

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Budget Estimates 2017-18; 30 May 2017
Answers to questions on notice from the Veterans' Affairs portfolio

Question 1

Outcome: 1 Program: Australian War Memorial

Topic: AWM Collections

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 92)

Senator BACK asked:

CHAIR: No. I am beyond Albany. Albany is going tremendously well. No, it is the last of the first three ASLAVs that went to Baghdad in 2003. I am just wondering if there are any plans yet for it to be brought back and placed at the War Memorial.

Dr Nelson: We do have the ASLAV prototype permanently on display now, alongside the Bushmaster and the Centurion tank, but I will have to ask either the assistant director or Gen. Dawson in relation to one of those three ASLAVs.

Mr Sullivan: We have a regular meeting with the ADF around objects that have been identified by curators, as well as deployed personnel, for return to Australia because of their heritage significance. I cannot swear that the particular ASLAV that you are talking about is one of those items that has been identified but we do have quite a number of objects, large technology objects, identified to be returned to Australia so I can find out. If you can provide the specific details of the one that you are considering I can give you advice on whether that is on our radar.

Answer

The Australian War Memorial has identified several ASLAVs for potential transfer to the National Collection. The ARNs (Army Registration Number) of the identified ASLAVs are 16321 and 16396, which were both present in the action at Derapet for which Corporal Daniel Keighran was awarded his Victoria Cross, as well as 16307 and 16310, which were two of the longest-serving vehicles in the Middle East.

The Memorial has sought further information regarding Senator Back's enquiry, which is specifically about an ASLAV with ARN 16046. Information has been sought by Army and can be provided in due course.

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Question 2

Outcome: 1 Program: 1.1

Topic: Freedom of Information

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

My office has been contacted by a Mr Peter Cairns and Mrs Roslyn Cairns of Woodbridge, Tasmania. Mrs Cairns recently made a Freedom of Information application to the Department of Veterans' Affairs to have her payslips returned. The Department refused her request on the grounds that, although they were satisfied that the documents in question were in the Department's possession, the documents could not be found.

- a) Why has the Department been unable to find Mrs Cairns's payslips?
- b) Are efforts continuing to be made by the Department to locate these documents? If not, why not?
- c) In searching for the documents, has the Department identified any deficiencies in their filing or archiving procedures? What action is being taken to correct these deficiencies?
- d) What steps is the Department taking to avoid further instances of misplacing clients' documents?

Answer

- a) Mrs Cairn's payslips have been sent to a DVA document repository to be placed on her file, but have not yet been processed. At this stage, due to the vast amount of documents requiring processing, it may take some time to physically locate her payslips.
- b) Yes, DVA continues its efforts to locate Mrs Cairn's payslips.
- c) DVA is in the process of digitising all incoming correspondence which will help to prevent missing documents and improve timeframes for locating documents in the future.
- d) Refer to answer c).

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Question 3

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: VCR – ICT Systems

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 95)

Senator KITCHING asked:

Senator KITCHING: Of the 200-odd systems, there were 15 or 18 systems—

Mr Geary: 18.

Senator KITCHING: So there were 18 systems that were very old. What are the other categories?

Mr Geary: I think it is fair to say that most of our IT systems are reasonably old. The income support system itself, which pays service pensions et cetera, would be around 15 years old, as well, and a lot on the help ICT systems are quite old. The systems that were identified at catastrophic risk were the compensation systems.

Senator KITCHING: But were there other categories? Were some of them okay or satisfactory?

Ms Cosson: Some of them probably need some attention earlier than others. I would not be able to give you the names of all systems, but we identified a lot of them. Last year, when we received in the budget the \$23.9 million to address the rehabilitation and compensation systems, that was dealing with the immediate risk of those systems, as Mr Geary pointed out. Through this process with Veteran Centric Reform we also identified, particularly, that income support needed some attention, because of the legacy system supporting that. With rehabilitation, we probably have a little bit more time. Also, with the health and aged care payment systems, I believe we have a bit more time with the health systems. There are a number of systems that sit beneath those major outcomes that we deliver and part of that risk assessment is looking at where we should be investing up-front with the \$23.9 million for improved processing systems. Also, with Department of Human Services, with WPIT we are seeing if we can bring anything forward as part of that to address some of the risk. Similarly, from within the department we are having a look at our own capital funding that might be available to invest today to hold those systems over until Veteran Centric Reform can deliver.

Senator KITCHING: How much of your own capital funding would you possibly use to do that?

Ms Cosson: We have an information committee meeting tomorrow, so I will take that on

Answer

DVA receives an annual amount in the order of \$13.6m in Departmental Capital Budgets (DCB) funding. For the 2017-18 financial year, approximately half of this amount will be available to invest in ICT assets.

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Question 4

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: VCR – ICT Systems

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 98)

Senator BACK asked:

Ms Pope: And we will be starting with a pilot in students. The student payments will be the first one that we trial with WPIT. There are about 2,500 student payments, so it is a very small program. They are educational support payments to the children of veterans. We are going to test and work with this system first. That will give us a guide and a sense of how successful we can be, then looking at income support payments more broadly.

CHAIR: What is the platform? Is it a Microsoft platform? It is not a bespoke platform?

Ms Pope: The DHS platform is SAP based.

CHAIR: So it is immeasurably able over time to be expanded, changed and integrated.

Ms Pope: Yes.

CHAIR: In 10 years' time we will not be there saying we have to spend \$1 billion this time because the 2017 versions are SAP based? By whom is it fully supported?

Ms Pope: By SAP.

CHAIR: They are not outsourcing either the hardware or software support? Are they taking responsibility for both of those?

Ms Pope: You might need to us some of those questions of DHS, in terms of the detail of their arrangements.

CHAIR: I would like to ask you to take it on notice and ask DHS.

Ms Pope: Certainly.

CHAIR: I am particularly keen to know who is undertaking software support and hardware maintenance and what the terms of the contracts are. If you can alert us to that it would be appreciated.

Answer

The Department of Human Services (Human Services) will ensure that hardware infrastructure and maintenance is provided to support SAP and other commercially available platforms through contracts with relevant hardware suppliers.

Human Services has contracts in place with SAP for support and maintenance of SAP software products whilst they are commercially available. As part of these contracts SAP provides Human Services with early advice on enhancements and upgrades, so that Human Services can plan accordingly. This also includes advice for when a product is to be retired from support and the product replacement path.

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Question 5

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: VCR – ICT Systems Contracts

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 101)

Senator KITCHING asked:

Senator KITCHING: Are the improvements going to be done in-house? Are they going to be done by contract? Do you have an idea about the value of the contracts? Will they go to open tender?

Mr Lewis: It will be a bit of all those things, and of course it will be done through DHS. If you wanted us to address any particular questions, we would be delighted to take that on notice. We would need to refer to our colleagues in Human Services and come back to you.

Senator KITCHING: If I could put those on notice. What is the value of the contracts? Will they go to open tender? What are the KPIs going to be for the contracts? Are there any KPIs or milestones in place to ensure system improvements are delivered on time and within budget? I was going to ask you about cybersecurity risks; I will put that on notice as well. Was there a cybersecurity risk assessment conducted on DVA's systems and what were the results? How many systems were at risk? I will give you a list.

Mr Lewis: We will wait for the list to come through and we will tackle them diligently.

Answer

The Department of Human Services (Human Services) has been provided with \$68 million to develop new ICT capability for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) as part of Veteran Centric Reform. The work will be undertaken in close consultation with DVA and will be covered by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the departments. Human Services will make any contracting arrangements necessary to deliver this capability to DVA in accordance with standard government contracting guidelines. This project is jointly governed under existing ICT development arrangements between the two departments. The details and timing of the deliverables are the subject of current intensive planning activities.

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Question 6

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: VCR – ICT Systems (Cybersecurity)
(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 101)

Senator KITCHING asked:

Senator KITCHING: I was going to ask you about cybersecurity risks; I will put that on notice as well. Was there a cybersecurity risk assessment conducted on DVA's systems and what were the results? How many systems were at risk? I will give you a list.

- a) Was there a cybersecurity risk assessment conducted on DVA's systems and what were the results?
- b) How many systems were at risk?

Answer

- a) An independent cybersecurity threat and risk assessment, on DVA's online services, was concluded in April 2017. The results indicate the mitigation of cybersecurity risk was adequate. .
- b) All systems carry a level of risk and a range of mitigation strategies, through a layered approach, are in place consistent with ASD recommendations. .

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Question 7

Outcome: 2 Program: All

Topic: RMA SOPs

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 101 - 102)

Senator FAWCETT asked:

Ms Foreman: The Repatriation Medical Authority has responsibility for the SOP and it bases those statements on sound scientific medical evidence. People are able to ask the RMA to review SOPs and the RMA is able to take an own motion and review the SOP on its own, if it decides to do so. That is the way the SOPs are presented. They would have looked at evidence that has come in from various scientific and medical studies to amend that particular SOP.

Senator FAWCETT: Sure, but as I understand—and tell me if I am wrong—the chronology of this, an issue or a concern was raised by veterans during a Senate inquiry. As I understand it, DVA was the agency at the table. As a result of that I am assuming you have then gone to the RMA for them to review the SOP.

Mr Lewis: I might need to take on notice the precise chronology there. To some extent I think we all would have been watching the proceedings of the Senate hearing quite closely. Whether we need to directly approach Professor Saunders about that issue or whether he already had it under advisement, I could not give you a concrete answer, but we would be very happy to take it on notice to explain the chronology to you.

Answer

The review of the Statements of Principles (SOPs) concerning suicide and attempted suicide (Nos. 65 and 66 of 2016), examining the timeframes required to be met for severe traumatic stressors and psychosocial stressors to be accepted as contributing factors in suicide and attempted suicide, was requested by an organisation representing veterans on 16 August 2016. The Authority agreed to undertake the review on 16 September 2016, and a notice of the review was published in the Government Notices Gazette on 19 September 2016.

The Authority also wrote to the applicant and major Ex-Service Organisations on 19 September, advising that submissions should be provided to the Authority by 2 December 2016. Submissions and information prepared by the Authority's Secretariat were considered at the Authority's bi-monthly meetings held in December 2016 and February 2017. Amended SOPs were registered with the Attorney-General's Department on 14 March 2017, and came into legal effect on 27 March 2017.

The first submission made to the Committee Inquiry (from Mr Peter Larter, an advocate with the Special Air Service Association) included the request referred to above to the Authority seeking changes to these factors.

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Question 8

Outcome: 2 Program: All

Topic: RMA SOP Review Schedule

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 102)

Senator FAWCETT asked:

Senator FAWCETT: I am conscious that I am asking you and it is them who do this, but do you know whether they have a regular schedule of reviewing to update their understanding around the medical evidence they have used?

Mr Lewis: I am not sure if there is a regular schedule.

Ms Foreman: But, as the secretary just said, they are able to initiate their own reviews, and they do that. I will take on notice whether it is a regular schedule. But I know that they do review their own SOPs. I am not sure how regularly they review each SOP.

Ms Spiers: To add to Ms Foreman's comments, mental health conditions are clearly a focus not only of Australian research but of international research. We will check with the Repatriation Medical Authority, but I suspect they are closely monitoring these areas because these are clearly areas of growth development in research. And we will look at the time frames appropriate to each condition. I think you referred to the two and five years, which would link to different mental health conditions. That is something they would be drawing from the research and would best placed to explain—not a common garden-variety lawyer, I am afraid!

Ms Foreman: We will take that on notice.

Answer

The Authority does have a schedule for regular review of its SOPs, and accompanying work plans which are reviewed every two months at the Authority's bimonthly formal meetings. In line with the provisions of the *Legislation Act 2003* (the LA), the Authority reviews the contents of each Statement of Principles at least once every 10 years. The Authority regards 10 years as the maximum period within which it can have confidence that the medical-science upon which a SOP is based is up-to-date. In practice, each SOP is reviewed after 7 to 8 years on average.

The Authority monitors developments in medical science and epidemiological understanding of disease aetiology. Where it becomes aware of significant new sound medical-scientific evidence, it initiates reviews of the relevant SOPs earlier than the usual cycle.

SOPs are also reviewed more frequently where a request is received from an eligible party to do so with sufficient relevant information to support the request. Eligible parties include veterans, organisations representing veterans or members of the ADF, defence personnel and the Repatriation Commission or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

When reviewing a SOP, the Authority takes as its starting point the information that was available to it when it most recently considered the condition, and focusses on any new relevant material.

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Question 9

Outcome: 1 Program: 1.2

Topic: Non Liability Health Care

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 104)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Senator GALLACHER: Perhaps if I work sequentially through the questions we will pre-empt some of the additional answers you are providing. Could you provide a breakdown of the estimated cost per patient? I understand that it is estimated.

Mr Brown: I would probably have to take that on notice. We have an average cost for a white card but we might have adjusted that to reflect that we are talking only about mental health treatment for this costing. I do not have the model with me—sorry.

Answer

The estimated cost of mental health treatment used in the costing of the 2017-18 Budget measure to expand treatment to all mental health conditions under non-liability health care arrangements is \$4,500 per patient per annum. This cost takes into account a variety of treatment costs including allied health, medical, pharmacy, hospital and transport.

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Question 10

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: Suicide Prevention Trials (Assistance Animals)

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 108)

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE asked:

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Something has struck me tonight, just listening to some of the evidence that we heard earlier and based on the questions that I put during last estimates about assistance animals that have been picked up tonight. Hearing what you said just then, and reading what was in the Budget Paper about these pilots, the aim is to provide a more holistic treatment service for veterans who are suffering from chronic mental health conditions. Would it be possible for some sort of trial around assistance animals to be included as part of this funding?

Ms Campion: As Ms Foreman mentioned, there is already work occurring in DVA to look at what we might be able to do to not repeat or duplicate what others are doing in that area but to add to that body of evidence. I think we would probably need to take that on notice and get more information and more certainty about what the other plans might be.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Sure. I am thinking in terms of us, as a country, relying on work that has been done by other countries. I understand the desire not to reinvent the wheel or duplicate efforts, but we do have quite a long, proud history in Australia of assistance animals and recognising the important role that they play in holistic care for a person. It struck me as somewhat odd that we are not taking the lead—pardon the pun—on this issue here, particularly if we are making some quite serious efforts. I have no doubt at all that these pilots are being treated very seriously, but there could be scope to include some work around assistance animals for veterans ourselves, rather than relying on other countries to do that.

Mr Lewis: We will take it on notice anyway because we are looking at this area ourselves.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Thank you.

Answer

The two suicide prevention pilots announced in this year's Budget are specific mental health treatment interventions, which will support vulnerable veterans with complex acute or chronic mental health conditions. The first pilot, the Mental Health Clinical Management Pilot, will be delivered to an at-risk population with complex mental health needs on discharge from a mental health hospital. These participants will be at risk of self-harm, re-admission and/or homelessness. The second pilot, the Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Mental Health Pilot, will be targeted at patients with chronic mental and physical health comorbidities, who require clinical management through general practice and, where necessary, other mental health professionals.

These pilots will be closely designed with clinical experts. As the pilots are targeted to the needs of a small group of potentially highly vulnerable people, any involvement of assistance dogs would need to be considered very carefully, and DVA will take expert clinical advice on the extent to which it would be feasible and appropriate.

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DVA is maintaining a watching brief on existing international research regarding the clinical efficacy of assistance dogs in treating veterans. DVA will continue to be informed by the literature and national and international experts regarding the appropriateness of these interventions into the future.

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Question 11

Outcome: 1 Program: 1.4

Topic: Transitioning and Single Medical Assessments
(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 112 - 113)

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE asked:

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: As a result of measures announced in the budget, will each of those people who are being discharged on a medical basis now be receiving a higher level of support?

Ms Cosson: There are a couple of things, Senator. In relation to those who are being medically discharged, one thing we are exploring as part of our transition task force is to look at how we can leverage Defence rehabilitation contracts so that we can look at that continuity of care for ADF personnel. We are running a proof of concept—which is not a budget measure; we are doing it without any additional resources—with our Special Forces colleagues. They have about 50 members who discharge per year, so we are looking at how we can learn from their experience in the transition area. As Ms Foreman mentioned earlier about the rehabilitation, we are looking at 100 members who are in the process of transitioning to get them into early rehabilitation. Also, as part of veteran-centric reform, we have, as part of that \$166 million measure over four years, some funding to look at that proactive intervention. So we have identified different categories of veterans who will be transitioning or have transitioned to see how we can connect with them early to make sure that we are getting them into treatment early and, as Ms Pope mentioned as well, that we are being proactive rather than reactive in reaching out to them. So there are a range of different activities underway. Some are pilots and some are learning from that experience to inform a report that we will give to government in response to the Transition Taskforce. It was one of the election commitments that we establish this Taskforce.

There is one other thing—and I heard the Vice Chief mention it as well in the questioning—about how we are looking at the experience for those who have to go to multiple medical providers. They go to a provider, a doctor, when they are in Defence, then DVA requires them to go to a medical practitioner, and then the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation requires that. So we have been working on a joint activity, as part of the Transition Taskforce, to look at a single medical assessment process. Commander Joint Health provided a brief to links the other day in which she is formalising how we might be able to take that forward. Minister Tehan will be seeking a brief from us over the coming weeks on what we are doing in that regard.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Would that single medical assessment process include assessment of any potential psychological conditions?

Ms Cosson: Defence has mental health screening arrangements in place, which are quite separate to that single process, but that screening will inform the process.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: You mentioned that there was a report that will be compiled outlining the results of these various initiatives. When do you anticipate that report will be ready for release?

Ms Cosson: At this stage, I do not know. I will have to take that on notice. But, certainly, we are required to report back to the Minister on a number of the initiatives, particularly the single medical assessment process. He is seeking advice by the end of June on what we are doing there. Regarding the Transition Taskforce, I am hoping that we will be able to have a report that outlines what improvements we need in transition in the next couple of months.

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Answer

The Transition Taskforce will provide a report to the Minister once it has analysed all of the feedback and evidence collected as a result of its engagement activities during May and June 2017.

The Taskforce will provide this report to the Minister in the second half of 2017.

Defence Input:

Defence provided an update on the single medical assessment process to the Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Defence Personnel, on 19 June 2017. Further updates will be provided as the project progresses.

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Question 12

Outcome: All Programs: All

Topic: Veteran Employment Program

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 115)

Senator KITCHING asked:

Senator KITCHING: Is the \$100,000 in the third and fourth years administrative costs of running the awards?

Mr Brown: I do not think it would be. I will have to take it on notice. My guess would be it is a capital cost associated with maintaining the website in the out years. I will take that on notice and come back to you on that.

Answer

Funding was provided for the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Program under the measure 'Supporting Veterans' Employment Opportunities' set out on page 178 of the *Budget 2017-18, Budget Measures, Budget Paper No. 2 2017-18*.

This funding includes approximately \$100,000 in 2019-20 and 2020-21 to administer the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Annual Awards, promote the wider Program, and for maintenance of the Program's website, which will support the Awards and host the Ex-service Organisation Industry Partnership Register.

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Question 13

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: VCR - Female Veterans and Families Forum

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 116)

Senator KITCHING asked:

Ms Pope: Yes. Some people told stories in other contexts as well about going with their male mates so that they had the protection of their group and so they would be recognised as part of that wider group rather than isolated on their own for that reason. They talked very much about families and the fact that a serving officer is very strongly supported by their family and helping the family and recognising that what the family can do is a really important part of supporting the veteran. That was the really important underlying message out of this, that support the family and you support the veteran. Often the family will know when a veteran is struggling before the veteran might recognise it themselves. Then, the dual issues of many female veterans who are married to veterans themselves. So, they have two family members, whereas that was not so common in the past, say in the Vietnam era. The man had served, but the woman had not. Now, the families are trying to manage with both parents having those experiences and how does that impact the family and when they are deployed, the impact that has. Those were the sorts of issues that they talked through.

Senator KITCHING: Are you able table or take on notice so that you can give us a list? Is that possible?

Ms Pope: Yes.

Ms Cosson: We have released a report on the outcomes of the forum, so we can make sure that we send you the link to that.

Senator KITCHING: I think everyone would be interested.

Answer

The report detailing the outcomes of the inaugural Female Veterans and Families Forum held on 5-6 December 2016 is located on the DVA website.

<https://www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/consultation-female-veterans-and-families>

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Question 14

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: VCR Female Veterans and Families Forum Cost

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 116 - 117)

Senator KITCHING asked:

Senator KITCHING: Was the forum held in Canberra?

Ms Pope: Yes, it was.

Senator KITCHING: What was the cost of the forum?

Ms Pope: I would have to take the exact cost on notice, but there were approximately 50 delegates. Twenty-five were veterans and 25 were family of veterans, although there was quite a bit of crossover between them as well because some were both veterans and family members.

Senator KITCHING: Could you take that on notice. Was it from existing resources?

Answer

The total cost of the Female Veterans and Families Forum held on 5/6 December 2016 was \$57,413. The Government committed \$600,000 over four years to hold the annual forum and to fund associated activities and initiatives.

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Question 15

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.1

Topic: Coordinated Veterans Care program
(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 117)

Senator KITCHING asked:

Senator KITCHING: Has any evaluation been done on the CVC Program?

Ms Campion: Yes, an evaluation has been undertaken. We would have to provide you that on notice. It was recent but not in the last couple of years.

Senator KITCHING: I might ask some questions, and it is fine if you take them on notice. Who conducted the evaluation? When was this evaluation provided to government? What findings of the evaluation can you share with the committee? Will you consider releasing the evaluation? Are you aware of any consideration to expand the CVC Program? How will veterans who participate in the CVC Program interact with practices participating in Health's Health Care Homes trial? If you could take all those on notice, that would be great.

Ms Campion: I can answer the one about expansion. A component of our new budget measure around suicide prevention pilots, as I mentioned before, is looking to add mental health as one of the conditions to the current five physical conditions that are the focus of CVC. That would be a pilot to look at how we incorporate mental health into that program.

Answer

a) Who conducted the evaluation?

Grosvenor Management Consulting undertook the overall evaluation of the Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program in 2015.

b) When was this evaluation provided to government?

The evaluation was commissioned internally for the Department of Veterans' Affairs and has not been provided to Government.

c) What findings of the evaluation can you share with the committee?

Overall findings from the evaluation are that:

- although expected savings are yet to be achieved, there is evidence to suggest that these could arise with longer term program enrolments;
- feedback derived from interviews, case studies, and a survey of General Practitioners indicate the Program is delivering positive qualitative benefits to both general practices and Gold Card holder participants; and
- there are a number of opportunities for the Program to be improved further.

d) Will you consider releasing the evaluation?

This is a matter for Government once briefed on the findings of the evaluation.

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e) Are you aware of any consideration to expand the CVC Program?

In the 2017-18 Budget, there is a measure to pilot expansion of the CVC Program to support veterans with chronic mental and physical health conditions.

f) How will veterans who participate in the CVC Program interact with practices participating in Health's Health Care Homes trial?

There will not be any interaction as veterans who participate in the CVC Program will not be eligible for the Department of Health's Health Care Homes trial and vice versa, as this would represent be a duplication of services.

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Question 16

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: VVCS eligibility

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 117)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Dr Hodson: Because of our duty-of-care responsibility, if a member of the veteran community contacted us in distress, we normally provide an episode of care to facilitate referral. We have been able to initiate this immediately. As soon as it was announced, we let our centres know that the eligibility was changed and that people were being seen under a duty of care until the instrument comes into effect probably on 1 July.

Senator GALLACHER: How many people are expected to benefit from this change?

Dr Hodson: I would have to take that question on notice. We did actually do the calculations in looking at usage of the service, but I could not tell you tonight.

Answer

VVCS Eligibility Expansion 2017	Expected Clients annual
The partners and children of current and former ADF members who hold a Repatriation Health Card - Gold or White for an accepted mental health disability.	600
The former partners of current and former ADF members for a period of five years following separation, or for the duration of co-parenting responsibilities for a child under 18 years.	327
Total per annum	927

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Question 17

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: Cost of Running VVCS

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 118)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Dr Hodson: In 2011 we had 10,000 actual clients seen by the service. We have a number of things for people. We have group programs. Counselling was about 10,000. That has increased now to 15,000 in 2015, so there is a gradual and increasing need which we are meeting through these initiatives.

Senator GALLACHER: Prior to the increase in funding, what was the cost for a year?

Dr Hodson: We would need to take that on notice.

Senator GALLACHER: Can you take it on notice for one year and two years?

Mr Lewis: We can give you client numbers and dollars if you like.

Answer

Clients (all) receiving VVCS services by support stream – 2014-15 & 2015-16

	2014-15	2015-16
Counselling (Centre / Outreach)	14,627	15,154
Psychiatric Assessment	91	51
Initial assessment resulting in resolution	5,350	4,783
Group programs (client participation in)	1,610	1,182
VVCS After Hours Service	6,571	6,269
Case Management	227	293
Service to Clients (all program streams) (Source: DVA Annual Reports)	28,476	27,732
Cost of VVCS services (Source: Parliamentary Budget Statements)	\$31,496,000	\$32,053,000

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Question 18

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Younger Veterans Forums Membership

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 119)

Senator MOORE asked:

Senator MOORE: One is the Younger Veterans Forum and one is Younger Veterans Grants. On the Younger Veterans Forum, there is a website that lists the membership of the forum. I am really interested to know whether the ages of those members can be provided?

Major Gen. Kelly: Off the top of my head, I would have to take that one on notice.

Senator MOORE: I would be surprised if you could just run them off, Major General Kelly. Is there any problem about getting the ages of those—

Major Gen. Kelly: There would be some privacy issues. I would have to consult with the membership if they want their ages to be known.

Answer

DVA does not collect date of birth information from members of National Consultation Framework Forums, which includes the Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum.

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Question 19

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Younger Veterans Forum

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 119)

Senator MOORE asked:

Major Gen. Kelly: Yes, and the organisation of our national consultative forum has just recently been through its three-year review process. The results of that are being finalised and the membership will be refined and organisations and presidents will be again asked to nominate. We will see a refresh of the membership—the Young Veterans Forum and indeed the other national consultative fora of the department's engagement with the ex-service organisation community and stakeholders.

Senator MOORE: Who issues the invitation? Is that from the minister? Is it from the department?

Major Gen. Kelly: It is from the minister through the secretary to the national presidents and the other organisations that we identify as emerging and could be of great benefit to us engaging with the wider younger community, as well as the older cohort, to ensure that we can actually connect and get our message out, and also to find out any issues that they are facing that we need to address.

Senator MOORE: On notice, can we have some indication of the age of the people who have been appointed?

Major Gen. Kelly: The standard committee or the new committee?

Senator MOORE: The one that is actually now operational.

Major Gen. Kelly: I will have to have a look at that with the membership.

Answer

DVA does not collect date of birth information from members of National Consultation Framework Forums, which includes the Younger Veterans – Contemporary Needs Forum.

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Question 20

Outcome: 1 Program: All

Topic: Rehabilitation Providers in the Northern Territory

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 122 - 123)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Senator GALLACHER: I was just checking to see if the officials are on their game and up to speed. So there is one in the Northern Territory. How are the services provided by this single rehabilitation provider? Do they have branches? Where are they located? It is 1,000 miles from Alice Springs to Darwin, with a few points in between—and I do know a couple of veterans in Alice Springs. So how are services provided? Are there branches in different places?

Mr Lewis: We may need to take this on notice.

Ms Foreman: Yes. I do not have the right people here to answer that question. I would need to go back to some other people to find the answer. We do the overall policy.

Mr Lewis: We would be happy to provide you the details.

Senator GALLACHER: Geographically, the ACT is very small and there are eight there.

Ms Foreman: Yes.

Senator GALLACHER: And the Northern Territory is much larger geographically and there is a single provider. How do you provide the range of services?

Mr Orme: From Alice Springs there may be providers coming out of Adelaide, which is quite common in that part of the Northern Territory-South Australia corridor, or they may come out of Queensland. I do not know the answer.

Mr Lewis: We will give you the correct answer on notice.

Answer

As at 30 June 2017, there were six Comcare approved providers who met DVA's requirements and were available to deliver rehabilitation services to veterans in the Northern Territory (NT). Of these providers: two delivered services exclusively in the NT, and four were national providers.

Locations covered by the six providers include Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, the Arnhem, and the Daly and Barclay regions. Five providers are based in Darwin. One provider has offices in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. All six providers undertake outreach services, as required for veterans in remote locations.

On a small number of occasions, approved providers based outside NT, provided services for NT based veterans. As at 30 June 2017, there were an additional three providers from other states (two from Queensland and one from Victoria), who provided rehabilitation services for NT veterans. This generally occurs on an ad-hoc basis when the veteran has moved but retained the original service provider after relocation or where they have moved but not yet transitioned to a locally based provider.

In response to a Question on Notice from Senator Kakoschke-Moore on 1 March 2017, DVA provided information regarding the number of qualified providers available to deliver services across Australia. This response showed that, as of 1 March 2017, while there was one service provider who delivered services only within the Northern Territory, a further four national

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providers were also available to deliver services in the Northern Territory. Since providing this response in March, a second provider has commenced delivering services in the Northern Territory.

As also noted in the previous response, to be qualified to deliver rehabilitation services to DVA clients, the provider needs to be Comcare approved, and meet several additional criteria required by DVA such as training in relation to DVA and its clients. Once DVA is satisfied that a provider meets the criteria they are then available to deliver services in the locations which they have specified. As this is a provider initiated process, the number of rehabilitation providers or where they deliver services, can change from month to month.

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Question 21

Outcome: 1 Program: All

Topic: Rehab Providers

(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 123)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Senator GALLACHER: That would also impact on the next question which is: is their choice in terms of rehab providers?

Ms Foreman: Yes. We try and match the client with the most appropriate rehabilitation provider. If for some reason the client is not satisfied with that provider, we would respond to that and move them to another provider where appropriate. Yes, we do that.

Senator GALLACHER: But if you only have one and they are in the Northern Territory, that is going to be a little bit problematic, isn't it?

Ms Foreman: I need to talk to my staff, who actually implement this, but I think that they use—

Senator GALLACHER: So the question of choice will come up if there is only one provider.

Ms Foreman: No, they use providers from other states, as I understand it, but we will take that on notice and get back to you and let you know how that works.

Senator GALLACHER: We asked the question on notice and you provided a very complete answer, so then we provided simple questions based on your answer. Are you saying your initial answer is incorrect, that, whilst there might be one in the Northern Territory, it is supplemented by Queensland and South Australia, and therefore the questions about choice and availability are misdirected?

Ms Foreman: No, I know that a number of the organisations that might be registered in Victoria actually have providers located in other states. I will get to the bottom of that for you.

Answer

See response to question 20. As at 30 June 2017, there were six Comcare approved providers with local offices operating in the Northern Territory who also met DVA's additional requirements. Other providers, based outside the Northern Territory, have supported veterans by continuing to provide services when a veteran moved location or the provider had specific skills needed by the veteran.

In choosing a service provider for veterans, DVA considers the identified needs of the veteran and the availability of the provider to deliver services in a timely fashion.

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Question 22

Outcome: 1 Program: All

Topic: Number of Clients treated by Northern Territory Rehabilitation Provider
(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 123)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Senator GALLACHER: So, in respect of the Northern Territory, could you give us the detail of how many clients this provider treats in 12 months and what the cost of those services is?

Ms Foreman: Yes, we can.

Senator GALLACHER: How many DVA clients has this provider treated over the last 24 months and what was the cost? Has the department received complaints about this rehabilitation provider?

Ms Foreman: We will take that on notice too.

Answer

In the 12 months to 30 June 2017, there were 30 veterans in receipt of rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory. These veterans were serviced by nine rehabilitation providers at a total cost of \$215,794. As noted in the response to question 20, on some occasions, veterans were serviced by providers outside of the Northern Territory.

In the 24 months to 30 June 2017, a total of 61 veterans were in receipt of rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory. These veterans were serviced by nine rehabilitation providers at a total cost during the two year period of \$402,894.

In the 24 months to 30 June 2017, there were no complaints recorded in the DVA Complaints, Compliments and Feedback register, which related to the delivery of rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory.

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Question 23

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Overseas Travel with RSL NSW

(Written Question on Notice)/(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 127 -128)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) Have DVA Officials travelled overseas with representatives of RSL NSW?
- b) What was the purpose of this overseas travel?
- c) How often have DVA Officials travelled overseas with representatives of RSL NSW?
- d) Who funded the overseas travel, NSW RSL or DVA?
- e) How much has the DVA spent of overseas trips?
- f) What level were officers that went on these trips?
- g) Who from DVA and Who from NSW RSL went on these trips?
- h) Did anyone from NSW RSL take part in these trips?
- i) Was Chris Perrin or Darren McManus-Smith from NSW RSL on any of these trips?
- j) Is it normal for DVA officials to attend trips overseas with RSL branch representatives?
- k) Have any overseas trips taken place with other RSL state branches?
- l) What class of travel do DVA officials typically fly on overseas trips (E.g. economy, business)?
- m) How much has the Department spent on overseas travel for officials traveling with members of the NSW RSL?

Answer

- a) An official from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) travelled to Timor-Leste on two occasions, from 17-21 August 2014 and 18-22 August 2015, at the invitation of the Government of Timor-Leste to attend FALINTIL Commemoration Day events. Representatives from the NSW RSL were in attendance at the same events, also at the invitation of the Government of Timor-Leste.
- b) At the invitation of the Government of Timor-Leste, to attend FALINTIL Commemoration Day events and participate in discussions about veterans' issues.
- c) Refer to a. above.
- d) DVA funded air and regulated travel allowance in relation to the DVA staff member's travel only. Ground costs were met by the Government of Timor-Leste.
- e) In relation to the travel by a DVA staff member mentioned at a. above, \$9,518.42 was spent by DVA.
- f) One Senior Executive Service Band 2 officer.
- g) Ms Jennifer Collins, then Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT, was the sole DVA representative on both occasions she travelled to Timor-Leste. Details of any trips undertaken by members of the NSW RSL is not a matter for DVA and this part of the question would need to be directed to them.
- h) See response to g. above.
- i) See response to g. above.
- j) DVA conducts a number of commemorative events overseas and it would not be unusual for a range of representatives from ex-service organisations to also be present at these events.
- k) See response to j. above.
- l) DVA officials typically travel business class on overseas trips.
- m) N/A.

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Question 24

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: DC NSW Overseas Travel with RSL NSW

(Written Question on Notice)/(FADT Hansard Proof 30 May 2017, p 128)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) Did Ms Jennifer Collins, NSW Deputy Commissioner take overseas trips with NSW RSL senior staff and state councillors?
- b) What was Ms Collins' role in the Department?
- c) When did these trips take place?
- d) Where did these trips go?
- e) Did any other DVA officials accompany Ms Collins on these trips?
- f) How were the trips funded?
- g) Did Mr Hayden White attend any overseas travel with Ms Collins or NSW RSL?
- h) What is Mr White's role in the Department and what is his level?
- i) What was his role on these trips?
- j) How were these trips funded?

Answer

- a) Ms Collins travelled to Timor-Leste on two occasions, from 17-21 August 2014 and 18-22 August 2015, at the invitation of the Government of Timor-Leste to attend FALINTIL Commemoration Day events. Representatives from the NSW RSL attended the same events, also at the invitation of the Government of Timor-Leste.
- b) Ms Collins was the Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT.
- c) 17-21 August 2014 and 18-22 August 2015
- d) Ms Collins' travel was to Timor-Leste.
- e) No.
- f) DVA provided air and regulated travel allowance in relation to Ms Collins' travel. Ground costs were met by the Government of Timor-Leste.
- g) No.
- h) Mr White is the Executive Officer to the Deputy Commissioner NSW and ACT. He is an Executive Level 1 officer.
- i) N/A.
- j) N/A.

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Question 25

Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Market Research
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator FARRELL asked:

For the 2016-17 financial year, what was the total amount spent by the Department/agency on market research (either as a whole contract or as part of a contract)?

For each contract for market research in 2016/2017, can you please provide:

- a) The subject of the market research;
- b) The supplier;
- c) Whether the supplier has been engaged previously and if so, for which contracts;
- d) The total value of the contract;
- e) The term of the contract (time);
- f) The date that the decision was taken to seek market research on the topic;
- g) The date the contract was opened to tender or selection process;
- h) The date the supplier was engaged;
- i) Whether the contract was subject to a tender process, including whether there was a full, partial or closed tender process;
- j) Does the supplier exist on a pre-approved supplier list, if so, when were they added to that list;
- k) Whether the Minister, or the Minister's Office, requested that the research be conducted;
- l) Whether the Minister approved the decision to conduct market research;
- m) Whether the Minister approved the contract with the supplier;
- n) Whether the Minister or the Minister's office was consulted on questions asked;
- o) Whether the Minister or the Minister's office received a copy of the market research;
- p) If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, was the Minister or their office consulted before the decision was taken to conduct research, if so – in what form did that consultation take (written, verbal other);
- q) If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, did Minister or their office make any amendments or changes to the Department's proposal for market research to be conducted, if so, what changes and to what aspects were they made;
- r) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other departments or agencies consulted?
- s) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other Ministers, or the Prime Minister consulted?
- t) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the expected cost change, if so how?

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- u) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the scope, questions or supplier of the research change?
- v) Have any topics or questions of market research been conducted and subsequently conducted again by the same or different supplier?

Answer

For the 2016–17 financial year, the Department spent a total of \$352,811.55 (exclusive of GST) on market research.

The Department had four contracts for market research. These were:

1. Orima Research
2. Essence Communications
3. Inside Story
4. Kantar Public

Responses for answers a–v can be found at [Attachment A](#).

Question	1. ORIMA Research Pty Ltd	2. Essence Communications Pty Ltd	3. Inside Story	4. Kantar Public
a. The subject of the market research	The 2016 DVA Client Satisfaction Survey.	To inform the marketing approach for the Sir John Monash Centre (SJMC).	To inform a new campaign to increase insurance sales to the under 50-year-old client segment, while retaining the 50+ clientele.	Assess advertising collateral developed for an advertising campaign to inform former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) of the support and services available to those who experienced physical or sexual abuse in the ADF.
b. The supplier	ORIMA Research Pty Ltd	Essence Communications Pty Ltd	Inside Story	Kantar Public
c. Whether the supplier has been engaged previously and if so, for which contracts	Yes, ORIMA Research has been engaged previously by DVA. Details of previous DVA contracts with ORIMA Research are publically available on AusTender.	No.	No.	No.
d. The total value of the contract	\$360,909.10 (excl GST) for the period of the contract (2014–17) \$200,336.55 (excl GST) total spent 2016–17 Financial Year	\$75,000.00 (excl GST) for the period of the contract (2016) \$75,000.00 (excl GST) total spent 2016–17 Financial Year	\$47,300.00 (excl GST) for the period of the contract (2017) \$35,475.00 (excl GST) total spent 2016–17 Financial Year	\$42,000.00 (excl GST) for the period of the contract (2017) \$42,000.00 (excl GST) total spent 2016–17 Financial Year
e. The term of the contract (time)	04/04/2014 to 04/04/2017	20/09/2016 to 17/11/2016	07/04/2017 to 30/06/2017	09/06/2017 to 30/06/2017
f. The date that the decision was taken to seek market research on the topic	12/07/2016	17/06/2016	19/10/2016	08/06/2017
g. The date the contract was opened to tender or selection process	17/02/2014	26/07/2016	06/03/2017	08/06/2017
h. The date the supplier was engaged	04/04/2014	20/09/2016	07/04/2017	09/06/2017
i. Whether the contract was subject to a tender process, including whether there was a full, partial or closed tender process	An open tender process was conducted by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to establish the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Services Panel (SON456233). DVA sought proposals from a limited number of panellists.	Pre-qualified tender.	Pre-qualified tender.	Pre-qualified tender.
j. Does the supplier exist on a pre-approved supplier list, if so, when were they added to that list	The supplier was listed on the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Social Policy Research and Evaluation Services Panel (SON456233) on 6 Feb 2012.	The supplier is on the Department of Finance's (Finance) Australian Government Communications Multi-Use List and was suggested by the Communication Advice Branch of Finance.	The supplier is on the Department of Finance's (Finance) Australian Government Communications Multi-Use List and was suggested by the Communication Advice Branch of Finance.	The supplier is on the Department of Finance's (Finance) Australian Government Communications Multi-Use List and was suggested by the Communication Advice Branch of Finance.
k. Whether the Minister, or the Minister's Office, requested that the research be conducted	No.	No.	No.	No.
l. Whether the Minister approved the decision to conduct market research	No.	No.	Yes.	Yes.
m. Whether the Minister approved the contract with the supplier	No.	No.	No.	No.
n. Whether the Minister or the Minister's office was consulted on questions asked	No.	No.	No.	No.
o. Whether the Minister or the Minister's office received a copy of the market research	Yes, the Minister and the Minister's office received a copy of the market research.	Yes.	The research is yet to be completed. The market research will be completed by 30 June.	Yes.
p. If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, was the Minister or their	No.	Yes, written.	Yes, written brief was provided.	Yes, written brief was provided.

<i>office consulted before the decision was taken to conduct research, if so – in what form did that consultation take (written, verbal other)</i>				
<i>q. If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, did Minister or their office make any amendments or changes to the Department's proposal for market research to be conducted, if so, what changes and to what aspects were they made</i>	No.	No.	No.	No.
<i>r. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other departments or agencies consulted?</i>	No.	No.	Yes, Department of Finance.	Yes, Department of Finance.
<i>s. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other Ministers, or the Prime Minister consulted?</i>	No.	No.	Yes, Special Minister of State.	Yes, Special Minister of State.
<i>t. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the expected cost change, if so how?</i>	Yes, the expected cost increased by \$12,268.20.	No.	No.	No.
<i>u. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the scope, questions or supplier of the research change?</i>	No.	No.	No.	No.
<i>v. Have any topics or questions of market research been conducted and subsequently conducted again by the same or different supplier?</i>	No for the 2016-17 financial year, noting ORIMA Research conducted the survey in 2014 under the same contract.	No.	No.	No.

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Question 26

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: National Mental Health Commission Review

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE asked:

The National Mental Health Commission Review into suicide prevention services for defence force members suggests that *'the provision of services under the White Card for the range of mental health conditions specified has been well received but that many people were not aware of it (and that) there would be benefit in wider promotion of the availability of this option'*.

- a) Has there been any increase in communication of this policy since this recommendation was made?
- b) If so, what changes were made?

Answer

- a) Yes.
- b) Over the past year, the Department of Veterans' Affairs' (DVA) Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC) program, which provides mental health treatment without requiring that the conditions be linked to a Australian Defence Force (ADF) service, has been promoted through DVA's social media channels and through interactions with the ex-service community and provider networks.

DVA has also undertaken a digital advertising campaign to raise awareness of the mental health support offered by DVA, particularly through NLHC. This campaign targets those who have any amount of full-time service in the ADF, from any time period. It also targets friends and family, informing them of the support available to their loved ones who have ADF service. This campaign commenced on 30 March 2017 and runs through until 30 June 2017.

DVA has also conducted a second advertising campaign designed to reach those who experienced physical or sexual abuse during their ADF service. This campaign, involving radio and newspaper advertisements, directed the listener or reader to either phone the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service – VVCS for assistance at any time of the day or night, or to visit the dedicated DVA webpage outlining the support for survivors of abuse, including prominent information about mental health care under NLHC arrangements. This campaign ran from 24 June 2017 to 30 June 2017. Further advertising of the changes will continue in the 2017-18 financial year.

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Question 27

Outcome: 1 Program: 1.2, 1.3, 1.6

Topic: Time Taken To Process Claims

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE asked:

My office has been assisting a constituent with his matter with DVA, this constituent also has a separate DVA complaint with the Ombudsman. In May our office received notice that this veteran's matter had been delayed as his file was transferred to the Ministerial and Legal team for assessment. An email from the Client Liaison Unit within DVA noted that this was due to his complaint which had been submitted to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. I am concerned that by making a complaint regarding a separate claim, this veteran's ability to have his claim resolved was delayed. This veteran was also informed verbally that the reason for the delay was due to my office's involvement with his matter.

- a) When a complaint is made to the Ombudsman, what process does the Department follow?
- b) Is the matter instantly referred to the Ministerial and Legal Team within DVA?
- c) If so, why?
- d) When a Senator's or an MP's office makes inquiries on behalf of a constituent what is the process that is followed? Is that file referred to a particular part of DVA?
- e) Does the involvement of a Senator or an MP result in a delay to the claim being processed?
- f) Is this an issue that DVA aims to overcome with new funding to improve claims processing?

Answer

- a) The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) responds to requests from the Ombudsman when it is formally notified under section 8 of the *Ombudsman Act 1976* that the Ombudsman's office has decided to commence an investigation into a complaint about DVA. The request from the Ombudsman is received in the office of the Deputy President to the Repatriation Commission. It is registered into the Parliamentary Document Management System (PDMS) and then referred to the relevant business area within the Department for investigation and preparation of a formal response.
- b) No. As noted above, the request from the Ombudsman is referred by the office of the Deputy President to the relevant area within the Department to respond to the specifics of the correspondence.
- c) n/a
- d) The inquiry is referred to the relevant business area within the Department for appropriate action, as prescribed by the Minister's office.
- e) No.
- f) The recent digitisation of correspondence and files, and planned implementation of a new claims processing system, will reduce DVA's dependency on paper. It will improve claims processing as staff will readily have access to the relevant electronic information and evidence.

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Question 28

Outcome: 1 Program: 1.2

Topic: Gold Card Eligibility

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE asked:

A theme that was heard throughout the National Mental Health Commission's review, and throughout the suicide by veterans inquiry, was that the requirement to demonstrate a significant level of disability to achieve and maintain eligibility for the Gold Card appears to create the unintended consequence of incentivising people to remain unwell, with a focus on what they can't do and what they have lost, rather than encouraging them to access services that could otherwise improve their health and wellbeing'.

- a) Has DVA received advice, or undertaken any work to rectify this matter?
- b) If not, are there plans to do so in the future?
- c) The review notes that there is a lack in the provision of trauma-informed care and a lack of a trauma informed care framework. Has DVA considered a trauma informed practice, and has DVA sought advice on implementing one?

Answer

- a) Eligibility for a Gold Card may be established where a current or former member of the Australian Defence Force is assessed as having a high level of impairment from their accepted chronic and permanent conditions. In these circumstances, and before a Gold Card is issued, a detailed needs assessment is conducted by qualified medical practitioners to assess the individual's rehabilitation needs and ongoing health treatment requirements. This will include a psychosocial and vocational assessment to determine their immediate needs and prospects of returning to work at some point in the future.

Claimants with short-term conditions that are expected to resolve, are issued with a White Card to access treatment for their specific condition(s).

- b) The Government has no plans to expand the Gold Card eligibility criteria beyond the changes announced in the 2017-18 Budget.
- c) DVA understands that trauma-informed care requires a culture that provides a safe, validating environment for clients, and offers opportunities for clients to be involved in decisions that have an impact on them. This approach has the client at the centre, and promotes a collaboration between clients/consumers, policy makers, service providers, carers and program managers.

Through the Veteran Centric Reform agenda, the department continues to ensure staff have a good understanding of the impact of trauma, and the links between trauma, mental health and psychosocial problems. DVA's reform agenda has, at its core, serving the needs of our clients. Therefore, trauma-informed care and practice is strongly aligned to our veteran-centric reform agenda.

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Question 29

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Limited Tender Contracts

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

- a. Across the department, please provide a list of all contracts in FY 2015/16 that involved a limited tender contract to an entity for services below \$80,000 followed by a limited tender contract (either in FY 15/16 or 16/17) to the same entity for services below \$80,000 or above \$80,000 (please list the two contracts by AUSTENDER number). Please provide the justification (and any documents relating thereto) for the limited tender of any second contract that was above the \$80,000 threshold.

- b. Across the department, please provide a list of all contracts in FY 2016/17 that involved a limited tender contract to an entity for services below \$80,000 followed by a limited tender contract to the same entity for services below \$80,000 or above \$80,000 (please list the two contracts by AUSTENDER number). Please provide the justification (and any documents relating thereto) for the limited tender of any second contract that was above the \$80,000 threshold.

Answer

a. and b. A review of Departmental records indicates that there are no contracts that meet the above criteria.

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Question 30

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Ministerial Functions

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

In relation to any functions or official receptions hosted by Ministers or Assistant Ministers in the portfolio since 1 March 2017, can the following please be provided:

- a) List of functions;
- b) List of attendees including departmental officials, ministerial staff and if members of the Minister's immediate family attended – number of members (names not required);
- c) Function venue;
- d) Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive);
- e) Details of any food served;
- f) Details of any wines or champagnes served including brand and vintage; and
- g) Details of any entertainment provided.

Answer

a) – d)

a) List of Functions	b) List of Attendees	c) Function Venue	d) Itemised List of Costs (GST Inclusive)
Budget Briefing on Tuesday 9 May.	56 attendees comprising of Ex-Service Round Table members, the VVCS National Advisory Committee, the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Mental Health. Various members of DVA's Executive were also in attendance.	Minister Tehan's Office	Catering \$2,660 Beverages \$356
			TOTAL = \$3,016 (GST inclusive)

e) – f) The time and effort to accurately provide this information would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

g) Nil entertainment provided.

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Question 31

Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Departmental Functions
 (Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

In relation to expenditure on any functions or official receptions etc hosted by the Department or agencies in the portfolio since 1 March 2017, can the following please be provided:

- a) List of functions;
- b) List of attendees;
- c) Function venue;
- d) Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive);
- e) Details of any food served;
- f) Details of any wines or champagnes served including brand and vintage; and
- g) Details of any entertainment provided.

Answer

a) - d)

a) List of Function	b) List of Attendees	c) Function Venue	d) Itemised List of Costs (GST Incl)
Gallipoli Anzac Day Welcome Function on Friday 21 April 2017.	Officials from Australian and New Zealand government agencies delivering Anzac Day in Turkey – total 88 people.	Kolin Hotel, Canakkale Turkey.	\$4,180.54 AUD
Gallipoli Anzac Day Thank you function on Tuesday 25 April 2017.	Officials from Australian government agencies delivering Anzac Day in Turkey – total 70 people.	Kolin Hotel, Canakkale Turkey.	\$4,595.44 AUD
French Anzac Day Thank you function on Wednesday 26 April 2017.	Officials from Australian government agencies delivering Anzac Day in France – total 50 people.	Le Vert Galant, Amiens France.	\$2,877.03 AUD

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<p>Department of Veterans' Affairs hosted an official function with the 2016 Korean Mission veterans attending Canberra for the Ministerial Statement at Parliament House on Wednesday, 22 March 2017.</p>	<p>38 attendees. The list of attendees range from representatives from Ex-service organisations to other external parties with an interest in veteran and commemorative activities, including the Minister and a representative from the Opposition.</p>	<p>Canberra Southern Cross Club, Yacht Club – Lotus Room</p>	<p>Catering \$1,800.00 Beverage Package \$1,360.00 Room Hire \$180 Total = \$3,340.00 (GST incl).</p>
<p>Expenditure relating to hospitality for various official meetings and forums involving external parties.</p>	<p>Various attendees (ranging from representatives of Ex- service organisations and other external parties with an interest in veteran and commemorative activities.</p>	<p>DVA premises</p>	<p>\$6,693.92</p>

e - f) - The time and effort to accurately provide this information would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

g) – Nil entertainment.

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Question 32

**Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Laptops
(Written Question on Notice)**

Senator BILYK asked:

- a) How many laptops are currently on issue to staff of the Department and agencies in the portfolio?
- b) Can an itemised list showing make and model please be provided?
- c) How many new laptops were purchased by the Department and agencies in the portfolio in calendar year 2016?
- d) What was the total cost (GST **inclusive**) of purchasing laptops for staff of the Department and agencies in the portfolio in calendar year 2016?
- e) How many laptops did the Department and agencies in the portfolio have to be replaced due to damage in calendar year 2016? What was the cost of replacement (GST **inclusive**)?
- f) How many laptops were reported lost or stolen in calendar year 2016? What was the cost of replacement (GST **inclusive**)?

Answer

- a) 264
- b)

Device Make and Model	On issue
Acer F5-573G-7244	36
Acer F760G	2
Asus F5500L	1
HP 9470m	180
Toshiba Z20	34
MacBook Pro 15"	1
Lenovo Thinkpad T460	10
Total:	264

- c) Purchased – 55
- d) Total cost of purchasing laptops was \$63,605
- e) Nil
- f) Nil

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Question 33

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Executive Office Upgrades

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

Have the furniture, fixtures or fittings of the Secretary's office, or the offices of any Deputy Secretaries, been upgraded since 1 March 2017? If so, can an itemised list of costs please be provided (GST **inclusive**)?

Answer

There has been no works undertaken in these offices since March 2017.

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Question 34

Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Facilities Upgrades
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

Have the facilities of any of the Department's premises, or the premises of any agencies in the portfolio, been upgraded since 1 March 2017, for example, staff room refurbishments, kitchen refurbishments, bathroom refurbishments, the purchase of any new fridges, coffee machines, or other kitchen equipment?

If so, can a detailed description of the relevant facilities upgrade please be provided together with an itemised list of costs (GST **inclusive**)? Can any photographs of the upgraded facilities please be provided?

Answer

Works have been undertaken in the Department of Veterans' Affairs' Brisbane office on level 5 since 1 March 2017. These works have been undertaken to increase the staff numbers by 40 on this floor.

The cost breakdown for this work is as follows:

• 120 degree workstations – electric sit stand *	\$80,740
• Desk mounted shelf	\$ 5,280
• Mobile pedestals	\$ 3,960
• Task chairs	\$ 6,820
• TOTAL (inclusive of GST)	\$96,800

(* Sit stand desk price includes all power and data)

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Question 35

**Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Vacancies
(Written Question on Notice)**

Senator BILYK asked:

Please provide a list of all statutory, board and legislated office vacancies and other significant appointments vacancies within the portfolio, including length of time vacant and current acting arrangements.

Answer

As at 31 May 2017, there were no statutory, board or legislated office vacancies in the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

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Question 36

Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Credit Cards
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

- a) How many credit cards are currently on issue for staff in the Department and agencies within the portfolio? If possible, please provide a break-down of this information by APS/SES level.
- b) What was the value of the largest reported purchase on a credit card in calendar year 2016 and what was it for?
- c) How much interest was paid on amounts outstanding from credit cards in calendar year 2016?
- d) How much was paid in late fees on amounts outstanding from credit cards in calendar year 2016?
- e) What was the largest amount outstanding on a single card at the end of a payment period in calendar year 2016 and what was the card holder's APS/ SES level?
- f) How many credit cards were reported as lost or stolen in calendar year 2016 and what was the cost of their replacement?
- g) How many credit card purchases were deemed to be illegitimate or contrary to agency policy in calendar year 2016? What was the total value of those purchases? How many purchases were asked to be repaid on that basis in calendar year 2016 and what was the total value thereof? Were all those amounts actually repaid? If no, how many were not repaid, and what was the total value thereof?
- h) What was the largest purchase that was deemed illegitimate or contrary to agency policy and asked to be repaid in calendar year 2016, and what was the cardholder's APS/ SES level? What that amount actually repaid, in full? If no, what amount was left unpaid?
- i) Are any credit cards currently on issue in the Department or agencies within the portfolio connected to rewards schemes? Do staff receive any personal benefit as a result of those reward schemes?
- j) Can a copy of the Department's staff credit card policy please be provided?

Answer

- a) DVA currently has 289 credit cards on issue to staff.

The breakdown by APS/SES level is:

APS2	9
APS3	11
APS4	42
APS5	42
APS6	56
EL1	51
EL2	46
SES band 1	18

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SES band 2	8
SES band 3	1
Statutory Position Holders	5
Total	289

- b) The largest single credit card purchase in 2016 was for \$30,895.06. It was for accommodation costs associated with undertaking Anzac ceremonies in France.
- c) There were no amounts outstanding on credit cards during the 2016 calendar year and no interest was paid.
- d) There were no amounts outstanding on credit cards during the 2016 calendar year and no late fees were paid.
- e) There were no amounts outstanding on any card at the end of a payment period in the 2016 calendar year.
- f) Two cards were reported lost/stolen in 2016. There was no cost associated with their replacement.
- g) Seven credit card purchases were deemed contrary to agency policy in the 2016 calendar year. The total value of these purchases was \$481.07 and all were asked to be repaid. All the amounts were repaid.
- h) The largest purchase that was deemed contrary to agency policy and asked to be repaid in 2016 was \$113.70. The cardholder's APS level was EL1. The amount was repaid in full.
- i) The Department is not aware of any credit cards currently on issue by the Department that are connected to rewards schemes. The Department is not aware of any staff receiving personal benefits as a result of a reward scheme.
- j) DVA's credit card policy is attached.

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Secretary's Instruction

DVA PURCHASE CARD

(Accountable Authority Instructions – Commonwealth Credit Cards and Credit Vouchers)

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Glossary

ANZ eManagement

The term used to represent web based systems provided by ANZ allowing card program administrators to perform a range of activities such as changing card limits. ANZ eManagement is a separate system to Fraedom.

Authorised Signatory

Responsible for overall management and administration of the purchase card program including the card management system (Fraedom) and authority to act on behalf of DVA in managing the borrowing agreement with ANZ. An Authorised Signatory may also undertake card program administration, Certifying Officer and Identification Officer duties. The Authorised Signatory role sits within the Resources Branch.

Payment Processor

A company (often a third party) appointed by a merchant to handle transactions from various channels such as credit cards and debit cards. The payment processor will both check the details received by forwarding them to the respective card's issuing bank or card association for verification, and also carry out a series of anti-fraud measures against the transaction. PayPal is an example of a third party payment processor.

Sales Voucher

A document provided by a supplier that confirms a purchase. Sales vouchers include, but are not restricted to: tax invoices, sales confirmation notices and invoices that don't meet the requirements of a valid tax invoice.

1. Introduction

1.1 This Secretary's Instruction (SI) has been made under section 20A of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and prescribes departmental policy and procedures governing the Department of Veterans' Affairs purchase card.

2. Card Provider

2.1 The ANZ bank has the contract to supply purchase card and related services to the Department.

2.2 ANZ is to be provided with the names and specimen signatures of officials nominated as Authorised Signatories for the purposes of authorising the issue of the purchase card. For the purposes of the *Financial Transactions Reports Act 1988*, agency banking delegates are required to provide to relevant banks the names and specimen signatures of Identification Officers who are responsible for confirming the identification of purchase card applicants.

2.3 Under the Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) travel arrangements the Department is required to use a Diners Card for payment of travel booked under the arrangements. This includes payment to airlines, domestic accommodation providers and domestic rental car companies. Unless the Diners Card is specifically mentioned in this SI, these instructions refer to the purchase card provided by ANZ. For additional information concerning the use of the purchase card for travel purposes see paragraph 3.16.

2.4 DVA staff may hold other types of credit cards or credit vouchers, such as vendor cards, where payment to the merchant is in advance of payment by DVA. These include, but are not limited to, Cabcharge cards, Cabcharge e-tickets and fuel cards. Since vendor cards issued to a Commonwealth entity are a form of Commonwealth credit card for the purposes of the s56 of the PGPA Act, applications to use a vendor card must be approved by the delegate responsible for entering into agreements for credit cards or credit vouchers. Credit arrangements with vendors that do not involve the issue of a physical vendor card or voucher also fall into this category and must also be approved by the delegate.

3.7 The purchase card should be used wherever possible, and cost effective, for the full range of supplies required by the Commonwealth within the restrictions indicated in the 'Agreement and Acknowledgment by Cardholder' form issued by the Authorised Signatory. Under Government policy, the purchase card is the preferred payment method for Eligible Payments, and must be used for Eligible Payments where requested by a supplier (see Resource Management Guide 416).

3.8 Under no circumstances should credit limits, available funds limits, or delegated spending limits, be exceeded, where:

- (a) the credit limit is the maximum amount of credit available to the cardholder at any time. It should be calculated to cover at least two months estimated usage by the cardholder. Standard credit limit amounts are: \$1,000, \$5,000; \$10,000; \$15,000; \$20,000; and \$30,000. The Authorised Signatory must endorse the appropriateness of the credit limits requested by cardholders.;
- (b) the available funds limit is the amount of funds unexpended and available to the cardholder. In Fraedom the available funds equates to credit limit less current balance; and
- (c) the cardholder's delegated spending limit is identified in the department's financial delegations and is based on staff level. A cardholder's delegated spending limit must exceed their card transaction limit and will generally exceed their card credit limit;

3.9 For each transaction undertaken, cardholders will be prevented from exceeding their nominated transaction limit and, for each settlement period, will be prevented from spending more than their credit limit. Transaction limits should be set at a level high enough to prevent the rejection of transactions at point of sale while mitigating against the risk of inappropriate transactions being processed for large amounts.

3.10 Where a sales voucher is lost, destroyed, deficient or otherwise could not be obtained, a substitute voucher is to be raised. The substitute voucher is also to be used to record credit adjustments. In order for DVA to claim GST input tax credits, a tax invoice is required for every taxable supply over \$75 exclusive of GST that is purchased with the purchase card. Where a substitute voucher replaces a tax invoice for a purchase valued at more than \$75 exclusive of GST the GST treatment of the transaction must be recorded as nil GST (for additional information see paragraph 11.3).

3.11 The purchase card may be used for payment using any of the following methods:

- (a) inter-departmental payments where the facility exists;
- (b) across the counter where the cardholder uses their PIN or PayWave to authorise a transaction or signs a sales voucher. ;
- (c) by recording the purchase card number on invoices, offers to supply, renewal advices, facsimile or mail orders;
- (d) by telephone where the purchase is transacted by advising the purchase card details to the supplier;

lieu of meal allowances, domestic rental vehicle hire and domestic accommodation. For additional details refer to the [DVA Travel Policy](#).

3.17 The purchase card must not be used for payment of the following:

- gratuities (tips). The estimation and payment of a gratuity would be a personal decision and must not be met from public funds;
- mini bar purchases from accommodation providers;
- functions to farewell employees on retirement or transfer; or
- entertainment of an informal nature provided by an employee to fellow employees and subordinates.

3.18 The purchase card should not be used when payment is more appropriately made through a DVA purpose built system. For example, to enable accurate reporting of expenditure on rehabilitation appliances, related payment information should be available from the purpose built system, RAPTOR. Payment for rehabilitation appliances using a purchase card may not be appropriate if it is not reflected in the system.

3.19 While there are similarities between the operations of the purchase card and fuel cards, the purchase card should not be used for the purchase of fuel where the fuel card is available - refer to AAI Commonwealth Credit Cards and Credit Vouchers – SI Fuel Cards.

4. Use of Third Party Payment Providers

4.1 DVA purchase card holders may use third party payment processors such as PayPal when making purchases if the choice to use such a service is deemed the most efficient, ethical, economical and effective means of purchasing. If a decision is made to use a third party payment processor, the Policy for Using Third Party Payment Processors Such as PayaPal must be complied with.

4.2 Cardholders must seek the endorsement of their manager before setting up a third party payment processor account.

4.3 Online merchants may offer payment via a third party payment processor and/or through a payment gateway. In some cases the cardholder may not have a choice but to use the merchant's payment gateway. In these cases, and to maximise the security of transactions, cardholders should never access a supplier's website from a public computer, through an open Wi-Fi connection or through links in e-mails.

4.4 Before signing up with a payment processor, or purchasing from a merchant that uses a payment gateway, cardholders must ensure that the costs of any fees that may be associated with using these services are taken into account when assessing value for money for purchases.

4.5 Third party payment providers do not always provide invoices, receipts, or payment confirmation documents in a form that would be considered valid tax invoices. When a valid tax invoice cannot be obtained from the third party payment provider, or the supplying merchant, DVA is not in a position to recover associated GST credits from the Australian Taxation Office. The potential loss of GST in these situations, particularly for substantial purchases, should be taken into account when

7. Responsibilities of Authorised Signatories

7.1 Authorised Signatories may authorise the issue of a purchase card by sending a completed 'ANZ Commercial Card Cardholder Registration Form' form to ANZ. On receipt of a card, cardholders must sign an 'Agreement and Acknowledgment by Cardholder' form which is retained by the Authorised Signatory. At each card renewal a new 'Agreement and Acknowledgment by Cardholder' form is to be signed by the cardholder.

7.2 Authorised Signatories are responsible for a variety of functions and are a key control in ensuring that the purchase card works effectively and that the risk of fraud is minimised. Authorised Signatories are responsible for the following duties:

- (a) act as liaison point with ANZ with regard to all aspects of purchase card operations;
- (b) assist in resolving disputes and ensure that copies of all correspondence with ANZ (e.g. purchase card requests, variations, transaction disputes) is retained on file as part of the Department's accountable records or is available online through ANZ eManagement systems;
- (c) request the issue of each purchase card from the ANZ and the transaction and credit limits to be applied based on the recommendation of the prospective cardholder's manager. Ensure cardholder transaction and credit limits do not exceed cardholder delegations to approve proposals to spend public moneys;
- (d) ensure all purchase card applications are endorsed at Assistant Secretary, Deputy Commissioner or higher level.
- (e) ensure all purchase card applications are signed by the Identification Officer. The Identification Officer certifies to the ANZ under Regulation 5 of the *Financial Transaction Reports Act 1988* that the cardholder is authorised by DVA to be a signatory to the card facility. (also see paragraph 3.2);
- (f) monitor breaches of transaction and credit limits. Advise cardholders and managers of these breaches and help managers determine the appropriateness of adjusting credit and transaction limits in this context;
- (g) ensure that cards are obtained from ANZ and issued to cardholders, and that withdrawn/cancelled cards are notified to ANZ and destroyed;
- (h) ensure appropriate access is provided to new cardholders and their delegates (if they have one) to Freedom and maintain an accurate map of cardholder access in the system. Freedom provides the official register of cards issued;
- (i) securely store all cards issued as virtual cards;
- (j) advise cardholders and their managers of their responsibilities and ensure the cardholder signs and returns to the Authorised Signatory the 'Agreement and Acknowledgment by Cardholder' form and, where applicable acknowledge in writing any restrictions on the card's use;
- (k) regularly review usage and adjust credit limits, or withdraw cards as necessary. The Authorised Signatory may reject a request to issue a card, or may withdraw a card, if the expected or actual transaction volumes, or total value of

8.5 Cardholder managers are responsible for checking cardholder transactions. To give effect to this responsibility the cardholder's manager must endorse the cardholder's transactions within the Fraedom system following the completion of the relevant statement period, or sooner if Fraedom workflow allows. If the system is unavailable, a manual endorsement process may be requested by the Authorised Signatory. By endorsing a cardholder's transactions the manager is indicating that they have checked the transactions and deem the expenses to be for official purposes, provide value for money, and were made in accordance with the PGPA Framework including all Departmental and Commonwealth procurement policies. If a manager feels a transaction has not been made in accordance with the above policies and decides it is not appropriate to endorse a transaction, they must provide the reason in the Approver Comments field in Fraedom and inform the Card Program Administrator. Where deliberate misuse is detected it must be reported immediately to the SES officer/Deputy Commissioner responsible for the cardholder and to the Authorised Signatory.

9. Responsibilities of Cardholders

9.1 Use of the purchase card in no way affects the cardholder's personal credit standing. Liability for charges debited to the purchase card attaches solely to the Commonwealth, unless the purchase card is used illegally for non official purposes. Action for misuse of purchase cards may also be pursued pursuant to the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth) and/or the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

9.2 Cardholders are to comply with directions for use of the purchase card issued by the Authorised Signatory. A Purchase Card Quick Reference guide is available to assist cardholders in understanding their responsibilities. Cardholders are to complete an Agreement and Acknowledgment by Cardholder form detailing their responsibilities and limitations on purchase card use.

9.3 All new or replacement purchase cards are delivered by the provider, ANZ, to the Authorised Signatory. The Authorised Signatory is responsible for distributing the purchase cards to cardholders. Cardholders must sign the purchase card and Agreement and Acknowledgement form immediately on receipt and return the original acknowledgement form to the Authorised Signatory.

9.4 Before using the purchase card, cardholders must have appropriate delegations to approve proposals to spend public moneys and enter into Commonwealth liabilities. If they do not have the delegations or their delegations are inadequate, cardholders must obtain the necessary approvals from an appropriate delegate before using the purchase card.

9.5 The use of the purchase card is contingent upon funds being available and subject to compliance with any departmental instructions.

9.6 Where a cardholder is unable to effect a purchase within transaction or credit limits, an alternative arrangement is to be sought. This may include a request to the Authorised Signatory to temporarily increase the applicable limit/s.

9.7 Cardholders, as purchasing officials, must have regard to the basic policy of obtaining the best value for money and observe departmental guidelines on the procurement of supplies. Cardholders must promote open and effective competition in their use of the purchase card.

Signatory and must be completed by the 18th of the month following the end of the statement period.

9.16 If appropriate to the efficient use of the purchase card, a cardholder may delegate to another officer responsibility for reconciling the card transactions to sales/substitute vouchers and ensuring transactions are correctly authorised and coded, with supporting documentation linked, in Fraedom. This option is most usually taken by cardholders who belong to the Departmental Senior Executive. If responsibility for reconciling cards is delegated, the delegate must be identified to the Card Program Administrator to ensure that both cardholder and delegate are correctly mapped to the card in Fraedom. When a delegate is used in this way, the delegate must follow the reconciliation procedures provided by the Authorised Signatory. The use of a delegate does not release the cardholder from obtaining their manager's endorsement of the statement in accordance with paragraph 9.15.

9.17 Cardholders and/or their delegates should log onto Fraedom at least once per week to code any new transactions and to ensure that no fraudulent transactions have been processed on their card.

9.18 The supplier should be contacted by the cardholder immediately on detection of a problem such as supply of incorrect goods or under supply. Where an Adjustment Note is required, immediate issue should be requested. A record of any adjustments requested must be kept by the cardholder who must ensure that such adjustments are duly made.

9.19 Cardholders must, as soon as reasonably practicable, contact the ANZ directly to query an incorrect transaction on a statement or report the loss or theft of a card. Cardholders are to advise the Authorised Signatory of any issues raised directly with the bank.

9.20 The purchase card must be immediately returned to the Authorised Signatory:

- (a) if a cardholder ceases to be an official of the Department; or
- (b) if directed by a manager or the Authorised Signatory to return it.

10. Payment of Accounts

10.1 Local procedures must be in place to ensure payment for the entire amount owing to ANZ for a billing period is paid by the due date. To achieve this, cardholders and their delegates must ensure that all transactions are coded and have supporting documentation linked in Fraedom by the dates advised by the Authorised Signatory..

10.2 The Certifying Officer may indicate that payment on a purchase card statement may properly be made if:

- (a) the expenditure has been duly approved and that the correct head of expenditure has been identified. For this purpose, the approval and coding of transactions in Fraedom indicates evidence of expenditure approval and that the head of expenditure has been identified; and
- (b) from an examination of the Fraedom data the Certifying Officer has no reason to believe that the payment may not properly be made.

10.3 Any purchase transacted by a valid cardholder must be paid to ANZ regardless of whether the expenditure is official.

13. Security

13.1 Cardholders are responsible for the security of the purchase card issued to them. They must immediately report suspected misuse, loss or theft of the purchase card to their manager, to the ANZ and to the Authorised Signatory.

13.2 A written report of the incident must be submitted by the cardholder to the Authorised Signatory, with a copy to the departmental security official, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so.

13.3 In addition to the requirements for physical security of the purchase card, the following controls apply:

- (a) cardholder signature on the purchase card;
- (b) transaction and credit limits;
- (c) restricted access to cash withdrawals;
- (d) restrictions on types of purchases;
- (e) merchant check on purchases over a certain value;
- (f) audit trail provided by records held by merchants, ANZ, the Department and within Fraedom.

13.4 Should there be any reason to suspect a fraud may have been perpetrated refer to AAI Managing Risk and Internal Accountability – SI Fraud Control & Reporting to determine the appropriate action to take.

14. Purchasing Provisions

14.1 Section 21 of the PGPA Act states that the accountable authority of a non-corporate Commonwealth entity must govern the entity in accordance with paragraph 15(1)(a) of the PGPA Act in a way that is not inconsistent with the policies of the Australian Government. Section 23 of the PGPA Act states that the accountable authority of a non-corporate Commonwealth entity may, on behalf of the Commonwealth, enter into arrangements relating to the affairs of the entity (an arrangement includes a contract, agreement, deed or understanding).

15. Training of Cardholders

15.1 Cardholders are to be trained in the use of Fraedom by staff nominated by the Authorised Signatory.

15.2 Cardholder's must complete the online purchase card training in accordance with paragraph 5.3. Cardholder delegates must also complete the course, and it is strongly recommended that cardholder managers complete the course. In addition, the cardholder's manager is responsible for ensuring the cardholder is familiar with the requirements of the AAI and SI and subsidiary instructions relating to purchasing and use of their purchase card. For example the Fraedom user guides and departmental purchasing guidelines.

17.3 The acknowledgement of staff efforts must be considered within the Department's Recognition and Rewards Framework. If staff recognition involves the purchase of food and/or beverages, the Request for Approval of Official Hospitality form associated with AAI Approval and Commitment of Relevant Money – SI Official Hospitality must be completed and endorsed by a delegate appropriate for the approval of official hospitality prior to purchases being made.

18. Review of Purchase Card Use

18.1 In addition to the responsibility of the cardholder's manager for maximising use of the purchase card, the Resources Branch will periodically review the use of the purchase cards within the Department.

19. Suspension and cancellation of cards

At the Chief Finance Officer's discretion a card may be suspended or cancelled if the cardholder or their delegate does not consistently comply with this Secretary's Instruction or the Commonwealth Procurement rules. The types of actions that may cause the suspension or cancellation of a card include:

- cardholder manager endorsement of transactions is not undertaken in a timely manner.
- consistent errors in acquittals, including inaccurate recording of GST.
- not obtaining appropriate approvals for expenditure in accordance with the Department's financial delegations.
- not providing sufficient documentation, including valid tax invoices, to support purchases.

21. Penalties

s15 of the *Public Service Act 1999* provides the following sanctions for breaches of the Code of Conduct:

- (a) termination of employment;
- (b) reduction in classification;
- (c) re-assignment of duties;
- (d) reduction in salary;
- (e) deductions from salary, by way of fine; and
- (f) a reprimand.

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Question 37

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Privacy Impact Assessment
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) What is the cost to the Department of undertaking a Privacy Impact Assessment on proposed legislative reforms?
- b) What is the cost if an external provider is engaged to undertake the PIA?

Answer

- a) The cost to the Department of undertaking a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) on proposed legislative reforms will depend upon whether the PIA is conducted internally or by an external provider. If the PIA is conducted internally by Departmental staff there is no additional cost to the Department.
- b) The cost of engaging an external provider to undertake a PIA will depend upon a number of factors, including the complexity of the proposed legislative reforms which need to be examined as part of the PIA, the timeframe and which external provider is engaged.

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Question 38

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Mental Health
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) How many positions are currently vacant on the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Mental Health?
- b) How long have they been vacant for?
- c) How many positions are there on the council?
- d) How often does this advisory council meet?
- e) How are people appointed to the council?
- f) Who signs off on the board appointments?

Answer

- a – b) There are no positions vacant on the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Veterans Mental Health (the Council).
- c) The Council's Terms of Reference specify that it will comprise of up to 12 members, including the Chair.
- d) There are currently 12 members serving on the Council (including the Chair), which meets three times per year.
- e) Members are chosen on the basis of individual merit and skills, not as representatives of organisations. Consideration is given to potential candidates with an appropriate background, broad experience and an understanding of the issues affecting the ex-service and defence communities.
- f) Council Members are appointed by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

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Question 39

Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Client Satisfaction Survey
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) How often are DVA client satisfaction surveys conducted?
- b) How was ORIMA Research engaged to undertake this research?
- c) What was the cost associated with running this survey?
- d) What is the methodology behind the scoring system?
- e) How are mixed results recorded?
- f) Who was interviewed in the survey; clients or people with applications pending?
- g) If it was only one of the above, does this represent an accurate picture? If so, how?
- h) Is this an accurate picture of satisfaction?
- i) What happens to the feedback from these surveys, is any action taken? If so, what action?
- j) Are these reported on? If so, where? If no, why not?

Answer

- a) DVA has conducted a range of client satisfaction surveys periodically since 1995. The most recent being 2014 and 2016.
- b) ORIMA Research was engaged from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Social Policy Research and Evaluation Services Panel (SON456233).
- c) ORIMA Research was paid a total of \$220,370.20 (including GST) to conduct the 2016 Client Satisfaction Survey.
- d) The methodology behind the scoring system is a 6 point scale designed to elicit a clear rating from survey respondents.
- e) Trained interviewers work with respondents to identify their preferred response, of which, 'mixed' is an option.
- f) DVA clients were interviewed for the DVA Client Satisfaction Survey, which could have included clients with applications in progress.
- g) The responses provided by the DVA clients surveyed accurately convey their views on DVA service delivery.
- h) Yes, the responses from survey participants is an accurate picture of satisfaction.
- i) The responses provided by the DVA clients surveyed are used to understand the needs of the client cohorts and to inform the design of DVA client services.
- j) The results of the DVA Client Satisfaction survey informs a wide range of programs and initiatives across DVA. These programs for example, Veteran Centric Reform, adhere to their specific program reporting requirements.

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Question 40

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: VVCS Expansion

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) Can the department clarify what part of the requirements is changing in relation to the expansion of VVCS?
- b) When will this be operational from?
- c) Why is the 'Time-Out' respite program only available to Vietnam Veterans?
- d) Has any consideration been given to opening up access to other veterans?
- e) Does VVCS provide any other respite for veterans of other conflicts?

Answer

- a) Successive governments have committed to reviewing VVCS client eligibility on an ongoing basis to ensure community needs are met. This has resulted in expansions of VVCS eligibility in 2014, 2016 and again in this Budget. The 2017-18 Budget expands access to:
 - i. the partners and children of current and former ADF members who hold a Repatriation Health Card - Gold or White for an accepted mental health disability; and
 - ii. the former partners of current and former ADF members for a period of five years following separation, or for the duration of co-parenting responsibilities for a child under 18.Consistent with the expansion of non-liability health care to all mental health conditions also announced in the 2017-18 Budget, the families of ex-service personnel with at least one day continuous full time service now have access to VVCS support services.
- b) 1 July 2017.
- c) The Crisis Assistance 'Time Out' Program (CAP) offers short-term emergency accommodation to Vietnam veterans in crisis. The program aims to help reduce stress that may lead to family violence or family break up. It links the client into services provided by VVCS such as counselling, case management, and group programs that assist with managing underlying issues. The CAP was established as part of the Government's response to the *Vietnam Veteran Health & Mortality Study* (1999).
- d) CAP eligibility is technically limited to Vietnam veterans, however, it has been accessed by veterans of other conflicts in circumstances where it would be an abrogation of VVCS's duty of care to turn them away.
- e) See answer to 'd'. VVCS and the Department of Veterans' Affairs are continuing to review the need for additional programs in this space.

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Question 41

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: Suicide Prevention Trial Sites

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) How do the suicide prevention trials which are a part of the 2017/18 DVA budget differ from the suicide prevention trials announced during the election period and on 5 subsequent occasions?
- b) The budget papers claim a robust evaluation framework will be developed to support future consideration for expansion of these sites, has this been developed yet?

Answer

- a) As part of the Australian Government's broader investment in suicide prevention, innovative and collaborative approaches to suicide prevention are being piloted in 12 different locations across the country. The National Suicide Prevention Trial aims to provide evidence of how a systems-based approach to suicide prevention might be best undertaken at a regional level to better respond to local needs, and to identify new learnings in relation to suicide prevention strategies for at-risk populations. All planning and coordination for these trials is through local Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and the Department of Health (Health).

Townsville, home to a large veteran community, is one of these sites and has a particular focus on veteran suicide prevention. This project is about building an understanding of suicide in the Townsville community, and developing a local solution that strengthens existing services, builds collaboration between existing service providers, provides visibility to consumers of those services and considers innovative approaches to suicide prevention. For this reason, the project is being led by the Townsville community, through the North Queensland PHN.

The 2017-18 Budget provided the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) \$9.8 million to pilot two new approaches to suicide prevention, which will support vulnerable veterans experiencing mental health concerns. The intent of these pilots is for DVA to identify barriers and success factors, health outcomes and evidence for future expansion of two specific suicide prevention interventions.

The Mental Health Clinical Management pilot will test whether intensive support following a hospitalisation for an acute mental health incident is effective in preventing suicide and readmission. The program will be delivered to an at-risk population, those at risk of self-harm, re-admission and/or homelessness, on discharge from a mental health hospital. Pilot participants will be offered intensive non-clinical care coordination to support continued recovery. This may include support to integrate into the community ensuring stable housing and social connections, and coordination of care with their health providers.

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The second pilot, the Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Mental Health Pilot, is an expansion of the existing program to support veterans with chronic mental and physical conditions resulting from their service to provide enhanced community-based support. The pilot will use the existing CVC framework to engage with general practice in its central role in the overall clinical management of individual patients. The expansion of this would see a new component to focus on the interaction between mental and physical health and would explore new models of clinical management to deliver this and integrate with CVC.

In testing these models of support, DVA will also collect the evidence necessary to support a national scale-up of the programs, if either or both pilots are found to be successful.

DVA will work with Health to ensure that there is no conflict between these new pilots and the existing Suicide Prevention Trial in Townsville.

- b) It is important that the evaluation framework is designed in conjunction with the design of the pilot delivery to ensure it is specific to the pilot. This work will commence in early 2017-18. DVA will procure evaluation partner/s who will work together with DVA, the service delivery partner and clinical experts to design the evaluation framework.

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Question 42

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: VAN Offices

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Can the Department please provide the following information in relation to VAN offices:

- a. Location of each VAN office
- b. Staff numbers
- c. FTE allocation
- d. Opening hours of each office
- e. Cost PA of each site

Answer

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has a face to face presence in twenty one locations around Australia.

The location of the sixteen VAN offices along with the number of staff and the FTE allocation for these offices is included in the table below. The cost per annum includes staffing, accommodation and stationery. The figures are for the 2015/16 financial year.

With the exception of Greater Western Sydney and Wodonga, all VAN offices are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm. The Greater Western Sydney Office provides a VAN service by appointment only. The Wodonga VAN is open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

VAN Office Name	VAN Office Location	Staff Numbers	FTE Allocation	Cost per annum
Canberra	28-30 Corinna Street, Woden, Canberra ACT	4	2.5	\$576,870
Sydney	Centennial Plaza B, Levels G-5 280 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW	14	14	\$1,203,943
Greater Western Sydney	Suite 41, 60 Station Street East, Parramatta NSW	Nil	Nil	\$26,826
Lismore	Suite 6 & 8, Conway Court 17 Conway Street, Lismore NSW	3	3	\$392,933
Newcastle	Suite 1 & 2 Ground floor	3	2.7	\$394,248

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VAN Office Name	6 Auckland Street, Newcastle NSW VAN Office Location	Staff Numbers	FTE Allocation	Cost per annum
Darwin	Unit 1 Winnellie Central, 14 Winnellie Road, Darwin NT	8	8	\$899,881
Brisbane	Levels 4-8, 259 Queen Street, Brisbane QLD	13	13	\$974,404
Townsville	Level 1, 520 Flinders Street, Townsville QLD	3	3	\$481,572
Broadbeach	Level 3b & 11 Niecon Tower 17 Victoria Avenue, Broadbeach QLD	3	3	\$446,879
Maroochydore	Shop 2/129 Horton Parade, Maroochydore QLD	3	3	\$412,337
Adelaide	Levels ground to 2 199 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA	13	13	\$924,644
Hobart	254-286 Liverpool Street, Hobart TAS	10	8.4	\$1,082,369
Launceston	105/287 Charles Street, Launceston TAS	2	2	\$225,769
Melbourne	Levels 11-13, 300 Latrobe Street, Melbourne VIC	23	20.8	\$2,101,860
Wodonga	81 Hume Street, Wodonga VIC	1	0.8	\$193,489
Perth	140 St Georges Terrace, Perth WA	24	22.13	\$2,150,778

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In addition to the VAN standalone offices, there are Department of Human Service (DHS) VAN offices in five locations.

DHS VAN Office Name	DHS Service Centre Location	Staff Numbers	FTE Allocation	Cost per annum
Morwell	Cnr Chapel Street & Elgin Street, Morwell VIC	1	1	N/A
Ballarat	4-12 Albert Street, Ballarat VIC	1	1	N/A
Geelong	12-14 Little Rynie Street, Geelong VIC	1	1	N/A
Tweed Heads South	100 Blundell Boulevard, Tweed Heads South NSW	1	1	N/A
Robina	Level 5, Robina Town Shopping Centre, 19-33 Robina Town Centre Drive, Robina QLD	1	1	N/A

Trained DHS staff members deliver in-person services on behalf of DVA at DHS shopfronts in 33 locations across Australia. Further, DVA maintains agreements with additional external agencies to deliver services under agency arrangements, particularly in regional areas.

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Question 43

Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: Staffing Levels
 (Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

Can the department please provide the following information in relation to staffing numbers

- a) Total number of staff, including a breakdown by state and of permanent, part-time and casual
- b) Total number of clients, including breakdown by state
- c) Total number of pending clients, including breakdown by state

Answer

- a) Table 1 shows total number of staff by state, ongoing or non-ongoing and full time or part time as at 31 May 2017.

State	Ongoing		Non Ongoing		Total Headcount
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	
ACT	549	69	15	4	637
NSW	247	31	17	1	296
NT	10	1	3		14
QLD	301	50	57	1	409
SA	121	12	13	3	149
TAS	45	12	4	2	63
VIC	198	42	29	1	270
WA	77	11	11		99
Total	1548	228	149	12	1937

- b) Total DVA clients by State as at 31 March 2017 (current available figures).

States/Territories	Persons
New South Wales	84,637
Victoria	54,800
Queensland	80,764
South Australia	23,264
Western Australia	29,282
Tasmania	8,807
Northern Territory	2,759
Australian Capital Territory	7,548
Overseas	2,013
Total	293,874

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- c) DVA does not record the number of pending clients. DVA reports the number of outstanding compensation claims at a point in time, but does not distinguish whether claims have been lodged by a current client or a new client.

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Question 44

Outcome: 1 Program: Australian War Memorial

Topic: Market Research

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator FARRELL asked:

For the 2016-17 financial year, what was the total amount spent by the Department/agency on market research (either as a whole contract or as part of a contract)?

For each contract for market research in 2016-2017, can you please provide:

- a) The subject of the market research;
- b) The supplier;
- c) Whether the supplier has been engaged previously and if so, for which contracts;
- d) The total value of the contract;
- e) The term of the contract (time);
- f) The date that the decision was taken to seek market research on the topic;
- g) The date the contract was opened to tender or selection process;
- h) The date the supplier was engaged;
- i) Whether the contract was subject to a tender process, including whether there was a full, partial or closed tender process;
- j) Does the supplier exist on a pre-approved supplier list, if so, when were they added to that list;
- k) Whether the Minister, or the Minister's Office, requested that the research be conducted;
- l) Whether the Minister approved the decision to conduct market research;
- m) Whether the Minister approved the contract with the supplier;
- n) Whether the Minister or the Minister's office was consulted on questions asked;
- o) Whether the Minister or the Minister's office received a copy of the market research;
- p) If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, was the Minister or their office consulted before the decision was taken to conduct research, if so – in what form did that consultation take (written, verbal other);
- q) If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, did Minister or their office make any amendments or changes to the Department's proposal for market research to be conducted, if so, what changes and to what aspects were they made;
- r) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other departments or agencies consulted?
- s) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other Ministers, or the Prime Minister consulted?
- t) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the expected cost change, if so how?

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- u) At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the scope, questions or supplier of the research change?
- v) Have any topics or questions of market research been conducted and subsequently conducted again by the same or different supplier?

Answer

Responses for answers a–v can be found at the attached table.

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Question	Roy Morgan Research	McNair Ingenuity Research	McNair Ingenuity Research	Woolcott Research
<i>a. The subject of the market research</i>	AWM audience segmentation profile research	General Visitor Survey 2016-17 - only data entry of survey results and report	AWM Café catering performance customer survey 2016-17- data entry of survey results and report	Brand positioning market research
<i>b. The supplier</i>	Roy Morgan Research	McNair Ingenuity Research	McNair Ingenuity Research	Woolcott Research
<i>c. Whether the supplier has been engaged previously and if so, for which contracts</i>	No	Yes, General Visitor Survey data entry and report 2015-2016 and 2014-15	Yes, Café catering performance customer survey 2015-16.	No.
<i>d. The total value of the contract</i>	Total cost excl GST \$99,979	Total cost excl GST \$17,550	Total cost excl GST \$8,772.50	Total cost excl GST \$7,800
<i>e. The term of the contract (time)</i>	3 Months	2 months	9 months	2 months
<i>f. The date that the decision was taken to seek market research on the topic</i>	June 2016 - FY Budget approval process	June 2016 - FY Budget approval process	June 2016 - FY Budget approval process	25 July 2016
<i>g. The date the contract was opened to tender or selection process</i>	20 February 2017	27 April 2017	19 September 2016	12 August 2016
<i>h. The date the supplier was engaged</i>	30 March 2017	17 May 2017	28 September 2017	20 August 2016
<i>i. Whether the contract was subject to a tender process, including whether there was a full, partial or closed tender process</i>	Partial tender process utilising Research and Evaluation Services (RES) Panel	No, Request for Quote process. Procurement value below threshold for mandatory tender process.	No, Request for Quote process. Procurement value below threshold for mandatory tender process.	Partial, Request for Quote process. Procurement value below threshold for mandatory tender process.
<i>j. Does the supplier exist on a pre-approved supplier list, if so, when were they added to that list</i>	N/A Not on any Memorial based pre-approved supplier list	N/A Not on any Memorial based pre-approved supplier list	N/A Not on any Memorial based pre-approved supplier list	N/A Not on any Memorial based pre-approved supplier list
<i>k. Whether the Minister, or the Minister's Office, requested that the research be conducted</i>	No request or involvement by Minister/Minister's Office	No request or involvement by Minister/Minister's Office	No request or involvement by Minister/Minister's Office	No request or involvement by Minister/Minister's Office
<i>l. Whether the Minister approved the decision to conduct market research</i>	No involvement or approval required by the Minister	No involvement or approval required by the Minister	No involvement or approval required by the Minister	No involvement or approval required by the Minister
<i>m. Whether the Minister approved the contract with the supplier</i>	No involvement or approval required by the Minister	No involvement or approval required by the Minister	No involvement or approval required by the Minister	No involvement or approval required by the Minister
<i>n. Whether the Minister or the Minister's office was consulted on questions asked</i>	No involvement by Minister/Minister's Office	No involvement by Minister/Minister's Office	No involvement by Minister/Minister's Office	No involvement by Minister/Minister's Office
<i>o. Whether the Minister or the Minister's office received a copy of the market research</i>	No copy supplied to Minister/Minister's Office	No copy supplied to Minister/Minister's Office	No copy supplied to Minister/Minister's Office	No copy supplied to Minister/Minister's Office
<i>p. If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, was the Minister or their office consulted before the decision was taken to conduct research, if so – in what form did that consultation take (written, verbal other)</i>	No consultation prior to decision	No consultation prior to decision	No consultation prior to decision	No consultation prior to decision
<i>q. If the decision to conduct research was initiated by the department or agency, did Minister or their office make any amendments or changes</i>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

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<i>to the Department's proposal for market research to be conducted, if so, what changes and to what aspects were they made</i>				
<i>r. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other departments or agencies consulted?</i>	No	No	No	No
<i>s. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research were other Ministers, or the Prime Minister consulted?</i>	No	No	No	No
<i>t. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the expected cost change, if so how?</i>	No	No	No	No
<i>u. At any stage in the life of the proposal to conduct market research did the scope, questions or supplier of the research change?</i>	No	No	No	No
<i>v. Have any topics or questions of market research been conducted and subsequently conducted again by the same or different supplier?</i>	No	No	No	No

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Question 45

Outcome: 1 Program: 1.4

Topic: Funding Provided to NSW RSL

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) Does the Department provide any money (via grants or other means) to NSW RSL?
- b) What is the purpose of the funding?
- c) Is the funding exclusively for the purpose of building or maintaining memorials or can it be used for other purposes?
- d) How does DVA acquit this funding to NSW RSL?
- e) Does the DVA monitor NSW RSL's spending of taxpayers' money and ensure that the money is being used for what it is intended?
- f) Has DVA ever found that the funding provided to NSW RSL was not used for the purpose it was intended?
- g) Does the DVA provide funding to any NSW RSL sub-branches?
- h) Do sub-branches have the same rigour of monitoring and acquittal from DVA as the state branch?
- i) In the wake of the current police investigation and allegations of misconduct and fraud, has the Department withheld any money from NSW RSL, or any of its state branches?
- j) Is the Department looking to improve the rigour of the monitoring it currently carries out?

Answer

- a) DVA provides grant funding to organisations that meet the guidelines for each grant program it offers. The NSW RSL State and Sub-branches have been recipients of DVA grant money. Details of these grants can be found at www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/grants
- b) Details and purpose of the funding provided to the NSW State Branch and Sub-branches can be located at www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/grants
- c) See response *b.* above.
- d) The acquittal process for each grant is defined in the guidelines for each program. Please refer to response *b.* above.
- e) The acquittal process is the mechanism used across Government to ensure that grant funding is spent in accordance with the purpose of the grant payment.
- f) DVA has no evidence to suggest that the RSL NSW State and Sub-branches has misappropriated DVA grant funds. DVA is aware of the media reports announcing various investigations into the NSW RSL and related entities and will consider the outcome of these investigations when available.
- g) Refer to response *a.* above.
- h) The acquittal process is the same, irrespective of whether an applicant organisation is a State Branch or a Sub-branch.
- i) DVA is aware of the allegations made and will continue to apply a risk-based approach to determining what additional assurance is required from the grantee. Withholding the grant funding could compromise the delivery of services to veterans and their families. DVA

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has balanced the need to continue to offer grant funding with a greater focus on assurance to ensure continued and appropriate use of grants funds.

- j) The acquittal process is scalable and flexible already to adjust the level of acquittal and assurance with the nature and value of the grant provided. The DVA Grant Guidelines outline the acquittal process for grants under and over \$100,000. The flexibility of this additional assurance can apply at the time of offering the grant or during the period when the grant agreement is in operation.

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Question 46

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: DVA Attendance at Events with the Former State Council of NSW RSL
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) Have any DVA officials attended any other events with the former State Council of NSW RSL (E.g. dinners or parties)?
- b) What was the purpose of such events?
- c) How was their attendance at such dinners funded? Was it funded by the RSL or by the taxpayer?
- d) How many events did officials attend?
- e) What was the cost to DVA for official attendance at these events?

Answer

- a) Throughout the year DVA officials attend numerous commemorative events, functions, fora and meetings that are convened by DVA and various state and local governments, ex-service organisation groups and the veteran community, some of which may also have been attended by RSL state councillors.
- b) The purpose of these events vary, e.g. briefings, consultative fora, training courses, commemorative events and health promotion activities.
- c) Generally DVA functions are paid for out of departmental appropriation and non-DVA events are funded by the host bodies/organisations.
- d) DVA does not have a central system capturing this information and it would be a costly exercise to try and reconstruct.
- e) Refer d. above.

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Question 47

Outcome: All Program: All
Topic: RSL State Congresses
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) Have senior executives of DVA attended RSL State Congresses around Australia?
- b) What was their role at such State Congresses?
- c) What travel class do DVA officials travel within Australia?
- d) Do DVA officials have any formal role at RSL State Congresses?
- e) Do DVA officials have any speaking role at RSL State Congresses?
- f) Does DVA regularly provide gifts or give-aways at RSL State Congresses?
- g) What has been the cost of such gifts and give-aways each year?

Answer

- a) Yes. One or more members of the senior executive from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) attend RSL State Congresses across Australia each year.
- b) Senior DVA officials attend RSL state congresses at the invitation of the relevant RSL organisation. The congress organisers will also often ask a senior official from DVA to speak to delegates or participate in a panel arrangement. The attendance by DVA officials at these congresses provides an ideal opportunity to engage with members of the ex-service community at all levels.
- c) DVA officials travel economy class within Australia unless there is a business case or an entitlement to travel business class.
- d) DVA officials do not have a formal role at RSL state congresses although senior executives may be invited by the organisers to speak or participate in a panel arrangement during the proceedings. Staff from DVA Veterans Access Network (VAN) offices will also often attend congresses and set up an information booth for the purpose of promoting awareness of DVA programs and to answer questions/provide advice to delegates.
- e) Senior DVA officials may have a speaking role if invited by the organisers to do so.
- f) As noted in d. above, representatives from the local DVA VAN offices will sometimes host an information stall at a state congress where delegates can access information about the services provided by the Department. The information available to delegates at these stalls will often include promotional material/merchandise which can range from brochures and other information publications to items such as stress balls, fridge magnets and pens. Delegates can choose to take these items if they wish.
- g) The promotional material/merchandise is not produced specifically for the RSL congresses and DVA does not keep a record of exactly what material/merchandise is given away.

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Question 48

Outcome: 3 Program: 3.1

Topic: St Mary's RSL Funding to Build Memorial in Pozieres, France
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator GALLACHER asked:

- a) Is DVA aware of a program by St Mary's RSL sub-Branch in NSW to fund and build a memorial in Pozieres, France?
- b) Has DVA been approached to help fund this program?
- c) Has DVA contributed to this program in any capacity?
- d) How are proposals for funding assessed by the Department?
- e) Who decides whether or not DVA will fund this particular project?
- f) Is the Department aware of any awards or honours being awarded to Australian officials (RSL or DVA) involved in this project?
 - i. If yes: What awards were received, and by whom?
 - ii. Has the project been finished?
 - iii. What were the awards for?
 - iv. Have any other DVA or RSL officials received awards for their involvement in projects that are yet to be finished?

Answer

- a) No. DVA is not aware of any program initiated by St Mary's RSL sub-Branch to fund and build a memorial in Pozières, France.
- b) No. DVA has not been approached to help fund a program by St Mary's RSL sub-Branch to build a memorial in Pozières, France.
- c) Please refer to previous responses at a. and b.
- d) DVA does not provide funding assistance for the construction of private memorials overseas.
- e) Please refer to previous response at d.
- f) No.
 - i. N/A.
 - ii. DVA is not aware of this project.
 - iii. Please refer to previous response at f.
 - iv. DVA is not aware of this project.

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Question 49

Outcome: 1 Program: Australian War Memorial

Topic: Departmental Functions

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

In relation to expenditure on any functions or official receptions etc hosted by the Department or agencies in the portfolio since 1 March 2017, can the following please be provided:

- a) List of functions;
- b) List of attendees;
- c) Function venue;
- d) Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive);
- e) Details of any food served;
- f) Details of any wines or champagnes served including brand and vintage; and
- g) Details of any entertainment provided.

Answer

a) List of Function	b- c) List of Attendees and Function venue	d) Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive)	e) Details of any food served
Australian Korean War veterans' afternoon tea	Includes veterans and their carers/family, ex-service organisations and ceremony participants, senior Government officials, Memorial sponsors and partners, commissioned artists and AWM staff hosts where required as relevant to the activity. All Functions were held at the Australian War Memorial	\$385	Basic afternoon tea
Presentation ceremony – AWM security staff		\$482	Basic morning tea
Flanders Memorial Garden Dedication		\$3,597	Canapes, tea, coffee and juice
Anzac Day Breakfast (partial for key invited stakeholders. Members of the public purchased tickets)		\$2,795 (for only key invited stakeholders plus \$6,106 Audio visual equipment hire for entire event)	2 course breakfast, tea and coffee
Workplace Relations network		\$525	Basic morning tea
Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) morning tea		\$212	Basic morning tea

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- f) Nil served.
- g) Nil.

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Question 50

Outcome: 2 Program: 2.5

Topic: Mental Health of ADF Serving Personnel

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator LAMBIE asked:

Could the Department provide an update on the status of recommendations it agreed or partly agreed or noted or agreed in principle with respect to the report on Mental Health of ADF Serving Personnel by the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, together with the Minority Recommendations, issued on 17 August 2016, which include the following:

- a) Recommendation 1 - The committee recommends that Defence conduct annual screening for mental ill-health for all ADF members.
- b) Recommendation 2 - The committee recommends that the Australian National Audit Office conduct an audit into the scope and accuracy of recordkeeping of relevant clinical information collected or recorded during deployment regarding mental ill-health or potentially traumatic incidents.
- c) Recommendation 3 - The committee recommends that all veterans be issued with a universal identification number and identification card that can be linked to their service and medical record.
- d) Recommendation 4 - The committee recommends that the Department of Health and the Department of Veterans' Affairs ensure that e-health records identify veterans and that GPs are encouraged to promote annual *ADF Post-discharge GP Health Assessment* for all veterans.
- e) Recommendation 5 - The committee recommends that Defence and DVA contact ADF members and veterans who have been administered mefloquine hydrochloride (mefloquine) during their service to advise them of the possible short-term and long-term side effects and that all ADF members and veterans who have been administered mefloquine during their service be given access to neurological assessment.
- f) Recommendation 6 - The committee recommends that the report for the Inspector General of the Australian Defence Force's inquiry to determine whether any failures in military justice have occurred regarding the Australia Defence Force's use of mefloquine be published immediately following the completion of the inquiry.
- g) Recommendation 7 - The committee recommends that the Department of Defence ensure that medical officers and mental health professionals have ready access to records of potentially traumatic events for members following their deployment.
- h) Recommendation 8 - The committee recommends that the DVA Psychologists Schedule of Fees be revised to better reflect the Australian Psychological Societies' National Schedule of Recommended Fees and that any restrictions regarding the number of hours or frequency of psychologist sessions are based on achieving the best outcome and guaranteeing the safety of the veteran.
- i) Recommendation 9 - The committee recommends that eligibility requirements for the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) be consolidated

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- and broadened to include all current and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and their immediate families (partners, children, and carers).
- j) Recommendation 10 - The committee recommends that currently serving ADF members be eligible to access the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) without referral and that the VVCS reporting obligations to the ADF be limited to situations where the VVCS believes that a members' mental ill-health will compromise their safety or the safety of others.
 - k) Recommendation 11 - The committee recommends that Defence mental health awareness programs do more to emphasise the benefit of early identification and treatment of mental ill-health for an ADF members' long-term career and encourage ADF members to plan beyond their next deployment.
 - l) Recommendation 12 - The committee recommends that the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs develop a program to engage current and former ADF members, who have successfully deployed after rehabilitation for mental ill-health, to be 'mental health champions' to assist in the de-stigmatisation of mental ill-health.
 - m) Recommendation 13 - The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs be adequately funded to achieve a full digitisation of its records and modernisation of its ICT systems by 2020, including the introduction of a single coherent system to process and manage claims.
 - n) Recommendation 14 - The committee recommends that the Department of Defence work with ex-service organisations to develop a transition mentoring program, which will connect every veteran with a trained mentor from the ex-service community to assist and guide them through the transition process.
 - o) Recommendation 15 - The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs review its rehabilitation assessment policy to ensure that junior-ranked members are not disadvantaged and all veterans are able to access rehabilitation, education, and re-skilling based on their individual needs and abilities and regardless of rank.
 - p) Recommendation 16 - The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs identify veterans who are receiving in-patient mental health care as at risk of homelessness and provide an ongoing psychosocial case manager to actively manage an 'at risk' veteran's care program until their mental health and living situation is stable.
 - q) Recommendation 17 - The committee recommends that the Department of Veterans' Affairs work together with the Department of Human Services and RSL Lifecare to develop a program to address veteran homelessness based on the Homes for Heroes 'housing first approach' and focus on ongoing psychosocial support.
 - r) Minority Recommendation 1 - That Defence and DVA report annually to the parliament on the 'state of mental health' of current and former ADF members including data on the rates of mental ill-health, homelessness, incarceration, suicidality, neurological conditions and any other issues or indicators relevant to instances of mental ill-health amongst defence personnel.
 - s) Minority Recommendation 6 - That funding for mental health support services for current and former ADF members are provided on the basis of need and not be subject to any arbitrary budget cap.

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Answer

The Senate Inquiry Report presented the Government with 25 recommendations, comprising 17 main recommendations and eight Minority Report recommendations. Of the 17 main recommendations, three were agreed to by the Government, four were agreed in principle, six were partly agreed and four were noted. The Government did not rate any of the main recommendations as 'not agreed'. Of the eight Minority Report recommendations, one was agreed to by the Government, one was partly agreed, two were noted and four were not agreed to.

Further details can be found in the Government Response to the report at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/ADF_Mental_Health/Government_Response

The Defence/DVA Links Steering Committee continues to oversee the implementation of the recommendations and receives six monthly updates. At their March 2017 meeting, the Committee was informed that of the recommendations agreed, agreed in principle and partly agreed, actions against five recommendations (main recommendations 5, 9, 10 and 12 and minority recommendation 6) have been completed and ten recommendations are underway.

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Question 51

Outcome: 1 Program: Australian War Memorial

Topic: AWM Credit Cards

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

- a) How many credit cards are currently on issue for staff in the Department and agencies within the portfolio? If possible, please provide a break-down of this information by APS/ SES level.
- b) What was the value of the largest reported purchase on a credit card in calendar year 2016 and what was it for?
- c) How much interest was paid on amounts outstanding from credit cards in calendar year 2016?
- d) How much was paid in late fees on amounts outstanding from credit cards in calendar year 2016?
- e) What was the largest amount outstanding on a single card at the end of a payment period in calendar year 2016 and what was the card holder's APS/ SES level?
- f) How many credit cards were reported as lost or stolen in calendar year 2016 and what was the cost of their replacement?
- g) How many credit card purchases were deemed to be illegitimate or contrary to agency policy in calendar year 2016? What was the total value of those purchases? How many purchases were asked to be repaid on that basis in calendar year 2016 and what was the total value thereof? Were all those amounts actually repaid? If no, how many were not repaid, and what was the total value thereof?
- h) What was the largest purchase that was deemed illegitimate or contrary to agency policy and asked to be repaid in calendar year 2016, and what was the cardholder's APS/ SES level? What that amount actually repaid, in full? If no, what amount was left unpaid?
- i) Are any credit cards currently on issue in the Department or agencies within the portfolio connected to rewards schemes? Do staff receive any personal benefit as a result of those reward schemes?
- j) Can a copy of the Department's staff credit card policy please be provided?

Answer

- a) The Memorial currently has 13 credit cards on issue to staff. The breakdown by APS/SES level is:

APS5	2
APS6	1
EL1	-
EL2	6
SES band 1	3
Statutory Position Holders	1
Total	13

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- b) The largest single credit card purchase in 2016 was for \$3,628.64. It was for the Annual membership to Museums Australia.
- c) There were no amounts outstanding on credit cards during calendar year 2016 and no interest was paid.
- d) There were no amounts outstanding on credit cards during calendar year 2016 and no late fees were paid.
- e) There were no amounts outstanding on any card at the end of a payment period in calendar year 2016.
- f) Nil.
- g) Nil.
- h) Nil.
- i) Nil.
- j) The Memorial's credit card policy is found in the Director's Instructions (Financial) 5 – Spending and Managing Memorial Money.

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Attachment

EXCERPT FROM THE

DIRECTORS' INSTRUCTIONS (FINANCIAL) 5

(Issued March 99, Amended July 2014)



Australian War Memorial

SPENDING AND MANAGING MEMORIAL MONEY (excluding official travel)

7. ISSUE OF CREDIT AND CHARGE CARDS

This section relates to the issue of official corporate credit cards, fuel cards, Cabcharge cards, and other charge cards. Refer to Director's Instruction (Financial) 5A for cards related to official travel.

The following employees can authorise the issue of corporate credit and charge cards for official purposes:

- Head of Finance / Chief Finance Officer
- ADCS
- Director

The positions above may issue an employee with an official corporate credit cards for general Memorial expenditure relevant to the card holder's role, or for a specific purpose and / or time period.

The employees responsible for issuing a corporate credit or charge card to other employees are to be designated Card Issuing Officers. The following employees are authorised Card Issuing Officers:

- Finance Officer (Bank Reconciliation)
- Manager, Budgets & Financial Policy
- Manager, Financial Reporting & Analysis
- Head of Finance / Chief Finance Officer
- ADCS

Card Issuing Officers must:

- not issue a corporate credit or charge Card to an employee unless there is a demonstrated business need for the card, as approved by the authorising employees listed above.
- ensure that cardholders formally acknowledge their acceptance of their responsibilities and obligations for using the card;

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- review patterns of corporate credit or charge card usage annually with a view to cancelling Cards which
 - o are not being used or where the level of usage is too low to justify continued allocation of a Card, or
 - o the conditions of using the card (outlined below) are not being met;
- monitor situations where the corporate credit or charge Card is being used for high value transactions above \$10,000 to ensure that the Cards are being used in a cost-effective manner; and
- keep proper records of corporate credit or charge cards issued and relevant details of cardholder's such as financial limits, whether or not they are approvers, access to cash advances, availability for travel purposes, etc.

The Finance Section (Accounts Payable Officers) must:

- distribute individual monthly statements to cardholders for verification of charges;
- ensure that the monthly account is settled by the due date, excluding any disputed transactions, which must be communicated to the Card Provider as soon as discrepancies are identified;
- ensure that the payment of the account is endorsed by a Verifying Officer prior to being made;
- carry out any post-reconciliation adjustments as necessary;
- refer any travel-related expenditure to the Travel Officer to ensure that travel allowance was not also paid to the cardholder; and
- refer any instances of high value transactions above \$10,000 to the Card Issuing Officer.

The Head of Finance / Chief Finance Officer must institute a program of random checking of corporate credit card operations, including supporting documentation for card transactions.

Every three years, Internal Audit shall conduct a full review of corporate credit card operations in the Memorial, including ongoing cost-effectiveness, compliance, risk of fraud, and settlement account arrangements.

An employee who becomes aware of an apparent misuse of the Card must report the matter immediately to the Head of Finance / Chief Finance Officer.

8. USE OF CREDIT AND CHARGE CARDS FOR PURCHASE OF GOODS AND SERVICES (EXCLUDING OFFICIAL TRAVEL)

This section relates to the use of official corporate credit cards, fuel cards, Cabcharge cards, and other charge cards. Refer to Director's Instruction (Financial) 5A for use of cards related to official travel.

Employees issued with credit or charge cards for the purchase of goods / services must:

- formally acknowledge their acceptance of their responsibilities and obligations for using the card;

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- if they have the authority to approve proposals to spend Memorial money, approve Card payments in accordance with Approving Proposals to Spend Memorial Money above;
- if they do not have the authority to approve proposals to spend Memorial money, ensure the proposed payment has been approved before making the payment using the Card;
- ensure they do not use the Card to enter into a Memorial Liability unless they have the authority to do so (see above, Entering into Memorial Liability);
- when using the Card for making a particular payment, be satisfied that it is the most cost-effective payment mechanism for those circumstances;
- ensure that individual purchases do not exceed the financial limits of their authorisation;
- ensure that the monthly purchases / payments do not exceed the billing period credit limit set for their Card;
- retain all documentation associated with the purchase and payment of goods and services to support payment of the Card's monthly account;
- not use the Card for purchases of Memorial plant and equipment and software assets >\$2,000 without prior approval by the Head of Finance / Chief Finance Officer;
- not use the Card for private purposes (to do so would constitute a fraudulent act);
- upon receipt of their individual monthly statements, promptly reconcile the statements and forward them to the Finance Section for verification and payment;
- only use the Card for cash advances if authorised to do so by the Director, Assistant Director Corporate Services, or Head of Finance / Chief Finance Officer;
- take all reasonable steps to maintain secure custody of their Cards and Card details; and
- report lost Cards immediately to the Head of Finance / Chief Finance Officer.

Under no circumstances should a holder of an official credit or charge card use the card for non-official purchases. Employees issued corporate credit or charge card for use in conjunction with Official Travel are referred to the requirements of *DI(F) 5A - Spending and Managing Memorial Money - Official Travel*.

Employees must not use their own personal credit cards for official Memorial business unless prior approval is obtained from the appropriate delegate.

Other reference:

PGPA Act s57 Borrowing by corporate Commonwealth entities ANAO Report 37 Management of Credit Cards

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Question 52

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: AWM Laptops
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator BILYK asked:

- a) How many laptops are currently on issue to staff of the Department and agencies in the portfolio?
- b) Can an itemised list showing make and model please be provided?
- c) How many new laptops were purchased by the Department and agencies in the portfolio in calendar year 2016?
- d) What was the total cost (GST **inclusive**) of purchasing laptops for staff of the Department and agencies in the portfolio in calendar year 2016?
- e) How many laptops did the Department and agencies in the portfolio have to be replaced due to damage in calendar year 2016? What was the cost of replacement (GST **inclusive**)?
- f) How many laptops were reported lost or stolen in calendar year 2016? What was the cost of replacement (GST **inclusive**)?

Answer

- a) There are 64 laptops issued to Staff and IT has 9 laptops for ad hoc use.
- b)

Device Make and Model	On issue
Dell E7470	60
Dell E6420	3
Dell E6220	1
Dell E6530	3
Dell E6540	5
MAC MacBook Air	1
Total:	73

- c) Nil.
- d) Nil.
- e) Nil.
- f) Nil.