

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

5.25 The committee recommends that the terms of reference of the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee be updated to explicitly include consideration that prospective research participants may be vulnerable to perceived coercion to participate.

Recommendation 2

5.28 The committee recommends that all members of the Australian Defence Force who are invited to participate in medical research have access to a confidential conversation with an independent participant advocate prior to consenting to participate.

Recommendation 3

5.45 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs expedite their investigation on antimalarial claims lodged since September 2016 and continue to offer individuals assistance to lodge their claims and facilitate access to an advocate if required.

Recommendation 4

5.49 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs continue to provide ongoing training, information and support for the officers working in the Complex Case Team.

Recommendation 5

5.62 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs, in addition to the existing program of consultation forums, ensure matters raised by attendees and families are followed up. The forums should continue to be promoted widely and in consultation with ex-service organisations and advocate groups.

Recommendation 6

5.63 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs make the material provided at the consultation sessions available online.

Recommendation 7

5.64 The committee recommends that the Department of Defence attend the Department of Veterans' Affairs' consultation forums to maintain their knowledge of the issues raised by the veteran community. This will assist Defence to ensure their dedicated website is updated appropriately.

Recommendation 8

5.65 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs undertake a targeted awareness raising campaign, in consultation with ex-service organisations and veterans' advocates, to increase veterans' awareness of the non-liability pathway.

Recommendation 9

5.72 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs and Department of Defence, in collaboration with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and other health professionals, review and update the clinical guidelines developed in 2016 to recognise the complex conditions with which some veterans may present.

Recommendation 10

5.73 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs consult with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to assess whether General Practitioner briefings, like the one that occurred in Townsville in 2016 would be beneficial in other areas, including around major bases.

Recommendation 11

5.77 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs review the University of Queensland research findings due in late 2018 with a view to further inform the development of any new initiatives and the ongoing review of existing programs.

Recommendation 12

5.82 The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs prioritise the development of the Neurocognitive Health Program. To enable veterans to access this program as soon as possible, consideration should be given to the rollout of a pilot program to a targeted population.

Recommendation 13

5.83 The committee recommends that the pilot program undertaken as part of the Neurocognitive Health Program be formally evaluated and that the evaluation report be made publicly available.

Recommendation 14

5.86 The committee recommends that, following the evaluation of the Neurocognitive Health Program pilot, a collaborative working group be established, including those who contributed to the development of the program, veterans and advocates, medical professionals and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This group would consider the outcomes of the pilot and, if supported by the evaluation, how best to roll out and promote the program to all veterans it could assist.