
1.1.1.2	Timeliness: The percentage of pensioner-initiated reviews (PIRs) processed within 10 days ^{1,4}	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	59%	44%	No
1.1.2.1	Quality: Correctness rate of new claims ^{2,5}	>95%	99%	97%	Yes
1.1.2.2	Quality: Correctness rate of pensioner-initiated review ^{4,5}	>95%	98%	99%	Yes
1.1.3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlement ^{6,12}	≥80%	67%	68%	No

(PBS p 35, CP p 20)

Program 1.2: Deliver veterans' disability support

This program provides compensation in the form of disability pensions and ancillary benefits to eligible veterans for the tangible effects of war or defence service.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.

TABLE 5: PROGRAM 1.2 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
1.2.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 100 days ^{1,7}	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	24%	22%	No
1.2.2	Quality: Correctness rate ⁷	>95%	94%	97%	Yes
1.2.3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlement ^{7,8,12}	≥80%	61%	56%	No

(PBS p 36, CP p 20)

Program 1.3: Deliver assistance to Defence widow/ers and their dependants

The war widow/ers pension is part of a compensation package provided in recognition of the special circumstances and to compensate a widowed partner of a veteran, where there was a connection between the veteran’s death and their service. Eligible children are also provided with financial support.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Engage with ex-service organisations and representatives of veterans and families to deliver support and services, which respond to their needs.
- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible dependants.

TABLE 6: PROGRAM 1.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020–21 Actual result	2021–22 Actual result	Achieved
1.3.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days ^{1,9}	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	51%	52%	Yes
1.3.2	Quality: Correctness rate ¹⁰	>95%	92%	98%	Yes
1.3.3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ^{11,12}	≥80%	82%	68%	No

(PBS p 37, CP p 21)

Program 1.4: Deliver assistance and other compensation for veterans and dependants

This program delivers other allowances and assistance to eligible veterans and dependants under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) and related legislation, including home insurance, funeral benefits, prisoner of war ex gratia payments, and payments on behalf of Commonwealth and allied countries. Assistance is also provided to the ex-service community via Building Excellence in Support and Training grants and the Training and Information Program.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Engage with ex-service organisations and representatives of veterans and families to deliver support and services, which respond to their needs.
- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.
- Enable veterans and families to access housing-related support via the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme and Defence Service Homes Insurance.

TABLE 7: PROGRAM 1.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
Funeral benefits					
1.4.1.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 10 days ¹	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	79%	74%	No
1.4.1.2	Quality: Correctness rate ⁵	>95%	100%	97%	Yes
1.4.1.3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ^{12,13}	≥80%	89%	78%	No
Defence Service Homes Insurance					
1.4.2	Policyholder satisfaction: The percentage of policyholders satisfied with the service provided when their claim for damage to their home has been finalised ¹⁴	>90%	90%	88%	No

(PBS p 38, CP pp 21-22)

Program 1.5: Deliver the Veterans' Children Education Scheme and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme

Under the Veterans' Children Education Scheme and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (collectively the Education Schemes), education allowances are paid to eligible children of Australian Defence Force (ADF) members who have died or been severely injured as a result of service.

The schemes provide financial assistance, student support services, guidance and counselling for eligible students undertaking primary, secondary and tertiary full-time study within Australia.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Provide eligible children of veterans and families with financial assistance support to access education and skills development.

TABLE 8: PROGRAM 1.5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
1.5.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 28 days ¹	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	49%	42%	No
1.5.2	Quality: Correctness rate	>95%	100%	100%	Yes
1.5.3	Client satisfaction: Percentage of responses to the annual Education Schemes Satisfaction Survey indicating that students thought the support provided helped them reach their academic potential ¹⁵	>75%	83%	81%	Yes

(PBS p 39, CP p 22)

Program 1.6: Deliver income support and compensation under DRCA and MRCA

This program provides compensation to eligible veterans and dependants under the DRCA, the MRCA and related legislation. The DRCA (and MRCA for injuries since 1 July 2004) provides coverage for injured ADF members to support their return to health, work and independence. There is also compensation for eligible dependants, and MRCA health care and other ancillary benefits.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Engage with ex-service organisations and representatives of veterans and families to deliver support and services, which respond to their needs.
- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.

TABLE 9: PROGRAM 1.6 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020–21 Actual result	2021–22 Actual result	Achieved
1.6.1.1	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 100 days ¹	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	17%	16%	No
1.6.1.2	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 100 days ¹	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	32%	27%	No
1.6.1.3	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days ¹	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	68%	54%	No
1.6.2.1	Quality: Correctness rate of DRCA liability claims	>95%	89%	90%	No
1.6.2.2	Quality: Correctness rate of DRCA permanent impairment claims	>95%	93%	95%	No
1.6.2.3	Quality: Correctness rate of DRCA incapacity claims	>95%	88%	93%	No
1.6.3.1	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 90 days ^{1,16}	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	23%	26%	Yes
1.6.3.2	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 90 days ^{1,16}	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	31%	16%	No
1.6.3.3	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days ¹	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year ³	69%	53%	No
1.6.4.1	Quality: Correctness rate of MRCA liability claims	>95%	86%	90%	No
1.6.4.2	Quality: Correctness rate of MRCA permanent impairment claims	>95%	84%	78%	No
1.6.4.3	Quality: Correctness rate of MRCA incapacity claims	>95%	97%	95%	No
1.6.5	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ^{12,17}	80%	54%	49%	No

(PBS p 40–41, CP p 23)

Notes on Outcome 1 tables

PBS = Portfolio Budget Statements 2021–22; CP = Corporate Plan 2021–22; VEA = Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986

1 We use timeliness measures as proxy tools to assess timeliness measures to assess our efficiency. These timeliness measures can give an indication of efficiency over time.

2 This measure considers the following claim types under the VEA and the Social Security Act 1991: Service Pension, Income Support Supplement, Veteran Payment, Age Pension, Qualifying Service, Gold Card, and Orange Card.

3 The target for this performance criterion has changed from 'percentage increase over previous year' in the 2021–22 PBS to 'percentage is the same or greater than previous year' in the 2021–22 CP and annual performance statements.

4 Reviews of a pensioner's entitlements as a result of the client updating their personal or financial circumstances.

5 Quality correctness rates for claims are based on a random sample of claim decisions extracted from the Quality Assurance Sampling & Recording System for manual checking by a suitably qualified DVA staff member not involved in the decision-making process.

6 This measure considers the following claim types under the VEA: Service Pension, Veteran Payment, and Income Support Supplement. It also considers Age Pension claims under the Social Security Act. The survey response rate for 2021–22 was 31% (470 clients).

7 This measure considers the following claim types under the VEA: Disability compensation payment claims (including initial liability), applications for increase, assessments, and reviews.

8 The survey response rate for 2021–22 was 45% (1,509 clients).

9 This measure considers the following claim type under the VEA: War widow/ers claims.

10 This measure considers the following claim type under the VEA: Death claims.

11 This measure considers the following claim type under the VEA: War widow/ers pension. The survey response rate for 2021–22 was 44% (52 clients).

12 Client satisfaction is measured through an annual independent Client Benefits Satisfaction Survey conducted by ORIMA, which covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The survey asks clients to rate their level of satisfaction with their experience making a claim on a scale of: 'Very satisfied', 'Satisfied', 'Somewhat satisfied', 'Somewhat dissatisfied', 'Dissatisfied', or 'Very dissatisfied'. Responses of 'Very satisfied', 'Satisfied' and 'Somewhat satisfied' are counted as satisfied for this measure.

13 This measure considers the following claim type: Funeral benefits. The survey response rate for 2021–22 was 30% (79 clients).

14 This measure relates to Defence Service Homes Insurance. Policyholder satisfaction is measured through a monthly survey sent to 100 randomly selected policyholders who have recently had a claim finalised (approved). The survey asks respondents to rate their satisfaction with the claims process and outcome. Policyholders responding 'Very happy' or 'Happy' are considered satisfied. The response rate for 2021–22 was 35%. The survey results span 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022.

15 The annual survey this year spanned 1 May to 3 June 2022 and was sent to parents or students receiving the Education Schemes payments. The survey asks clients how effective they think the support has been in assisting the student to reach their academic potential, rated on a scale of 'Extremely effective', 'Effective', or 'Made no difference to academic outcomes'. Responses of 'Extremely effective' or 'Effective' are counted as satisfied for this measure. The survey response rate for 2021–22 was 13% (403 clients).

16 The Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Act 2019 includes a commitment by the government to deciding a claim under the MRCA within 90 days from when DVA receives the claim, or within 90 days of any requested information being provided. This came into effect on 1 November 2019.

17 This measure considers the following claim types: MRCA and DRCA initial liability, MRCA and DRCA permanent impairment, as well as MRCA and DRCA incapacity. The survey response rate for 2021–22 was 28% (3,440 clients).

Analysis of performance against Outcome 1

Timeliness

Throughout 2021–22, there has been continued awareness of, and interest in, the backlog of compensation claims and its

subsequent impacts on the timeliness of claims processing. In order to provide greater transparency regarding DVA's claims processing performance, Figure 4 has been included to demonstrate the trend over the last 3 financial years. Additional claims processing data can be found at Appendix A in the Annual Report..

FIGURE 4: TIMELINESS OF CLAIMS PROCESSING, 2019–20 TO 2021–22

2021-2022	2021-2022	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
Measure #	Measure	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual	Trend line
1.1.1.1	Timeliness: The percentage of new claims processed within 30 days	76%	80%	76%	68%	
1.1.1.2	Timeliness: The percentage of pensioner-initiated reviews (PIRs) processed within 10 days	59%	49%	59%	44%	
1.2.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 100 days	24%	34%	24%	22%	
1.3.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days	51%	51%	51%	52%	
1.4.1.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 10 days	79%	84%	79%	74%	
1.5.1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 28 days	49%	54%	49%	42%	
1.6.1.1	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 100 days	17%	28%	17%	16%	
1.6.1.2	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA permanent impairment (PI) claims processed (determined) within 100 days	32%	24%	32%	27%	
1.6.1.3	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days	68%	63%	68%	54%	
1.6.3.1	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 90 days	23%	31%	23%	26%	
1.6.3.2	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 90 days	31%	24%	31%	16%	
1.6.3.3	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days	69%	68%	69%	53%	

% Met Target	25%	42%	17%

For measures 1.6.3.1 and 1.6.3.2, the 90-day timeliness time frame came into force in November 2019. Prior to the 2020–21 Financial Year the timeliness time frame for these measures was 100 days. All Outcome 1 timeliness targets changed from 'percentage increase over previous year' in the 2021–22 PBS to 'percentage is the same or greater than previous year' in the 2021–22 CP and annual performance statements. Results in Figure 4 are based on published results in annual performance statements.

DVA continues to experience an increase in claim numbers driven by the success of the Veteran Centric Reform – Putting Veterans and their Families First Program (Veteran Centric Reform) and the Veteran Recognition Program, as well as the changing nature of our veteran population. The growth in claims for compensation over the past 3 years has led to a backlog of claims across many compensation streams, and longer wait times for veterans, which is reflected in DVA's results against its timeliness targets for 2021–22.

Timeliness targets were achieved for 2 of 12 measures: VEA war widow/er claims (measure 1.3.1) and MRCA initial liability claims (measure 1.6.3.1). Of VEA war widow/er claims, 52% were processed within the 30-day time frame. This is a small increase from the performance results in 2020–21 (51%) and reflects that a number of claims could not be determined within the time frame due to external factors such as waiting on coronial evidence. For MRCA initial liability claims there was a slight improvement on the prior year's performance from 23% to 26% of claims processed within 90 days. This is largely a result of the number of claims that were prioritised during the year and the high rate of new staff (receiving less complex claims) being trained. This year DVA saw an 8% rise in the number of MRCA initial liability claims, at a gross of 51,043 claims received in 2021–22 compared to 46,890 in 2020–21. This number includes those claims considered under MRCA only, and those where MRCA, DRCA and VEA service eligibility may apply. At the same time, there was a 23% increase in the number of MRCA initial liability conditions determined, with a total of 45,476 conditions determined during 2021–22, compared with 36,931 in 2020–21. Refer to Appendix A for more information.

In 2021–22, DVA did not meet its targets for 10 of 12 Outcome 1 timeliness measures. The timeliness target to process new claims within 30 days (measure 1.1.1.1) and the targets for pensioner initiated reviews (PIRs) (measure 1.1.1.2) and funeral benefits (measure 1.4.1.1) were not achieved in 2021–22.

The reduction in performance was due to the introduction of a new ICT system, which initially slowed processing times as it required additional staff training and adjustments to processes; and the time necessary to recruit, train and accredit new claims processing staff. Improvement in timeliness performance is expected to increase as staff gain experience in their roles and as enhancements to the new processing system are implemented.

The incoming claim volumes exceeding available resources caused delays in processing claims and resulted in timeliness targets not being achieved for VEA disability compensation and support claims (measure 1.2.1) and DRCA initial liability claims (measure 1.6.1.1). The increased focus on determining initial liability claims and the subsequent flow through to permanent impairment and/or incapacity claims resulted in timeliness targets not being achieved for permanent impairment claims (measures 1.6.1.2 and 1.6.3.2) and incapacity claims (measures 1.6.1.3 and 1.6.3.3) under the MRCA and DRCA.

Significant investment has been made in recruiting and training new staff, which is expected to flow through to improved claims processing times over the coming years. Other initiatives have also been implemented to improve processing times, including:

- streamlining VEA disability compensation payment and disability increase applications by allowing veterans to indicate which accepted conditions they would like re-assessed by a medical practitioner, streamlining the previous approach of re-assessing all accepted conditions
- proactively contacting veterans with claims waiting to be allocated to check on their circumstances, check that their claim information remains current and connect them to available support services
- improving the screening and triaging process undertaken for VEA disability compensation payment claims, and MRCA and DRCA initial liability claims lodged to be able to direct a claim to the correct assessment pathway and be ready for allocation to a delegate

- reviewing all claims throughout the claims screening and triage process for 'at risk' indicators which might result in a claim being prioritised for allocation to a delegate and/ or a referral for additional support (such as Triage and Connect, and Open Arms) to be offered to a veteran where required
- better engagement and data sharing with Defence to enable real-time exchange of some service, pay, incident, and health data required for claims processing, and to identify and prioritise members who are being medically discharged.

While the above strategies are expected to improve the number of decisions made and the number of active cases under investigation, the number of ageing claims on hand will continue to impact the time taken to process.

For Veterans' Children Education Schemes (measure 1.5.1), DVA processed 42% of claims within 28 days, down from 49% in the prior year. Increases in the numbers of students applying at the commencement of the 2022 academic year resulted in a reduction in the number of claims processed within the 28-day time frame. Additional staffing will be on-boarded before the 2023 academic year to better support timely processing of claims.

Quality (correctness rates)

In 2021–22, DVA exceeded the >95% quality (correctness rate) targets for 6 of 12 measure under Outcome 1. This includes income support new claims (1.1.2.1), change of circumstances requests (measure 1.1.2.2) and funeral benefits (measure 1.4.1.2). In the delivery of compensation, DVA achieved the quality targets for VEA veterans' disability support claims (measure 1.2.2), war widow/er claims (measure 1.3.2) and the Veterans' Children Education Schemes (measure 1.5.2). For DRCA permanent impairment (measure 1.6.2.2) and MRCA incapacity payments (measure 1.6.4.3), DVA came within 0.2% of achieving the >95% quality target.

There is often a negative correlation between the timeliness and the quality of claims decisions. In 2021–22 quality continued to be impacted by the increase in claim volumes and onboarding new processing staff. Additionally an increase in the level of complexity of claims determined (e.g. claims with multiple conditions or assessed under multiple Acts) has also been identified as impacting the quality of decision-making. DVA continues to use the issues and trends identified by the Quality Assurance Program to target the improvement of policy and procedures, ICT enhancements and the training of new and existing staff to help enable the continuous improvement of both the quality and timeliness of claims processing.

Client satisfaction

For measures 1.1.3 (income support), 1.2.3 (disability support), 1.3.3 (war widow/ers), 1.4.1.3 (funeral benefits) and 1.6.5 (safety rehabilitation and compensation – DRCA and MRCA), client satisfaction is measured through an annual independent Client Benefits Satisfaction Survey conducted by ORIMA. For these measures, analysis of results was conducted for the period spanning 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Level of satisfaction reported in the annual report is an annual figure.

Clients were either selected at random or as a census of all clients within a program. This year the Client Benefits Satisfaction Survey was completed by 5,550 clients, representing a response rate of 31% for the survey overall. Claims processing time was again a key factor that clients said contributed to the low level of satisfaction, most notably among MRCA/DRCA and disability support clients. Younger clients continued to report lower level of satisfaction rates than older cohorts. This year, improved communication with clients about the progress of their claims was again a key suggestion for further improvement in service delivery.

DVA's Education Schemes (Program 1.5) provide financial assistance and other support services to eligible children and dependants of current and former Australian Defence Force personnel who have either died or been severely

wounded or injured as a result of their service. DVA provides the assistance through the Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) established under the VEA, or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS) established under the MRCA. Other support and services under the Education Schemes, including additional tuition and special assistance, are available any time throughout the year to support eligible students if required. In 2021–22 the Education Schemes survey delivery method changed from postal to electronic and was incorporated into the broader Student Progress Survey. Survey recipients also included students who were not currently in the Education Schemes but had received a payment through them within the past 12 months. These changes may have resulted in the increased number of survey responses, from 132 in 2020–21 to 403 responses in 2021–22 (13% response rate).

In total 80.65% of students (or their parents) were measured as satisfied. Factors listed by participants as affecting students' progress included COVID-19, the student's mental health and family circumstances. Although the satisfaction rate was 2.57% lower than it was in 2020–21 (83.22%), it met the target of 75%. An evaluation of the Education Schemes to assess the targeting and effectiveness of support now and into the future was undertaken in mid-2022. The recommendations are being considered by the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance policyholder satisfaction (measure 1.4.2) was 88.3%, and did not meet the >90% target. The survey response rate for the reporting period was 35%. Two natural disaster events during the reporting period resulted in high claims numbers, and DSH Insurance prioritised responses to high-risk claims first. This may have impacted the policyholder satisfaction survey results. To increase future survey response rates, in May 2022 DSH Insurance added a QR code to allow responses to be provided electronically. Prior to this, survey responses were only available for completion in hard copy.

Enhance wellbeing – Outcome 2

Outcome 2

Maintain and enhance the physical wellbeing and quality of life of eligible persons and their dependants through health and other care services that promote early intervention, prevention and treatment, including advice and information about health service entitlements.

Key performance results

DVA's performance under Outcome 2 is measured by its achievements in 4 categories: access to health services, travel, counselling and rehabilitation.

Our PBS and the 2021–22 Corporate Plan set out performance measures and targets for each program under Outcome 2. The following tables show our results against our targets for each criterion in 2021–22.

Outcome 2 performance measures and results

Program 2.1: Provide access to general medical consultations and services

DVA has arrangements in place with medical and allied health practitioners in both the public and private sectors to deliver a comprehensive

range of services throughout Australia, provided in hospitals, in providers' rooms and in the homes of veterans and families. To ensure that eligible veterans and dependants are able to access necessary services, DVA will either pay for travel to the nearest service provider or pay a provider to travel to other locations to provide services to eligible veterans and dependants.

Key activities:

- Work with a range of medical, dental, hearing and allied health providers throughout Australia to ensure veterans and families have access to a comprehensive range of services.
- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Monitor the Provider Engagement Framework for ongoing effectiveness of our engagement and communication activities with DVA's health providers. Proactively drive continuous improvement building on the strong foundations provided under the framework, with a focus on enabling DVA and providers to deliver effective programs that enhance the wellbeing of veterans and families.

TABLE 10: PROGRAM 2.1 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020–21 Actual result	2021–22 Actual result	Achieved
2.1.1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients accessing services against the total number of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality ¹	>99%	99.97%	99.94%	Yes

(PBS p 50, CP p 24)

Program 2.2: Provide access to veterans' hospital services

This program provides access to inpatient and outpatient hospital services for eligible veterans through arrangements with private hospitals, day procedure centres and mental health hospitals, as well as all public hospitals operated by the state and territory governments.

Key activities:

- Make arrangements with public and private hospital service providers throughout Australia to ensure veterans and families have access to a comprehensive range of services.

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Monitor the Provider Engagement Framework for ongoing effectiveness of our engagement and communication activities with DVA's health providers. Proactively drive continuous improvement building on the strong foundations provided under the framework, with a focus on enabling DVA and providers to deliver effective programs that enhance the wellbeing of veterans and families.

TABLE 11: PROGRAM 2.2 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
2.2.1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients accessing services against the total number of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality ¹	>99%	99.94%	99.89%	Yes

(PBS p 51, CP p 24)

Program 2.3: Provide access to veterans' pharmaceutical benefits

The Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme provides clients with access to a comprehensive range of pharmaceuticals and wound dressings for the treatment of their health care needs, including items available to the broader Australian community under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Provide eligible veterans with access to a broader range of medicines and wound care items at a concession rate.

TABLE 12: PROGRAM 2.3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
2.3.1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients accessing services against the total number of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality ¹	>99%	99.99%	99.99%	Yes

(PBS p 52, CP p 25)

Program 2.4: Provide access to veterans' community care and support

DVA manages community support and residential aged care programs for clients, including the Veterans' Home Care program and the Community Nursing program, which aim to support people to remain independent in their homes and improve their quality of life and health. This program also provides subsidies and supplements for DVA clients living in residential care facilities.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.

- Provide a range of care and support in the home to assist eligible veterans and families to remain independent for longer.
- Monitor the Provider Engagement Framework for ongoing effectiveness of our engagement and communication activities with DVA's health providers. Proactively drive continuous improvement building on the strong foundations provided under the framework, with a focus on enabling DVA and providers to deliver effective programs that enhance the wellbeing of veterans and families.

TABLE 13: PROGRAM 2.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
2.4.1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients accessing services against the total number of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality ¹	>99%	99.58%	99.58%	Yes

(PBS pp 53-54, CP p 25)

Program 2.5: Provide veterans' counselling and other health services

This program provides a wide range of mental and allied health care services, including counselling and referral services for veterans and families. The program also supports eligible veterans and families with funding for aids and appliances, and travel for treatment.

Key activities:

- Provide veterans and families with access to mental health care services, including primary prevention through counselling and complex care coordination.
- Provide veterans with access to medical management, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation programs and support for employment.
- Support veterans with travel for treatment and provide access to aids, appliances and modifications to support independent living.
- Provide veterans with access to allied health services, including access to telehealth services.
- Provide access to Open Arms including individual and family counselling, after-hours counselling, group program interventions, and peer support.

TABLE 14: PROGRAM 2.5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
Access to services					
2.5.1	Quality of service: The proportion of clients accessing services against the total number of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality ¹	>99%	99.62%	99.45%	Yes
Travel					
2.5.2	Timeliness: Target percentage of claims for reimbursement processed within 28 days ²	95%	99.92%	99.66%	Yes
2.5.3	Client satisfaction: Degree of complaints about arranged travel relative to the quantity of bookings ³	<0.05%	0.01%	0.01%	Yes
Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling services					
2.5.4	Percentage of clients allocated to an Open Arms clinician within two weeks of initial intake ⁴	>65%	87%	87%	Yes
2.5.5	Client satisfaction ⁵	>80%	92%	89%	Yes

(PBS pp 55-56, CP p 26)

Program 2.6: Provide access to health, rehabilitation and other care services under DRCA and MRCA

DVA arranges for the provision of rehabilitation, medical and other related services under the DRCA, the MRCA and related legislation. The services include payment for medical treatment, rehabilitation services, attendant care and household services.

Key activities:

- Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.
- Provide veterans with access to medical management, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation programs and support for employment.

TABLE 15: PROGRAM 2.6 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
2.6.1	Timeliness: The percentage of rehabilitation assessments that were made within 30 days of referral for assessment ⁶	75%	88%	88%	Yes
2.6.2	Quality: Percentage of clients where rehabilitation goals were met or exceeded ⁷	75%	70%	73%	No
2.6.3	Client satisfaction: An annual survey of client satisfaction with the rehabilitation program ⁸	75%	77%	81%	Yes

(PBS p 57, CP p 27)

Notes on Outcome 2 tables

PBS = Portfolio Budget Statements 2021-22; CP = Corporate Plan 2021-22

1 Complaints are registered in the Client Feedback Management System when they are received by DVA. The target reflects the proportion of clients who do not submit a complaint. Achieving the target of >99% equates to the proportion of complaints received being less than 1% of the total number of clients accessing the service.

2 The performance measure title has changed from 'Target percentage of claims for reimbursement processed within the Service Charter timeframe (28 days)'. The approach to assessing the performance measure is unchanged. This measure relates to claims for reimbursement through the Repatriation Transport Scheme.

3 This measure is assessed as the total number of complaints compared to the total number of transport bookings provided.

4 The performance measure title has changed from 'Percentage of clients provided an appointment with a Veterans & Families Counselling Service (Open Arms) clinician within two weeks of initial assessment'. The approach to assessing this performance measure is unchanged.

5 Client satisfaction is measured by a questionnaire which is offered by clinicians following the completion of an episode of care. Survey participation is voluntary. The survey asks clients to rate their level of satisfaction with the counselling provided on a scale of 'Very satisfied', 'Satisfied', 'Neutral', 'Unsatisfied' or 'Very unsatisfied'. Responses of 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' to the question are counted as satisfied. The final result for 2021-22 was based on a total of 369 survey responses. DVA is unable to determine how many surveys were distributed for response. In 2021-22, there were 29,957 episodes of care closed.

6 This measure is a calculation of percentage of rehabilitation assessments undertaken during 2021-22 that were conducted by rehabilitation providers within 30 days of the assessment being requested by DVA. The assessment date is recorded in DVA systems by a delegate based on the assessment date reported by the provider.

7 Rehabilitation providers work with eligible veterans to develop personalised SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Based) goals as part of their rehabilitation plan. Goal attainment is assessed using the Goal Attainment Scale rating. The percentage performance result is calculated through dividing the total number of clients who met their goals by the total client count.

8 Client satisfaction is measured through a monthly independent survey by ORIMA Research of DVA clients who have recently completed the rehabilitation program. The survey assesses participants' overall views of the program including the rehabilitation plan commencement, implementation and closure process. The 2021-22 performance result is based on rehabilitation case closures from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022. Survey participation is voluntary. Neutral responses are excluded from the total population for this measure. The response rate for 2021-22 was 21%.

Analysis of performance against Outcome 2

Quality of service

DVA measures most quality of service for Outcome 2 by comparing the number of complaints registered by clients to the number of clients who accessed services.

In 2021–22 DVA met 5 out of 6 quality of service targets. This includes achieving service quality of 99.94% for access to general medical consultations and services (measure 2.1.1), 99.89% for access to veterans' hospital services (measure 2.2.1), 99.99% for access to veterans' pharmaceutical benefits (measure 2.3.1), 99.58% for access to veterans' community care and support (measure 2.4.1) and 99.45% for veterans' counselling and other health services (measure 2.5.1).

DVA did not achieve the target for performance measure 2.6.2: the number of rehabilitation clients who met or exceeded their rehabilitation goals. The results for this measure have remained relatively steady over recent financial years, with this score reflecting a slight improvement from the 2020–2021 reporting period. There are a number of possible reasons why a client's rehabilitation goals may not be met during the reporting period – for example, changes to medical capacity and ability to participate in rehabilitation, which can mean that a client is no longer able to meet a goal or that their plan is closed due to no longer having medical clearance to participate in the program; and changes to plan type resulting in the potential lack of achievement of all relevant goals.

Reduced processing times for prescribers through the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme has improved the quality of service through more timely access to treatment for veterans (measure 2.3.1). This has been achieved through simplified

and streamlined administration processes to allow phone approval for the commonly requested pharmaceutical items previously subject to and forming a high proportion of written applications (35%). DVA recognises that health providers are key partners in optimising health and wellbeing outcomes for veterans, through the delivery of quality services. We are actively engaging with providers to create greater awareness of DVA services, programs and entitlements available to veterans and families beyond the Medical Benefits Scheme and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Timeliness

Under the Repatriation Transport Scheme, DVA can reimburse some travel costs where veterans have paid to travel to medical appointments or to get medical evidence. In 2021–22, DVA achieved the performance target for reimbursement of 95% of travel claims within 28 days (measure 2.5.2), with 99.66% of claims processed within target time frames. Feedback received about travel for treatment is used to identify issues and variations in service delivery; in conjunction with contract management, this allows DVA to target transport services needing improvement. DVA deals directly with veterans and transport providers on a daily basis so that issues can be dealt with and resolved immediately as they arise, which supports the delivery of quality and timely services.

Open Arms has been the Australian Government's response to veteran mental health support for 40 years. Founded by the Vietnam veterans, Open Arms is a nationally accredited mental health service that provides 24-hour free and confidential mental health support. In 2021–22, 87% of Open Arms clients were allocated to an Open Arms clinician within 2 weeks of their initial intake (measure 2.5.4). The target of 65% has been consistently exceeded each month over the financial year.

DVA exceeded the target (75%) for the percentage of rehabilitation assessments that were made within 30 days of referral for assessment (measure 2.6.1). A number of possible reasons may have contributed to the successful achievement of assessments within the 30 days of referral. These include:

- increased flexibility in the facilitation of assessments following the impacts of COVID-19, with improved remote support options assisting with the timeliness in assessment coordination
- the easing of COVID-19 restrictions Australia wide, allowing for greater opportunity to facilitate and successfully complete rehabilitation assessments
- continued support and training resources for rehabilitation providers, ensuring a clear understanding of timeliness and requirements associated with conducting assessments.

Client satisfaction

In 2021–22 the number of complaints about arranged travel, relative to the quantity of bookings (measure 2.5.3) was 0.01%, which meets the target of less than 0.05%. This indicates a high level of satisfaction with the Booked Car With Driver Scheme and the ability of DVA to address issues quickly and efficiently.

Open Arms maintained a high level of client satisfaction, exceeding the 80% target with a result of 89% of clients satisfied with services provided (measure 2.5.5). This result was calculated from the 369 client questionnaires received in 2021–22. Questionnaires were distributed to clients via email, post and in person following an episode of care. A client may not receive a survey due to administrative reasons, for example the closure of an episode of care while services are continuing. The client satisfaction survey is a voluntary system and

there is no process to follow up with clients to encourage or increase participation and completion.

In 2021–22 DVA exceeded the 75% target for client satisfaction with the rehabilitation program (measure 2.6.3). This score reflects an increase from the 2020–21 reporting period. Improved client satisfaction may be the result of enhancements to resources and training of rehabilitation providers; increased flexibility and improved remote support options; and the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, allowing for greater participation in activities.

The response rate for the annual survey period ending 31 May 2022 was 21%, which is an improvement from the 14% response rate over the 2020–21 reporting period. Efforts have been made to improve the response rate from the rehabilitation client satisfaction survey, including the introduction of SMS and email reminders in March 2021. In June 2021 streamlined survey questions and a simplified process for clients were introduced which are anticipated to increase response rates further next year.

Recognition and respect

Support the wellbeing of those who serve or have served in the defence of our nation, and their families, by providing and maintaining war graves and delivering meaningful commemorative activities to promote community recognition and understanding of the service and sacrifice of veterans.

Recognition and respect – Outcome 3

Outcome 3

Acknowledgement and commemoration of those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations through promoting recognition of service and sacrifice, preservation of Australia's wartime heritage, and official commemorations.

Key performance results

DVA's performance under Outcome 3 is measured by our achievements in 2 categories: war graves and commemorations.

Our PBS and the 2021–22 Corporate Plan set out performance measures and targets for each program under Outcome 3. The following tables show our results against our targets for each criterion in 2021–22.

Outcome 3 performance measures and results

Program 3.1: Provide and maintain war graves

This program acknowledges and commemorates veterans' service and sacrifice, and promotes an increased understanding of Australia's wartime history. To meet the government's commitment, the Office of Australian War Graves cares for and maintains official commemorations and sites of collective official commemoration to the standards set by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Key activities:

- Provide and maintain war cemeteries, war plots, gardens of remembrance and memorials to the missing and other individual official commemorations for eligible veterans who have died as a result of their service to Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

TABLE 16: PROGRAM 3.1 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020–21 Actual result	Achieved
3.1.1	Official commemorations, war cemeteries, war plots and gardens of remembrance are maintained in accordance with Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) specifications ¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of official commemorations are inspected at least once annually to ensure they continue to meet the CWGC standard 	95%	Not able to report ²	N/A
3.1.2	Percentage of official commemorations that meet the standard compared to the previous year ³	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year	Not able to report ²	N/A

(PBS p 61, CP p 29)

Program 3.2: Deliver commemorative activities

Commemorative activities are delivered to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

Key activities:

- Deliver domestic and international commemorative events to enable the community to better understand, acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who have served Australia in wars, conflicts and peace operations.
- Develop and distribute digital and hard copy educational and commemorative resources and information to promote an increased understanding in the community of Australia's experiences of service and wartime history.

TABLE 17: PROGRAM 3.2 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance criteria	Target	2020-21 Actual result	2021-22 Actual result	Achieved
3.2.1	Commemorative event quality: Commemorative events are conducted to commemorate veterans' service in a dignified, solemn and respectful manner ⁴	The number of discrete complaints is less than 1% of the estimated audience for any one event	Achieved	Achieved	Yes

(PBS p 62, CP p 29)

Notes on Outcome 3 tables

PBS = Portfolio Budget Statements 2021-22; CP = Corporate Plan 2021-22

1 Official commemorations (graves, cremation markers, bronze plaques) in Australia are maintained in accordance with the CWGC standards (each commemoration type has different specifications).

2 Due to limitations with the data source, a result for this measure cannot accurately be measured and reported.

3 This performance measure has changed from '95% of official commemorations that no longer meet the standard (through either environment factors, vandalism or aging) are to be replaced or refurbished within the following industry average timeframes: graves < 6 months; columbarium or niche placement < 4 months; garden of remembrance plaque < 3 months' in the 2021-22 PBS. The associated target has changed from '95%'. The intent of the revised measure remains unchanged - to reduce the percentage of 'Category 4 - Major structural defects' and 'Category 5 - Unserviceable' commemorative assets compared to the previous year. 'Category 3 - Minor non-structural defect' assets are not factored into the measure due to this level of defect having only minor impact on the acceptable service standards. Examples of Category 3 commemorative assets are those showing signs of ageing, wear and tear, weathering or environmental impacts.

4 Complaints are registered in the Client Feedback Management System. Estimated television audiences viewing commemorative events are sourced from the ABC and combined with estimates of live attendee numbers to represent the total estimated audience. Total estimated audience for 2021-22 was 687,228.

Analysis of performance against Outcome 3

DVA met 1 out of 3 commemorations targets, with 2 results from Program 3.1 unable to be reported against (performance measures 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). It has been identified that limitations of the War Graves System, data upload and assurance processes have impacted the integrity of data sources underpinning these measures. DVA will consider what alternative performance measures may be suitable to include in the Outcome 3 performance measure suite into the future. In 2021–22, DVA delivered a number of commemoration events and activities that were well received by the Australian community, and it is committed to improving its services in care and maintenance of official commemorations and memorials.

War graves

In the century since official commemoration was established in 1922, the government has provided official commemorations for more than 330,000 Australian service personnel at around 2,330 commemorative sites throughout Australia, the Torres Strait, Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island. DVA manages a program of care and maintenance for each of these commemorations, 73 Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) cemeteries and plots, 4 Australian Military Cemeteries and 10 Gardens of Remembrance.

During 2021–22, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on suppliers and artisans, and frequent rainfall, compromised supply chains, and trade skills shortages continued to impact repairs and rebuilds of official commemorations. This also challenged DVA's capacity to manage inspections and meet our maintenance and provisioning obligations.

DVA has experienced significant challenges to recruitment in 2021–22. Both the horticultural services and stonemasonry sectors are fragile trade skills markets. This has resulted in DVA being unable to fill positions to ensure we continue to meet CWGC standards for commemorations.

Commemorative activities

The 50th anniversary of Operation Ivanhoe and the Battle of Nui Le was acknowledged with a virtual commemorative service broadcast on the ABC and iView on Monday, 20 September 2021 at 10.30 am. The service was also live streamed on DVA's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#). The planned service at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial could not take place due to the COVID-19 restrictions in force at the time.

For the first time since 2019, Anzac Day commemorative services were held at Gallipoli (Turkey) and Villers-Bretonneux (France) on Monday, 25 April 2022 to honour the service of all Australian men and women who have served our nation in times of war, conflict and peace operations, ensuring their commitment and sacrifice is remembered by us all. These services were also supported by an ABC broadcast across Australia.

The 2022 international Anzac Day commemorations were conducted successfully in both countries. The Dawn Service at Villers-Bretonneux was attended by 665 people and had a broadcast viewership of 289,000, and the Dawn Service at Gallipoli was attended by 563 people and had a broadcast viewership of 397,000.

While attendance figures were lower than those experienced prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that attendance will return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 as confidence in overseas travel returns.

