

Audit report of the 2022–23
annual performance statements

Department of Veterans' Affairs



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT on the 2022-23 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Veterans' Affairs

To the Minister for Finance

Qualified Conclusion

In my opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Conclusion section of my report, the 2022-23 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA):

- present fairly DVA's performance in achieving its purpose for the year ended 30 June 2023; and
- 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 PGPA Act).

Audit criteria

In order to assess whether DVA's annual performance statements complied with Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the PGPA Act, I applied the following criteria:

- whether DVA's key activities, performance measures and specified targets are appropriate to measure and assess DVA's performance in achieving its purposes;
- whether the performance statements are prepared based upon appropriate records that properly record and explain DVA's performance; and
- whether the annual performance statements present fairly DVA's performance in achieving DVA's purposes in the reporting period.

Basis for Qualified Conclusion

Program 3.1: Provide and maintain war graves

Performance measures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2

DVA has reported that due to incomplete data, results for performance measures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2 are unable to be reported for the years ended 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022. 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 DVA's purpose. Accordingly, the statements do not provide a complete basis to measure and assess DVA's performance with respect to Outcome 3 for both the current and previous reporting periods.

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Emphasis of Matter – Revised performance targets for Outcome 1 timeliness measures

I draw attention to DVA's disclosure of changes to the targets for twelve timeliness performance measures related to Outcome 1 from the targets, that were originally set out in the 2022-23 corporate plan, under the heading *Changes to DVA's performance measures* in the *Introduction* section of the performance statements.

I further draw attention to the disclosures in the *Analysis of performance against Outcome 1* section of the performance statements that provides additional context for the change in the targets and analysis of DVA's performance under the revised targets, including the historical trend information.

My conclusion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Accountable Authority's responsibilities

As the Accountable Authority of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Secretary is responsible under the PGPA Act for:

- the preparation and fair presentation of annual performance statements that accurately reflect DVA's performance and comply with the PGPA Act and Rule;
- keeping records about DVA's performance in accordance with requirements prescribed by the PGPA Act; and
- establishing such internal controls that the Accountable Authority determines are 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's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statements

My responsibility is to conduct a reasonable assurance engagement to express an independent opinion on DVA'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 DVA fairly presents DVA's performance in achieving its purpose and comply, in all material respects, with the PGPA 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 controls 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 Engagement* 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 PGPA 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



Michael White

Executive Director

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra

28 September 2023



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Repatriation Commission

Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Annual Reports 2022–23



Annual performance statements

Annual performance statements

Statement by the accountable authority

I, as the accountable authority of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, present the 2022–23 annual performance statements of the department, as required under Section 39(1) 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 Section 39(2) of the PGPA Act.



Alison Frame
Secretary
Department of Veterans' Affairs

28 September 2023

Introduction

The DVA Annual Performance Statements 2022–23 present achievements against the outcomes, key activities, programs, performance measures and targets set out in the DVA Portfolio Budget Statements 2022–23 (PBS) and DVA Corporate Plan 2022–23 (CP).

Changes to DVA’s performance measures

DVA continues to improve and evolve the way it reports on performance, and the business processes underpinning its reporting. A number of changes have been made since the publication of the Corporate Plan 2022–23 in order to:

- streamline the performance suite by removing 3 performance measures (1.5-3, 2.5-3, and 2.6-2) which are adequately covered by remaining measures
- increase clarity through the simplification of some measure descriptions and targets
- increase transparency by amending 12 ‘timeliness’ performance measure targets from percentage increase on previous year to a numerical target.

Details of these changes are set out in Annexure 1: Performance measure changes.

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 families, by:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Partnering with organisations and individuals to help design, implement and deliver effective programs and benefits, which enhance wellbeing of veterans and families.</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <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> </div> </div>			
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 widowers 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>	<p>3.1 War Graves</p> <p>3.2 Commemorative Activities</p>
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS	Report against performance measures			
	Performance measure	Performance measure	Performance measure	
Performance information	<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 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 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>	

How we measure performance

The annual performance statements illustrate our achievements against our purpose set out in the corporate plan, noting the changes to DVA's performance measures, as discussed above. This is done through the use of our performance measures. These annual performance statements were developed in accordance with the PGPA Act and Department of Finance guidelines.

Our PBS and corporate plan set out performance measures and targets for each program. For Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, performance is measured by assessing timeliness, quality and client satisfaction. For Outcome 3, performance is measured by assessing war graves and commemorations.

The following tables demonstrate the use of a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures.

Table 1: Outcome 1 performance measure categories

Performance category	Performance measure number
Timeliness	1.1-1, 1.1-2, 1.2-1, 1.3-1, 1.4-1, 1.5-1, 1.6-1, 1.6-2, 1.6-3, 1.6-7, 1.6-8, 1.6-9
Quality	1.1-3, 1.1-4, 1.2-2, 1.3-2, 1.4-2, 1.5-2, 1.6-4, 1.6-5, 1.6-6, 1.6-10, 1.6-11, 1.6-12
Client satisfaction	1.1-5, 1.2-3, 1.3-3, 1.4-3, 1.4-4, 1.6-13

Table 2: Outcome 2 performance measure categories

Performance category	Performance measure 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
Client satisfaction	2.5-5, 2.6-3

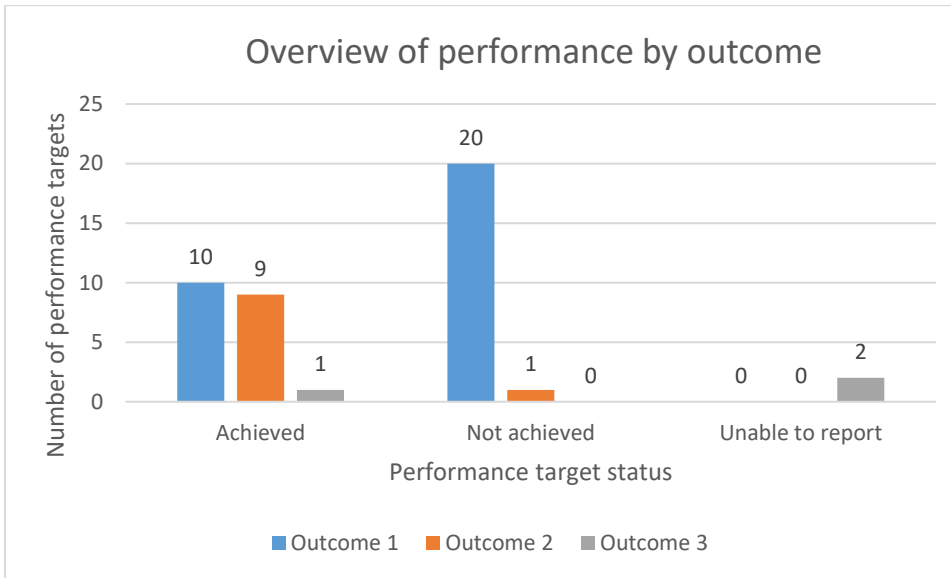
Table 3: Outcome 3 performance measure categories

Performance category	Performance measure number
War graves	3.1-1, 3.1-2
Commemorations	3.2-1

Overview of performance

Of DVA's 43 performance measures, we achieved the targets for 20, did not achieve the targets for 21 during the reporting period, and are unable to report on 2 measures related to commemorations. Figure 3 provides a snapshot of our overall performance, summarising the number of targets met across our 3 outcomes.

Figure 3: Performance snapshot, 2022–23



For Outcome 1, DVA achieved 2 of the 12 timeliness measure targets, 6 of the 12 quality measure targets, and 2 of the 6 client satisfaction targets. DVA continued to recruit and train additional frontline staff throughout 2022–23, with an additional 451 claims processing staff coming on board through the year. This is having a positive impact on the department's ability to process claims more quickly and work through the backlog. At 30 June 2023 the backlog was 20% lower than at its peak in September 2022. While the department still has work to do, the trajectory of claims processing is now headed in the right direction, especially for initial liability claims, which are the gateway into services and supports from DVA.

The recruitment of staff was challenging due to tight labour markets. DVA delivers 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.

New teams and processing procedures were introduced during the year, such as, an expanded standalone claims support team. This team assists in gathering the evidence for submitted claims, making them more 'decision ready' when they are allocated to a delegate. A pilot Combined Benefits Processing program was established to train staff across all Acts (VEA, DRCA and MRCA) and in both initial liability and permanent impairment claims. This initiative aims to reduce claims wait time significantly and streamline the end-to-end process for veterans by allocating a single delegate to a veteran. Ongoing improvements are expected as staff continue to move through training and accreditation.

For Outcome 2, DVA achieved all 5 quality measure targets, all 3 timeliness measure targets, and 1 of the 2 client satisfaction targets. This reflects DVA's successful delivery of programs to maintain and enhance the wellbeing of veterans and families. Throughout 2022–23 veterans and their families were connected to high-quality, evidence-based and responsive services funded through Outcome 2. DVA ensured clients had timely access to high-quality health care, counselling and rehabilitation services; and maintained and developed services that supported the holistic wellbeing of veterans and families. DVA continues to review

and improve business practices and enabling systems to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and effectively.

For Outcome 3, while DVA is unable to report reliably on performance measures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2 due to limitations of the War Graves System, a planned and regular program of maintenance and inspections are managed by the Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) field staff in each state each year. In 2 to 3 years, DVA is seeking to implement a new system to enable reporting. In the interim, from 2023–24, DVA will report on 2 new measures for Program 3.1 that do not rely on data from the existing War Graves System.

In 2022–23, DVA delivered a number of commemorative events and activities that were well received by the Australian and international communities. The department remains committed to caring for and maintaining official commemorations and memorials to required standards.

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.

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

Outcome 1 performance measures and results

Program 1.1: 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* (VEA). Income support provides a regular means-tested payment for eligible veterans and their dependants with limited means.

Key activities:

- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.

TABLE 4: PROGRAM 1.1 VETERANS’ INCOME SUPPORT AND ALLOWANCES – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
1.1-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days ^{1, 2, 23}	≥50% ³	68%	69%	Yes
1.1-2	Timeliness: The percentage of change of circumstances processed within 10 days ^{1, 4}	≥50% ³	44%	39%	No
1.1-3	Quality: Correctness rate of processing of new claims ^{2, 5, 6}	≥95%	97%	97%	Yes
1.1-4	Quality: Correctness rate of processing change of circumstances ^{4, 5, 6}	≥95%	99%	99%	Yes
1.1-5	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlement ^{7, 8, 9}	≥80%	68%	68%	No

Program 1.2: 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:

- Provide disability support and compensation payments to eligible veterans.

TABLE 5: PROGRAM 1.2 VETERANS' DISABILITY SUPPORT – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
1.2-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 100 days ^{1, 23}	≥50% ³	22%	16%	No
1.2-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims ^{5, 6, 11}	≥95%	97%	94%	No
1.2-3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlement ^{9, 11, 12}	≥80%	56%	49%	No

(PBS p 35, CP p 20)

Program 1.3: Assistance to Defence Widow/ers and 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:

- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible dependants.

TABLE 6: PROGRAM 1.3 ASSISTANCE TO DEFENCE WIDOW/ERS AND DEPENDANTS – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
1.3-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days ^{1, 13}	≥50% ³	52%	40%	No
1.3-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims ^{5, 6, 14}	≥95%	98%	98%	Yes
1.3-3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ^{9, 15}	≥80%	68%	93%	Yes

(PBS p 36, CP p 20)

Program 1.4: Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependants

This program delivers other allowances and assistance to eligible veterans and dependants under the 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 Advocacy Training and Development Program.

Key activities:

- 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 ASSISTANCE AND OTHER COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS AND DEPENDANTS – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
Funeral benefits					
1.4-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 10 days ^{1, 16, 23}	≥50% ³	74%	89%	Yes
1.4-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims ^{5, 6, 16}	≥95%	97%	100%	Yes
1.4-3	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ^{9, 16, 17}	≥80%	78%	90%	Yes
Defence Service Homes Insurance					
1.4-4	Policyholder satisfaction: The percentage of policyholders satisfied with the service provided when their claim for damage to their home has been finalised ¹⁸	≥90% ¹⁰	88%	88%	No

(PBS p 37, CP pp 21)

Program 1.5: Veterans' Children Education Scheme

Under the Veterans' Children Education Scheme and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme, 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:

- Provide eligible children of veterans and families with financial assistance and support to access education and skills development.

TABLE 8: PROGRAM 1.5 VETERANS' CHILDREN EDUCATION SCHEME – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
1.5-1	Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 28 days ^{1, 19}	≥50% ³	42%	17%	No
1.5-2	Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims ^{5, 6}	≥95%	100%	100%	Yes

(PBS p 38, CP p 22)

Program 1.6: Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Acts Payments – Income Support and Compensation

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:

- Provide income and financial support and compensation payments to eligible veterans and families.

TABLE 9: PROGRAM 1.6 MILITARY REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION ACTS PAYMENTS – INCOME SUPPORT AND COMPENSATION – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
1.6-1	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 100 days ¹	≥50% ³	16%	10%	No
1.6-2	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 100 days ¹	≥50% ³	27%	18%	No
1.6-3	Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days ¹	≥50% ³	54%	38%	No
1.6-4	Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA liability claims ^{5, 6}	≥95%	90%	90%	No
1.6-5	Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA permanent impairment claims ^{5, 6}	≥95%	95%	96%	Yes
1.6-6	Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA incapacity claims ^{5, 6}	≥95%	93%	90%	No
1.6-7	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 90 days ^{1, 20, 21}	≥50% ³	26%	20%	No
1.6-8	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 90 days ^{1, 20}	≥50% ³	16%	13%	No
1.6-9	Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days ^{1, 20}	≥50% ³	53%	33%	No
1.6-10	Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA liability claims ^{5, 6}	≥95%	90%	89%	No
1.6-11	Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA permanent impairment claims ^{5, 6}	≥95%	78%	90%	No
1.6-12	Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA incapacity claims ^{5, 6}	≥95%	95%	94%	No
1.6-13	Client satisfaction: The percentage of clients satisfied with the level of customer service they received when accessing their entitlements ^{9, 22}	≥80%	49%	47%	No

(PBS p 39–40, CP p 23)

Notes on Outcome 1 tables

PBS = DVA Portfolio Budget Statements 2022–23; CP = DVA Corporate Plan 2022–23; VEA = *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*

1 DVA use timeliness measures as proxy tools 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, Orange Card, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, and Home Equity Assurance Scheme (formally Pension Loan Scheme).

3 This target has changed from 'Percentage is the same or greater than previous year' to a numerical value to increase transparency. All processing timeliness targets for Outcome 1 have been set at $\geq 50\%$ to enable the reader to easily understand and compare the department's performance in processing the different claim types.

4 Change of circumstances includes personal changes (e.g. phone number, relationship status, accommodation, financial circumstances).

5 This performance measure has been amended to include the word 'processed' or 'processing'.

6 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.

7 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.

8 The response rate for 2022–23 was 25% (441 clients) for Program 1.1.

9 Client satisfaction is measured through an annual independent Client Benefits Client Satisfaction Survey conducted by ORIMA Research, which covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. 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. The overall survey response rate for 2022–23 was 26% (3,369 clients).

10 The target has been changed from $>90\%$ to $\geq 90\%$ to clarify the intent.

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

12 The response rate for 2022–23 was 31% (1,088 clients) for Program 1.2.

13 This measure considers the war widow/er claims under the VEA. The methodology has been adjusted to be consistent with other timeliness measures. The results now reflect the time taken between the date of receipt and the date of determination. The results had previously been measured as the time taken between the date of registration and the determination date.

14 This measure considers death claims under the VEA.

15 This measure considers War Widows Pension claims under the VEA. The response rate for 2022–23 was 35% (129 clients) for Program 1.3.

16 This measure considers funeral benefits claims.

17 The response rate for funeral benefits for 2022–23 was 25% (326 clients) for Program 1.4.

18 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 2022–23 was 31%. The survey results span 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023.

19 Internal testing indicated that there had been an incorrect recording of the date of receipt in 8% of transactions. However, this did not alter the result reported. The department is modifying procedures to ensure that the date of receipt is correctly recorded, including the issuance of task cards, and has enhanced its training in this area.

20 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.

21 Internal testing indicated that there had been an incorrect recording of the determination date in 16% of transactions. The department is modifying procedures to ensure that the date of determination is correctly recorded, including by updating standard operating procedures and conducting more sampling and checking of claims, and has enhanced its training in this area.

22 This measure considers the following claim types: MRCA and DRCA initial liability, MRCA and DRCA permanent impairment, and MRCA and DRCA incapacity. The response rate for 2022–23 was 24% (1,385 clients) for Program 1.6.

23 A process error resulted in a delay registering some claims that had been received via post. These did not impact whether DVA met the target for this measure.

Analysis of performance against Outcome 1

Outcome 1 provides veterans and their families with access to income support, compensation and other support services. DVA achieved 2 of the 12 timeliness measure targets, 6 of the 12 quality measure targets, and 2 of the 6 client satisfaction targets.

Timeliness

DVA has experienced an increase in claims for compensation over the past few years which has led to a backlog of claims across many compensation streams, and longer wait times for veterans. This is reflected in DVA's results against its timeliness targets for 2022–23. Timeliness of claims processing remains the department's main priority and is the subject of extensive external scrutiny, in particular the backlog of compensation claims and its subsequent impacts on the timeliness of claims processing.

The timeliness measures provide an assessment of the department's claims processing performance against the targets set for the department. Comparing the results over time provides a view of the efficiency of the department in processing claims. To improve the transparency of the department's achievement of these measures, the target has been changed from 'percentage is the same or greater than previous year' to '≥50%'. DVA notes that past achievement across Outcome 1 timeliness measures has been varied. To bring consistency across these measures and to make them easier to understand and compare, now and in the future, the same target has been used for all timeliness measures. This has meant that in some instances a benchmark has been set at a level lower than previous achievement. Although this is the case, DVA continues to strive to improve its performance and is committed to clearing the backlog and ensuring that it does not occur again.

Claims can be made under 3 Acts depending on the year and the circumstances of service at the time the injury or illness was caused: *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA), *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) and *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). The time taken to finalise claims is dependent on a number of variables, with many being outside the control of DVA. This includes factors such as:

- the complexity of the claim, including the number of conditions claimed
- the number of Acts the veteran has eligibility under
- whether supporting medical and other evidence has been provided with the claim
- reliance on third parties for supporting information.

Figure 4: Timeliness: the percentage of claims processed against benchmark of 50%

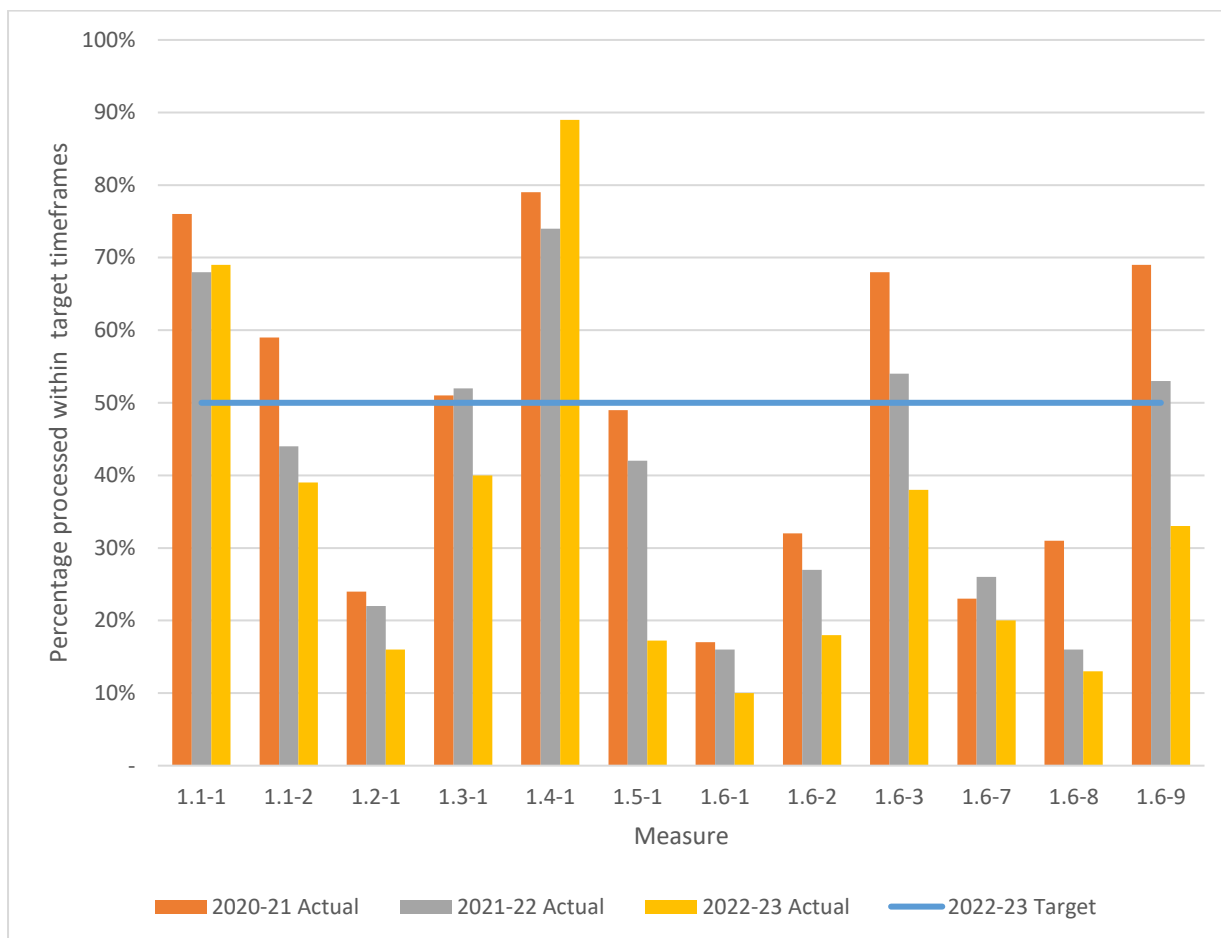


Figure 4 shows the 3-year trend of performance against each of the timeliness measures. Additional claims processing data can be found at Appendix A and on DVA’s website.

Overall, the timeliness of processing declined in 2022–23 compared to the previous year, with 10 of the 12 timeliness measures not achieved. This occurred despite the recruitment of an additional 451 staff. The percentage of claims processed within the standard will remain low while upskilling of the additional staff continues and older claims are processed. The department has made substantial progress in clearing the backlog, especially for initial liability claims, which open up access to other DVA services and supports for veterans. The overall backlog is down by more than 20% since its peak in September 2022, and the initial liability backlog is on track to be cleared by the end of 2023–24. Improvements in claims processing times and productivity are expected over the coming year as a result of the significant investment in recruiting and training new staff. Other initiatives have also been implemented to improve processing times and ongoing communication with veterans during the claims process, such as using claims support teams to assist in gathering evidence so that claims are more ‘decision ready’, using the same delegate to assess multiple claims by veterans, and trialling combined benefits processing.

For Veterans’ Children Education Schemes (measure 1.5-1), DVA processed 17% of claims within 28 days, down from 42% in the prior year. Increases in the numbers of students applying at the commencement of the 2023 academic year resulted in a reduction in the number of claims processed within the 28-day timeframe. Additional staff will be on-boarded before the 2024 academic year to better support timely processing of claims.

The target for MRCA initial liability claims processing (measure 1.6-7) was not achieved in 2022–23. In 2022–23 the average number of days between the lodgement of an MRCA initial liability claim and the claim being decided was 441. Performance for MRCA initial liability claims was slightly below the prior year’s performance, at 20% of claims processed within 90 days in 2022–23 compared with 26% in 2021–

22. This is largely a result of prioritising older claims in the backlog and the impact of training new staff. DVA saw an 8.6% increase in the net number of MRCA initial liability claims, with 34,346 claims received in 2022–23 compared to 31,613 claims received in 2021–22. In late May 2022 an improvement to DVA's systems was introduced, to allow multiple conditions to be attached to a single claim, rather than separate claims being required for each condition. This means that clients only need to lodge one claim rather than multiple claims. This also improves end to end processing times, outcomes, overall user experience and satisfaction, and provides cost savings to the department due to efficiency gains and reduced client enquiries.

There was a 52.8% increase in the number of MRCA initial liability conditions determined, with a total of 69,486 conditions determined during 2022–23, compared with 45,476 in 2021–22. Refer to Appendix A of this report for more information. Other factors also impacted on the timeliness of processing; for instance, the target for VEA war widow/er claims (measure 1.3-1) was not met due to delegates waiting on evidence such as coroner reports or death certificates, and DVA changing the commencement time from date of registration to date of lodgement/receipt to be consistent with other claims processing measures. This change in method has impacted the overall processing time; however, it is unlikely the target would have been met using the old methodology.

The incoming claim volumes exceeding available resources caused delays in processing claims and resulted in timeliness targets not being achieved for VEA disability support claims (measure 1.2-1) and DRCA initial liability claims (measure 1.6-1). 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 1.6-2 and 1.6-8) and incapacity claims (measures 1.6-3 and 1.6-9) under the MRCA and DRCA.

Funeral benefits (measure 1.4-1) and new claims processed within 30 days (measure 1.1-1) timeliness targets were achieved in 2022-23. The funeral benefits (measure 1.4-1) processing timeliness target was exceeded as a result of improving processing systems and training additional delegates. The target to meet 50% of new claims processed within 30 days (measure 1.1-1) was achieved and performance is expected to continue to improve as a result of creating temporary work groups to target identified priority transaction types.

Quality (correctness rates)

In 2022–23, DVA exceeded the ≥95% quality (correctness rate) targets for 6 of 12 measure under Outcome 1. This includes income support new claims (measure 1.1-3), change of circumstances requests (measure 1.1-4) and funeral benefits (measure 1.4-2). In the delivery of compensation, DVA achieved the quality targets for war widow/er claims (measure 1.3-2), Veterans' Children Education Schemes (measure 1.5-2) and DRCA permanent impairment (measure 1.6-5). DVA came within 1% of achieving the quality targets for 2 other quality measures – MRCA incapacity payments (measure 1.6-12), and VEA veterans' disability support claims (measure 1.2-2).

DVA did not achieve targets for the following measures, which continue to be impacted by the increase in claim volumes and complexity (e.g. claims with multiple conditions or assessed under multiple Acts): correctness rate of processed claims (measure 1.2-2), DRCA liability claims (measure 1.6-4), DRCA incapacity claims (measure 1.6-6), MRCA liability claims (measure 1.6-10), MRCA permanent impairment claims (measure 1.6-11) and MRCA incapacity claims (measure 1.6-12).

DVA has enhanced its quality assurance in some areas of the department and 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 continuous improvement of both the quality and the timeliness of claims processing. Through this quality assurance DVA has become aware of the error rate associated with Veterans' Children Education Schemes and MCRA liability claims and is striving to improve this with the implementation of additional internal quality assurance and training.

Client satisfaction

In 2022–23, DVA exceeded the $\geq 95\%$ quality (correctness rate) targets for 6 of 12 measure under Outcome 1. An independent Client Benefits Client Satisfaction Survey, conducted by ORIMA Research over the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, measures client satisfaction for measures 1.1-5 (income support), 1.2-3 (disability support), 1.3-3 (war widow/ers), 1.4-3 (funeral benefits) and 1.6-13 (safety, rehabilitation and compensation – DRCA and MRCA).

The survey methodology comprised both random selection of clients, and for some programs a census of all clients within a program. In 2022–23 the Client Benefits Client Satisfaction Survey was completed by 3,369 clients, representing a response rate of 26% (compared to 31% in 2021–22 and 21% in 2020-21).

Payments not meeting expectations and claims processing time were key factors that contributed to the low level of client satisfaction, most notably among MRCA/DRCA and disability support clients. Younger clients continued to report lower satisfaction rates than older cohorts. DVA is investing additional resources to improve the time taken to process all claim types and to improve communication about the progress of claims throughout the entire process.

Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance policyholder satisfaction (measure 1.4-4) was 88%, so DVA did not achieve the $\geq 90\%$ target for this measure. The survey was sent to 100 randomly selected policyholders who had recently had a claim finalised. The survey asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with the claims process and outcome. Those responding 'Very happy' or 'Happy' are considered satisfied. The response rate for 2022–23 was 31%. The survey results span 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. In 2021–22 DSH Insurance added a QR code to allow responses to be provided electronically. However, this has not increased the survey response rates as expected.

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.

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

Outcome 2 performance measures and results

Program 2.1: 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 can 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.

TABLE 10: PROGRAM 2.1 GENERAL MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS AND SERVICES – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 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	<1% ²	0%	0%	Yes

(PBS p 49, CP p 24)

Program 2.2: 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.

TABLE 11: PROGRAM 2.2 VETERANS' HOSPITAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 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	<1% ²	0%	0%	Yes

(PBS p 50, CP p 24)

Program 2.3: 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:

- Provide eligible veterans with access to a broader range of medicines and wound care items at a concession rate.

TABLE 12: PROGRAM 2.3 VETERANS' PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 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	<1% ²	0%	0%	Yes

(PBS p 51, CP p 25)

Program 2.4: 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:

- Provide a range of care and support in the home to assist eligible veterans and families to remain independent for longer.

TABLE 13: PROGRAM 2.4 VETERANS' COMMUNITY CARE AND SUPPORT – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 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	<1% ²	0%	0%	Yes

(PBS pp 52, CP p 25)

Program 2.5: 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 their families. The program also supports eligible veterans and their 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.
- 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 VETERANS' COUNSELLING AND OTHER HEALTH SERVICES – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
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	<1% ²	0%	0%	Yes
Travel					
2.5-2	Timeliness: Target percentage of claims for reimbursement processed within 28 days ³	≥95%	100%	100%	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%	92%	Yes
2.5-5	Client satisfaction ⁵	≥80%	89%	91%	Yes

(PBS pp 53–54, CP p 26)

Program 2.6: Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Acts – Health and Other Care Services

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:

- Provide veterans with access to medical management, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation programs and support for employment.

TABLE 15: PROGRAM 2.6 MILITARY REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION ACTS – HEALTH AND OTHER CARE SERVICES – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
2.6-1	Timeliness: The percentage of rehabilitation assessments completed within 30 days of assessment referral ^{3, 6}	≥75%	88%	99%	Yes
2.6-3	Client satisfaction: An annual survey of client satisfaction with the rehabilitation program ⁷	≥75%	81%	70%	No

(PBS p 55, CP p 27)

Notes on Outcome 2 tables

PBS = DVA Portfolio Budget Statements 2022–23; CP = DVA Corporate Plan 2022–23

1 Complaints are registered in the Client Feedback Management System when they are received by DVA.

2 The target for 2022–23 and actual results for 2021–22 has been changed from >99% to <1% to make this measure more understandable. DVA is measuring the proportion of clients who have registered a complaint in relation to unmet access and/or quality compared to the total number of clients accessing services.

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

4 The intake process is not systemised and is a manual process.

5 Client satisfaction is measured by a questionnaire. Satisfaction questionnaires are offered by clinicians at the end of an episode of care. All clients who answer 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' to the question 'How satisfied are you with the counselling provided to you?' are measured as satisfied. The questionnaire is not compulsory for clients to complete. The final result for 2022–23 was 91% based on a total of 418 survey responses. DVA is unable to determine how many surveys were distributed for response for 2022–23; however, the systems have been modified to enable future reporting. In 2022–23 there were 29,535 episodes of care closed.

6 This measure is a calculation of percentage of rehabilitation assessments undertaken during 2022–23 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. The 2022–23 corporate plan erroneously included a target of $\geq 88.50\%$. The target should have been $\geq 75\%$ per the 2022–23 Portfolio Budget Statements. The wording of this measure has changed slightly from 'The percentage of rehabilitation assessments that were made within 30 days of referral for assessment' in the 2022–23 corporate plan to 'The percentage of rehabilitation assessments completed within 30 days of assessment referral'.

7 Client satisfaction is measured through a monthly independent survey by ORIMA Research of DVA clients who have recently completed the rehabilitation program. Client satisfaction for this measure is calculated through the responses to 7 questions in the survey, which assess participants' overall views of the program as well as the rehabilitation plan commencement, implementation and closure process. The 2022–23 performance result is based on rehabilitation case closures from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Survey participation is voluntary. Neutral responses are excluded from the results for this measure. The response rate for 2022–23 at May 2023 was 23%, which is an increase from 21% in 2021–22.

Analysis of performance against Outcome 2

In 2022–23 DVA continued the journey to shift from an illness model and adopt a wellbeing outcomes approach that empowers veterans to achieve greater independence for themselves and their families. DVA is committed to understanding veterans' wellbeing needs, connecting them and their families to relevant services and supports, and enabling them to make informed decisions based on what matters to them. DVA's achievement of this is measured through the quality, timeliness and client satisfaction results for the services provided under Outcome 2.

For Outcome 2, DVA achieved all 5 quality measure targets, all 3 timeliness measure targets, and 1 of the 2 client satisfaction targets. This reflects DVA's successful delivery of programs to maintain and enhance the wellbeing of veterans and families. Throughout 2022–23, veterans and their families were connected to high-quality, evidence-based and responsive services funded through Outcome 2. DVA ensured clients had timely access to high-quality health care, counselling and rehabilitation services; and maintained and developed services that supported the holistic wellbeing of veterans and families. DVA continues to review and improve business practices and enabling systems to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and effectively.

Quality of service

The quality of service for most of DVA Outcome 2 measures are assessed by comparing the number of complaints registered by clients to the number of clients who accessed services. In 2022–23 DVA met all of the quality of service targets, including for access to general medical consultations and services (measure 2.1-1), access to veterans' hospital services (measure 2.2-1), access to veterans' pharmaceutical benefits (measure 2.3-1), access to veterans' community care and support (measure 2.4-1) and access to veterans' counselling and other health services (measure 2.5-1). This reflects DVA's ongoing commitment to providing high-quality services and supports to veterans and their families.

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 Medicare 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 2022–23, DVA reimbursed all travel claims within 28 days, thereby achieving the performance measure target (measure 2.5-2).

Open Arms has been the Australian Government's response to veteran mental health support for 40 years. Founded by Vietnam veterans, Open Arms is a nationally accredited mental health service that provides 24-hour free and confidential mental health support. There has been an improvement in the timeliness of allocation to Open Arms clinicians from that achieved in 2021–22. In 2022–23, 92% of Open Arms clients were allocated to an Open Arms clinician within 2 weeks of their initial intake (measure 2.5-4), compared to 87% for 2021–22, due to streamlining processes to ensure faster allocation to regional clinicians. 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 this achievement. These include:

- increased flexibility in the facilitation of assessments, with improved remote support options assisting with the timeliness in assessment coordination
- continued support and training resources for rehabilitation providers, ensuring a clear understanding of timeliness and requirements associated with conducting assessments.

Client satisfaction

Open Arms improved the level of client satisfaction, exceeding the 80% target with a result of 91% of clients satisfied with services provided compared to 89% in 2021–22 (measure 2.5-5). This improvement in satisfaction can be attributed to streamlined processes, reduced wait times and increased staff training. This result was calculated from the 418 client questionnaires received in 2022–23. Questionnaires were distributed to clients via email, by post and in person following an episode of care. A client may not receive a survey for 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 2022–23 DVA did not achieve the 75% target for client satisfaction with the rehabilitation program (measure 2.6-3). The score achieved of 70% reflects a decrease from the 2021–22 reporting period which may be explained by a change in the calculation methodology which removed neutral responses. Other factors which may impact satisfaction include personal, environmental, social and policy changes. Efforts to improve the response rate from the rehabilitation client satisfaction survey continued, including the use of SMS and email reminders. These efforts resulted in an improvement in the response rate from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023 of 23%, which was an increase from the previous financial year of 21%.

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.

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

Program 3.1: War Graves

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

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 WAR GRAVES – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
3.1-1	95% of official commemorations are inspected at least once annually to ensure they continue to meet the CWGC standards ¹	≥95%	Not able to report ²	Not able to report ²	N/A
3.1-2	Percentage of official commemorations that meet the CWGC standard compared to the previous year	Percentage is the same or greater than previous year	Not able to report ²	Not able to report ²	N/A

(PBS p 59, CP p 28)

Program 3.2: 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.

TABLE 17: PROGRAM 3.2 COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES – PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

No	Performance measure	Target	2021–22 Actual result	2022–23 Actual result	Achieved
3.2-1	Commemorative event quality: Commemorative events are conducted to commemorate veterans' service in a dignified, solemn and respectful manner ³	The number of discrete complaints is less than 1% of the estimated audience for any one event	0%	0%	Yes

(PBS p 60, CP p 28)

Notes on Outcome 3 tables

PBS = DVA Portfolio Budget Statements 2022–23; CP = DVA Corporate Plan 2022–23

1 Particular specifications apply for each commemoration type (graves, commemoration markers, bronze plaques).

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

3 Complaints are registered in the Client Feedback Management System. Estimated television audiences viewing commemorative events are sourced from ABC TV. Total estimated audience for 2022–23 was 1.86 million.

Analysis of performance against Outcome 3

While DVA is unable to report reliably on performance measures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2 due to limitations of the War Graves System, a planned and regular program of maintenance and inspections are managed by OAWG field staff in each state each year. Maintenance and inspections are conducted by a combination of service providers and OAWG field staff and cover over 90% of the commemorative assets OAWG is responsible for maintaining. However, data integrity issues limit DVA's ability to report against these measures. DVA intends to implement a new system to enable reporting however implementation of the new system is estimated to take 2 to 3 years. In the interim, from 2023–24, DVA will report on 2 new measures for Program 3.1 that do not rely on data from the existing War Graves System.

War graves

Established under the *War Graves Act 1980*, the Office of Australian War Graves within DVA is responsible for the delivery of the Australian Government's program of official commemoration. OAWG provides care and maintenance of the final resting places of more than 331,750 eligible veterans and war dead of the wars, conflicts, peacekeeping and other operations to which Australia has been committed, in more than 2,400 commemorative sites throughout Australia. This includes a further 1,750 commemorations established in 2022–23.

OAWG manages a complex program of care and maintenance of each of these commemorations, 76 CWGC cemeteries and plots, 4 Australian Military Cemeteries and 10 Gardens of Remembrance. The annual work program is managed by a combination of 186 maintenance contracts and 10 standing offers, 36 employed staff and over 600 individual contractors across all states and territories, at a cost of \$24 million in 2022–23.

During 2022–23, the impacts of trade skills shortages and a variable climate, including extreme and unseasonable weather, affected the provision, inspection, repair and rebuilding of official commemorations.

OAWG, like the broader cemetery and crematoria sector, has experienced significant challenges to recruitment and retention in 2022–23. Both the horticultural services and stonemasonry sectors remain fragile trade skills markets. OAWG is investigating collaborative opportunities with other government

agencies, such as the National Indigenous Australians Agency, to supplement its existing workforce and support delivery of the program of official commemoration.

OAWG also manages overseas commemorations including interpretive centres in Thailand (Hellfire Pass), Malaysia (Hellfire Pass) and France (Villers-Bretonneux), and the resting places of nearly 22,000 Australian and Commonwealth war dead in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

Commemorative activities

Australians have served as peacekeepers in countries around the world since 1947, when Australians were the first peacekeepers deployed in a United Nations mission to the Netherlands East Indies. The National Commemorative Service to mark the 75th anniversary of Australian peacekeeping took place on 14 September 2022 and was broadcast nationally on the ABC. Approximately 350 people attended the ceremony (numbers were impacted by the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II), and 88,000 viewers tuned in to the ABC to watch the service.

Anzac Day commemorative services were held at Gallipoli (Türkiye) and Villers-Bretonneux (France) on 25 April 2023 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 2023 international Anzac Day commemorations were conducted successfully in both countries. The Dawn Service at Villers-Bretonneux was attended by 1,711 people and had a broadcast viewership of 282,000, and the Dawn Service at Gallipoli was attended by 1,507 people and had a broadcast viewership of 405,000.

Annexure 1: Performance measure changes

Program / key activity / performance measure	Explanation of change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program 1.1 – Veterans’ Income Support and Allowances • 1.1-1 Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days • 1.1-2 Timeliness: The percentage of change of circumstances processed within 10 days <p>Program 1.2 – Veterans’ Disability Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2-1 Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 100 days <p>Program 1.3 – Assistance to Defence Widow/ers and Dependants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.3-1 Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 30 days <p>Program 1.4 – Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4-1 Funeral Benefits: Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 10 days <p>Program 1.5 – Veterans’ Children Education Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5-1 Timeliness: The percentage of claims processed within 28 days <p>Program 1.6 Military Rehabilitation and compensation Acts Payments – Income Support and Compensation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.6-1 Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 100 days • 1.6-2 Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 100 days • 1.6-3 Timeliness: The percentage of DRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days • 1.6-7 Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA liability claims processed (determined) within 90 days • 1.6-8 Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA permanent impairment claims processed (determined) within 90 days • 1.6-9 Timeliness: The percentage of MRCA incapacity claims processed (determined) within 50 days 	<p>Target changed from percentage improvement from previous year to $\geq 50\%$ to more clearly articulate and track performance over time.</p> <p>The same target has been used across all measures assessing the timeliness of claims processing to improve reader clarity and compare the department’s performance in processing the different claim types.</p> <p>For some of these timeliness measures, the numerical target is lower than the previous year’s performance, effectively lowering the target for that measure for this year. The intent is to increase transparency and to enable the reader to easily understand and compare the department’s performance in processing the different claim types. Therefore, all processing timeliness targets for Outcome 1 have been set at $\geq 50\%$. Additional information has been provided in the analysis section for Outcome 1 to ensure transparency.</p>

Program / key activity / performance measure	Explanation of change
<p>Program 1.1 – Veterans’ Income Support and Allowances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1-3 Quality: Correctness rate of processing of new claims • 1.1-4 Quality: Correctness rate of processing change of circumstances <p>Program 1.2 – Veterans’ Disability Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2-2 Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims <p>Program 1.3 – Assistance to Defence Widow/ers and Dependants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.3-2 Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims <p>Program 1.4 – Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4-2 Funeral benefits: Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims <p>Program 1.5 – Veterans’ Children Education Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5-2 Quality: Correctness rate of processed claims <p>Program 1.6 Military Rehabilitation and compensation Acts Payments – Income Support and Compensation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.6-4 Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA liability claims • 1.6-5 Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA permanent impairment claims • 1.6-6 Quality: Correctness rate of processed DRCA incapacity claims • 1.6-10 Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA liability claims • 1.6-11 Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA permanent impairment claims • 1.6-12 Quality: Correctness rate of processed MRCA incapacity claims 	<p>The target has been changed from >95% to ≥95% to clarify the intent.</p> <p>Additional words (shown in bold in this table) have been added to make the measure clearer.</p>
<p>Program 1.4 – Assistance and Other Compensation for Veterans and Dependants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4-4 Defence Service Homes Insurance: Policyholder satisfaction: The percentage of policyholders satisfied with the service provided when their claim for damage to their home has been finalised 	<p>The target has been changed from >90% to ≥90% to clarify the intent.</p>

Program / key activity / performance measure	Explanation of change
<p>Program 2.1 – General Medical Consultations and Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>The target has been reversed from >99% to <1% to ensure the intent of the measure is maintained and is easier to understand.</p>
<p>Program 2.2 – Veterans’ Hospital Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>The target has been reversed from >99% to <1% to ensure the intent of the measure is maintained and is easier to understand.</p>
<p>Program 2.3 – Veterans’ Pharmaceutical Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>The target has been reversed from >99% to <1% to ensure the intent of the measure is maintained and is easier to understand.</p>
<p>Program 2.4 – Veterans’ Community Care and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>The target has been reversed from >99% to <1% to ensure the intent of the measure is maintained and is easier to understand.</p>
<p>Program 2.5 – Veterans’ Counselling and Other Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.5-1 Access to services: 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 	<p>The target has been reversed from >99% to <1% to ensure the intent of the measure is maintained and is easier to understand.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.5-4 Open Arms: Timeliness: Percentage of clients allocated to an Open Arms clinician within two weeks of initial intake 	<p>The target has been changed from >65% to ≥65% to clarify the intent.</p>
<p>The following performance measures have been removed</p>	
<p>Program 1.5 – Veterans’ Children Education Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>This measure used a survey asking students or their parents to what extent the scheme had helped them reach their academic potential, to demonstrate the achievement of the Veterans’ Children Education Scheme and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme outcomes.</p>

Program / key activity / performance measure	Explanation of change
	<p>This is no longer considered a suitable indicator due to the small number of respondents and an absence of causation between actions of the department and the academic goals of individuals being reached.</p> <p>The measure has been removed to streamline the remaining performance measures, which adequately cover the performance of the program.</p>
<p>Program 2.5 – Veterans’ Counselling and Other Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.5-3 Client satisfaction: Degree of complaints about arranged travel relative to the quantity of bookings 	<p>This measure assessed how well the department assisted eligible veterans and their attendants with transport when travelling for approved medical treatment. Satisfaction with this program was assessed through the level of complaints in relation to being unable to access services or the quality of the service.</p> <p>This measure has been removed to streamline the remaining performance measures, which adequately cover the performance of the program.</p>
<p>Program 2.6 – Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Acts Payments – Health and Other Care Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.6-2 Quality: Percentage of clients where rehabilitation goals were met or exceeded 	<p>This measure assessed whether the program was supporting clients to successfully meet rehabilitation goals set by clients as part of their rehabilitation plans.</p> <p>This measure is no longer considered a suitable indicator of performance as it relies on factors outside of DVA’s control. For instance, the setting of rehabilitation goals relies on medical professionals and the client’s capacity to work towards them.</p> <p>This measure has been removed to streamline the remaining performance measures, which adequately cover the performance of the program.</p>

Program / key activity / performance measure	Explanation of change
The following key activities have been removed	
<p>Make it easier for veterans and families to access the right information, services and support by continuing to improve and enhance systems and processes.</p> <p><i>Programs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 , 2.6</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These key activities have been removed as they do not directly relate to the program/s. • The intention is to more clearly articulate key activities by including only those that directly relate to the particular program.
<p>Engage with ex-service organisations and representatives of veterans and families to deliver support and services, which respond to their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Programs: 1.3, 1.4, 1.6</i> 	
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Programs: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4</i> 	
<p>Provide veterans with access to medical management, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation programs and supports for employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Program: 2.5</i> 	
<p>Develop and distribute digital and hard copy educational and commemorative resources and information to promote an increased understanding in the community of Australia’s experience of service and wartime history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Program 3.2</i> 	