

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 1

Outcome: 1 (Compensation)

Topic: F111 Deseal/Reseal

Senator Mark Bishop asked

- a. How many applications have been received from (a) former RAAF personnel and (b) civilians for the act of grace payment for those exposed to toxic chemicals in the deseal/reseal of F111 fuel tanks?
- b. Of those applications, how many to date have been accepted and rejected for each of the \$10 000 and \$40 000 categories, and how many remain to be finalised?
- c. How many applications have been received from widows and of those how many have been accepted, and how many rejected due to the date limitation?
- d. What sum has been expended so far, and is it likely that funds additional to those announced will be required; if so, how much?
- e. How many RAAF personnel had pre-existing disability compensation claims accepted in relation to the work on F 111's in prior to lodging claims for the ex gratia payment?
- f. How many (a) new claims and (b) claims for increased compensation have been received for disability compensation under each of the relevant Acts from personnel who worked on the F 111's, and how many entailed dual eligibility?
- g. What is the total value to date of lump sum payments made for RAAF personnel for disabilities arising from this project, and what is the cost of disability pensions payable over the next four years?
- h. How many ex RAAF personnel are in receipt of incapacity pay flowing in whole or in part from their accepted disability and what is the estimated cost of those payments over the next four years?
- i. Is it correct that claims for disability compensation are not processed until claims for the ex gratia payments are determined; if so, what is the rationale for that action?
- j. How many claims have been received from RAAF personnel who worked on deseal/reseal in South Australia, and how many have been accepted. for both the ex gratia payment and disability compensation?
- k. How many reviews have been sought of claims rejected in whole or in part, how many determinations have been revised or upheld, and how many appeals have been lodged with the AAT and the VRB?

Answer:

- a. As at 9 January 2006, 933 claims had been received from RAAF personnel and 82 from civilians for the F-111 ex-gratia payment.
- b. Of these 444 claims have been accepted for payment in the \$40 000 category and 14 in the \$10 000 category. 43 claims have been refused as these claimants did

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006

Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

not meet the definitions of a Deseal/Reseal participant for the purposes of the ex-gratia lump sum payment scheme. 514 claims remain outstanding.

- c. As at 9 January 2006, 16 claims have been received from F-111 Deseal/Reseal estates. One has been successful at \$40 000. One has been refused as the deceased had died before the eligibility date of 8 September 2001. One was refused because the deceased did not meet the definitions of a Deseal/Reseal participant for the purposes of the ex-gratia lump sum payment scheme. The other 13 are still being processed.
- d. \$17.9M has already been expended on this scheme. All those entitled to the ex-gratia lump sum payment will be paid according to the applicable Tier definitions. The Department is still investigating the balance of these claims and at this time it is not possible to estimate the number that will be approved or rejected.
- e. As at 20 August 2005, 104 claimants under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act* 1986 (VEA) had had their compensation claims accepted prior to lodging claims for their ex-gratia payment and 215 claimants under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act* 1988 (SRCA) had had their compensation claims accepted prior to lodging their ex-gratia applications. Of these, 45 claimants had had their compensation claims accepted under both the VEA and the SRCA.
- f. 512 claimants have lodged compensation claims under the SRCA and 499 claimants have lodged claims under the VEA. Of these, 407 claimants have lodged claims under both the VEA and the SRCA. 105 claimants have lodged SRCA claims only and 92 have lodged claims under the VEA only.
- g. \$4,221,989.80 has been paid in lump sum Permanent Impairment payments for disabilities arising from this project. It is not possible to estimate future payments over the next four years.
- h. 26 Deseal/Reseal personnel are in receipt of incapacity payments. It is impossible to estimate future payments over the next four years.
- i. From September 2001, when the Deseal/Reseal Compensation Team was established, any claims which could be accepted under either the VEA or SRCA (or both) have been accepted. Conditions which could not be accepted were deferred pending firstly the results of the health study and then, when that report was released, the Government response to this study.
- j. As a result of this study a group of diseases were identified by doctors in the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs as showing a significant increase in presentation amongst the Deseal/Reseal group. The Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission subsequently approved the use of powers contained in subsection 7(2) of the SRCA and section 31 of the *Compensation (Commonwealth Government Employees) Act 1971* for various groups of employees who worked in the Deseal/Reseal programs. Liability for compensation cannot be accepted until this link has been established. This check is common to both the compensation claim and the claim for an ex-gratia payment.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

- k. All F-111 Deseal/Reseal programs were carried out at Amberley. There was no F-111 Deseal/Reseal carried out in South Australia.
- l. Under the VEA, 11 Section 31 reviews have been requested and 15 appeals to the VRB have been lodged. Under the SRCA, reconsideration has been requested in relation to 83 conditions, 64 of which have been determined. 19 of those reconsiderations are outstanding. There are no known appeals to the AAT.

Question 2

Outcome: Output 1.4

Topic: Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. Is the current review into the Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme to consider the possibility of privatisation of the scheme?
2. What are the terms of reference for the review?
3. Who is conducting the review?
4. What is the budget for the review?
5. When is the review expected to be finished?

Answer:

1. The scoping study identifying future options for the Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme is being undertaken by the Finance and Administration portfolio. All possible options are being canvassed.
2. The Terms of Reference for the Review are encompassed in the objectives of the Scoping Study namely:

The key output of the scoping study will be a Scoping Study Report (SSR) that considers options, and related issues, for the future management and/or ownership of Defence Service Homes Insurance (DSHI). The SSR will, amongst other things:

- review the business operations and financial performance of DSHI;
- analyse relevant options for the future management and/or ownership of DSHI (including a trade sale of shares), and for each option analysed:
 - examine the likely benefits;
 - examine the risks (including any relevant mitigation strategies), timing and cost implications;
 - consider any relevant legal and regulatory issues; and
 - provide market analysis and advice on likely investors and investor interests, where relevant.
- recommend a preferred option for the future management and/or ownership of DSHI including:

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006

Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

- if a sale is recommended, the proposed sale structure and process;
 - a timetable identifying key activities; and
 - any preparatory work required to give effect to the preferred strategy.
- consider any other matters or issues materially relevant to the Australian Government's consideration of the future management and/or ownership of DSHI; and
 - provide a valuation of DSHI.
3. The Review is being undertaken by a working group of officers from the Department of Finance and Administration and the Department of Veterans' Affairs reporting to a steering committee comprising senior executives of those departments and the Deputy President of the Repatriation Commission. The working group is being assisted by a commercial adviser, McGrath Nicol and Partners, and a legal adviser, yet to be appointed.
 4. The Review is being funded from current departmental allocations.
 5. The working group is expected to complete its report in June 2006. After endorsement by the Steering Committee the outcomes will then be considered by Government.

Question 3

Outcome: Output 1.5

Topic: Sea King helicopter accident in Indonesia

(Hansard Proof, 15 February 2006, p. 108)

Senator BISHOP—So the only one that is still in the process of negotiation is No. 9, involving the godchild.

Mr Sullivan—Yes. I will check that and if there is a change in that at all I will let you know.

Answer:

Case No. 9 involving the godchild is still in the process of negotiation, awaiting a response from the claimant.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 4

Outcome: 2.1

Topic: Manufacture of Veterans' Affairs benefit cards

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. Is DVA moving to have the Gold Card, Orange Card and White Cards made overseas?
2. How many Gold Card, Orange Card and White Cards are made each year?
3. How much does it currently cost DVA to produce the Gold Card, Orange Card and White Cards?
4. What will be the costs and the savings to DVA in having the Gold Card, Orange Card and White Cards made overseas?
5. There has been some concern in the media that security of data of personal health records. Will any of data be placed on the cards during their overseas manufacture, if so what?

Answer:

1. No, DVA is not moving to have veterans cards made overseas. Medicare Australia produces DVA Health Cards under a Services Agreement between the two agencies. In October 2005, Medicare Australia, in line with the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (issued by the Department of Finance and Administration), renegotiated a contract for the production of Medicare cards including DVA Health cards. Medicare Australia selected Giesecke and Devrient as the preferred supplier.
2. The following number of cards were produced in the 2005 calendar year (these figures are representative of a normal year):

Gold Cards	50,047
White Cards	11,912
Orange Cards	485

There was also a bulk re-issue of 18,000 Orange cards during 2005.

3. It currently costs DVA \$1.73 to produce and distribute each card (Gold, White or Orange).
4. Medicare Australia has indicated that card production costs are commercial-in-confidence. It is expected, however, that savings to DVA per card from the new agreement will equate to approximately 4%.
5. Only graphic design information required to print the blank cards is sent outside Australia. All personal information required to print, emboss or encode onto the blank cards is sent from Medicare Australia to the supplier's (Giesecke and

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Devrient) premises in Melbourne. This information is sent via an encryption process as per Australian Government security standards. Individual cards are generated inside Australia.

Question 5

Outcome: Output 2.1

Topic: Calcium RPBS

(Hansard Proof, 15 February 2006, p. 124)

Senator HURLEY—Is there any proposal to put those calcium tablets on the RPBS as an extra item?

Mr Sullivan—There is no proposal to do that, but we have certainly listened to people's views on it and will provide some advice to our minister in respect of it.

Senator HURLEY—I think there was some hint that that might occur. Do we know how many individual veterans were receiving calcium tablets before it was delisted?

Mr Douglas—We would have to take that on notice. We do not have that figure.

Answer:

For the calendar year 2005, there were over 31,000 veterans accessing calcium supplements funded under Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme arrangements.

Question 6

Outcome: Output 2.1

Topic: RPBS

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. What will be the increased cost to veterans by 2009 of the increase threshold limit of the RPBS from 52 scripts to 60?
2. What is the cost to veterans of the latest increase in the RPBS co-payment?

Answer:

1. At the current concessional patient co-payment rate of \$4.70, veterans will pay and extra \$37.60 (or a further 8 patient co-payments) per year in 2009 before the safety net threshold is reached.
2. Veterans will pay an extra \$9.40 per year before the safety net threshold is reached.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 7

Outcome: Output 2.1

Topic: Advance travel allowance

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. Are the reports in the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia February newsletter correct in stating that advance payments of pre paid travel for VRB and the AAT were suspended last year?
2. Why were they suspended?
3. Who made the decision and on what grounds and advice?
4. When were the payments reinstated and why were they reinstated?
5. During the 9 months that payments were not being made, how many applications were received and refused?

Answer:

1. The legislation allows for advance payments of travelling expenses when veterans are required to attend VRB matters. There has been no suspension of these arrangements. However, in some states there had been a practice of the Department arranging travel by Booked car with Driver (BCWD) for veterans to VRB appointments. The use of BCWD for such appointments is not consistent with legislative requirements and ceased in February 2005. There is no provision in the legislation for advance payments of travelling expenses for veterans attending AAT matters.
2. There was no suspension of advanced payments for travel expenses.
3. See answer to question 1.
4. See answer to question 1.
5. Only a small number of claims for an advance toward travelling expenses were received in the previous 12 months and none was refused. All claims for advances are considered on their merits and if warranted an advance toward travelling expenses may be provided.

Question 8

Outcome: Output 2.1

Topic: Travel to specialists clinics—advance payments

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. Are reports from veterans in the community true that they cannot receive advance payments to visit a specialist clinic if they do not specifically see the specialists?
2. What happens to veterans who cannot afford to pay travel expenses upfront to visit a specialist clinic? Isn't it true that they will have to cancel their appointment and miss out?

Answer:

1. Veterans are not excluded from receiving an advance payment toward the cost of travelling expenses if they travel to receive approved treatment at a specialist clinic. It is not relevant whether they are seeing the specialist or not as long as the purpose for the travel was for treatment. Advance payments are rarely requested. However, if a veteran were to be in a position of financial hardship and unable to afford the cost of travel then the Department may consider a request and may provide an advance. If a veteran is experiencing financial hardship they should contact the Department well in advance of the travel to ensure that the Department has sufficient time to process the claim.
2. As previously stated, if a veteran feels that they may have difficulties with paying for any travel associated with treatment then they should contact the Department for assistance well in advance of the appointment date. The Department has no knowledge of any medical appointments that have been missed by veterans due to their inability to afford the travelling costs.

Question 9

Outcome: Output 2.2

Topic: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. What is DVA's total annual funding for ASIST?
2. What amount of ASIST's budget is expected to be raised by ESOs?
3. What is the administrative structure of the ASIST program?
4. What is the projected future funding for ASIST over the next 4 years?

Answer:

1. In 2004-05 the Department spent \$12,629 on veteran participation in ProgramASIST workshops.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

2. NIL.
3. The administrative structure is as follows:
 - DVA pays for course fees for veteran community participants in ASIST workshops.
 - DVA in consultation with the State Coordinating Committee (SCC) develops and distributes ProgramASIST promotional material which aims to raise the interest of ASIST within the veteran community.
 - DVA provides secretariat support to the ex-service organised State Coordinating Committee (SCC) and assistance with planning and local liaison through the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS) and the Veterans' Affairs Network (VAN).
 - The ex-service community promotes ProgramASIST and coordinates the organisation of a workshop within their local community with the contracted ProgramASIST trainer, Living Works.
4. Funding for ProgramASIST is based on the level of demand.

Question 10

Outcome: Output 2.2

Topic: Mental health

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. What was the total annual expenditure on mental health in the DVA budget for the last 4 years by:
 - i) state and territory
 - ii) private and public hospital
2. What was the total annual budget for the VVCS for the past 4 years by state and territory and by program in each state and territory?

Answer:

1.
 - (i) DVA reports on mental health across state and territory funding by using expenditure taken from:
 - private and public hospitals;
 - consultant psychiatrists;
 - the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS);
 - Pharmaceuticals;
 - private psychologists and social workers; and
 - general practitioners.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
 Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
 Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

The following is a breakdown of mental health expenditure for states and territories since the 2001–02 financial year. It should be noted that reporting at this time for the financial year 2004–05 is not available as reconciliation and verification for hospitals, in particular, is still underway.

State	DVA mental health expenditure FY 2001-02	DVA mental health expenditure FY 2002-03	DVA mental health expenditure FY 2003-04
NSW	\$39,883,151	\$39,965,679	\$39,972,962
VIC	\$28,993,803	\$26,292,375	\$29,824,029
QLD	\$31,553,112	\$32,307,982	\$33,445,779
WA	\$11,340,819	\$11,954,197	\$13,471,837
SA	\$11,629,401	\$11,002,770	\$10,613,076
TAS	\$3,925,120	\$3,771,611	\$3,579,910
ACT *	\$1,578,757	\$1,684,594	\$1,530,085
NT #	\$476,119	\$528,594	\$498,318
Total	\$129,380,282	\$127,507,802	\$132,935,996

Note: *Data for ACT includes expenditure for VVCS, public and private hospital and pharmaceutical for 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04. Data for social work, psychologist, psychiatrist and GP is reported against NSW expenditure for this period.

Data for NT for the period 2001–02 and 2002–03 includes expenditure for VVCS, private hospital and pharmaceutical. Data for social work, public hospital, psychologist, psychiatrist and GP is reported against SA expenditure for 2001–02 and 2002–03.

Data for NT for the period 2003–04 includes expenditure for VVCS, public and private hospital and pharmaceutical. Data for social work, psychologist, psychiatrist and GP is reported against NSW expenditure for 2003–04.

ii) Public Hospital

The below data outlines expenditure for public hospitals since the 2001–02 financial year. It should be noted that reporting at this time for the financial year 2004–05 is not available as reconciliation and verification of the data is still underway.

Year	Total
04-05	Reporting not available for 04-05
03-04	\$36,801,255
02-03	\$28,760,244
01-02	\$37,363,729

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
 Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
 Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Private Hospital

The below data outlines expenditure for private hospitals since the 2001–02 financial year. It should be noted that reporting at this time for the financial year 2004–05 is not available as reconciliation and verification of the data is still underway.

Year	Total
04–05	Reporting not available for 04–05
03–04	\$27,138,195
02–03	\$31,623,179
01–02	\$29,993,409

2. Annual Budget, Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service

State	2001 – 2002 \$	2002 – 2003 \$	2003 – 2004 \$	2004 – 2005 \$
ACT	3,114,400	5,267,300	2,609,000	2,797,400
NSW	2,550,000	2,639,000	2,755,200	2,965,500
Vic	2,636,000	2,681,000	2,768,300	2,948,800
QLD	3,743,000	3,894,000	3,955,600	4,240,300
SA	820,000	913,000	1,052,500	1,186,000
NT	396,000	427,000	459,400	562,200
WA	1,665,000	1,820,000	2,011,700	2,332,300
Tas	1,275,000	1,327,000	1,290,500	1,220,600
Total	16,199,400	18,968,300	16,902,200	18,253,100

Note: VVCS programs include provision of counselling, group and lifestyle programs and After Hours Crisis Counselling. Programs are provided based on level of demand.

ACT includes National Office.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
 Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
 Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 11

Outcome: Output 2.2

Topic: VVCS

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. What was the annual cost of the VVCS for the last 4 years in total and by state?
2. What was the total number of veterans who accessed the VVCS by age, conflict and by state?
3. What was the total number of non-veterans (i.e. family members) who accessed the VVCS by Spouse, Children, Other?
4. In relation to children of veterans accessing the VVCS, what was the numbers for the number of children accessing service annually over the past 4 years for,
 - a) children of Vietnam veterans age 36 and over,
 - b) children of Vietnam veterans age 35 and under and
 - c) children of other veterans other than Vietnam Veterans?
5. What is the average number of hours of service accessed by the groups mentioned in question 4?
6. What is the average cost of services per hour for the groups mentioned in question 4?

Answer:

1. Annual Cost, Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service

State	2001 – 2002 \$	2002 – 2003 \$	2003 – 2004 \$	2004 – 2005 \$
ACT	2,600,400	2,638,400	2,625,300	2,100,000
NSW	2,594,300	3,000,600	2,463,500	2,812,300
Vic	2,644,300	2,527,300	2,807,800	2,833,300
QLD	3,827,100	4,086,100	4,151,800	4,427,200
SA	851,000	1,033,200	1,115,200	1,085,400
NT	410,800	452,700	437,200	523,900
WA	1,791,300	2,206,700	2,229,400	2,220,700
Tas	1,260,200	1,254,800	1,187,900	1,201,400
Total	15,979,400	17,199,800	17,018,100	17,204,200

Note: VVCS programs include provision of counselling, group and lifestyle programs and After Hours Crisis Counselling. Programs are provided based on level of demand.

2. A total of 9710 Veterans accessed the VVCS over the four years 2002-2005. This does not include Veterans who used Veterans line but not other VVCS services. An estimated 11700 Veterans also used Veterans Line. In addition 5130 Veterans accessed VVCS, were assessed, but decided not to proceed with counselling or group programs or were referred elsewhere.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
 Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
 Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

By age and state

	WA	QLD	VIC	NSW	TAS	NT	ACT	SA	NAT
Veterans < 25	5	107	9	14	7	12	5	6	165
Veterans 25-35	43	501	63	102	16	60	30	23	838
Veterans 35-50	76	445	79	138	40	78	44	33	933
Veterans > 50	894	1908	1402	1520	615	147	491	695	7672
Veterans not known	10	31	16	12	11	2	7	13	102
Total veterans	1028	1196	1569	1786	689	299	577	770	9710

By conflict

Accurate date on service zones or conflict is only available for clients seen since January 2002.

The Veterans saw active overseas service in the following service/conflict zones:

Service zone	Veterans	Percent
Vietnam	6225	64.1
East Timor only	1175	12.1
East Timor +	416	4.3
WW2	408	4.2
Other (not listed)	325	3.3
Malaya and Malaya+	265	2.7
Borneo and Borneo+	201	2.1
Iraq and Iraq+	158	1.6
Korea and Korea+	124	1.3
Gulf war and Gulf+	116	1.2
Cambodia and Cambodia+	105	1.1
Somalia and Somalia+	85	0.9
Afghanistan and Afghanistan+	60	0.6
Rwanda and Rwanda +	47	0.5

+ These veterans served in more than one service/conflict zone

3. Over the four years 2002-2005, 14411 non veterans have accessed the VVCS. 11650 non veterans accessed Veterans line some of whom did not proceed with counselling or group programs. 7512 non veterans accessed the VVCS, were assessed and decided not to proceed with counselling or group programs or were referred elsewhere.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
 Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
 Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Non veterans	Total
Spouses of Veterans	5719
Children of Veterans<25	1572
Children of Veterans>25	4803
Other (see note)	2317
TOTAL NON VETERANS	14411
Veterans Line	11650
Intake/Referrals	7512

Note: Other includes current serving member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) referred under special arrangements between DVA and the ADF, war widows and ex-partners.

4. (a) and (b)

<u>Year</u>	2002	2003	2004	2005
(a) Children of Vietnam Veterans aged 36 and over	338	335	371	465
(b) Children of Vietnam Veterans aged 36 and over	2106	1978	1973	1938
TOTAL	2444	2313	2344	2403

c) 490

5. For Children of Vietnam Veterans aged 36 and over – 10 hours
 For Children of Vietnam Veterans aged 35 and under – 10 hours
 For Children of other Veterans other than Vietnam Veterans – 10 hours
6. For Children of Vietnam Veterans aged 36 and over – \$100.00 hours
 For Children of Vietnam Veterans aged 35 and under – \$100.00 hours
 For Children of other Veterans other than Vietnam Veterans – \$100.00 hours

Question 12

Outcome: Output 3.1

Topic: World War II nominal roll

Senator HURLEY asked

1. What amount of funding is allocated annually to amend, maintain and correct the online WWII Nominal Roll?
2. Who provides the funds?
3. Whose responsibility is it to make corrections?

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Answer:

1. \$191 000
2. Department of Veterans' Affairs Outcome 3
3. Responsibility for corrections is divided between the Nominal Roll Section, Office of Australian War Graves, and the Research, Support & Development Section, Rehabilitation, Research & Development Group.

The Nominal Roll Section, Office of Australian War Graves, is responsible for dealing with all public enquiries about the World War Two Nominal Roll.

Enquiries related to possible amendments or additions to the World War Two Nominal Roll are passed to the Research, Support & Development Section for verification. This usually involves locating and checking the original service documents, most of which are held by the National Archives of Australia in Canberra. In cases where the original service record has been lost alternate sources of information, such as ship's pay ledgers, RAAF unit history sheets and unit war diaries, will, where they exist, be investigated instead.

The Nominal Roll Section is informed of the outcome and, in turn, passes on that decision, and an accompanying explanation of it, to the member of the public who made the enquiry. If an amendment is approved, the Research Support & Development Section effects the change.

Question 13

Outcome: Output 3.2

Topic: ANZAC Cove

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. Could copies of all reports and correspondence from the DVA employee in Turkey to Australia be provided?
2. What is the annual cost involved in posting the DVA employee to Turkey?
3. What is his role, job description, duties and responsibilities?

Answer:

1. The Counsellor Veterans Affairs' provides considerable correspondence to Australia on a wide range of matters. Provision of the information as requested would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of DVA from its other operations. The Senator is requested to refine the scope of her question.
2. The additional annual recurring costs are approximately \$240 000 not including relocation costs.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

3. The occupant will, under the direction of the ambassador, oversee and assist with the Australian Government's interests in the long term management of the battle site on the peninsula and, coordinate the management of non-consular activities for Anzac Day ceremonies each year. The occupant will liaise with Turkish authorities on the above matters.

Question 14

Outcome: 3.2

Topic: 40th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HURLEY asked

1. What events have been planned to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan?
2. What amount of funding has been allocated for these commemorations?
3. What ESO and community groups have been consulted over the commemorations?

Answer:

1. The Government is considering a range of initiatives developed in consultation with ex-service organisations which represent Vietnam veterans in the 2006/07 Budget process.
2. In addition to any funding available in the 2006/07 Budget, ex-service and community organisations may apply for grants to a maximum of \$4000 under the Australian Government's Commemorations program, *Saluting Their Service*. The Office of Australian War Graves has provided AUD \$4,000 for works associated with improving access and facilities at the Long Tan Cross site.
3. Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL); Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA); Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia (VVFA); and the Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women (TPI). A National Advisory Committee, comprising representatives of the above organisations, as well as the Department of Defence and a veteran of the Long Tan battle, has been established. Advice is also provided to the Committee by the Australian War Memorial. Committees with similar Vietnam veteran representation have been established at the State level. For example, in Queensland, the Committee also includes representatives from the 6RAR Association and the Long Tan Veterans' Association.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 15

Outcome: N/a

Topic: Grants to Hillsong Church

(Written question on notice)

Senator LUDWIG asked

How many grants have you issued to Hillsong Church, its associated corporations and entities? List name, price and duration of funding by department.

Answer: Nil

Question 16

Outcome: N/A

Topic: Briefs to the DPP

(Written question on notice)

Senator LUDWIG asked

1. How many briefs have you forwarded to the DPP for 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05?
 - a. How many briefs were returned without action, and how many were actioned?
2. For each year, what was the average time (as well as indicating the minimum and maximum time in each case) in which it took the DPP to...
 - a. Bring charges against the accused party
 - b. Formally bring the matter to a conclusion through either a verdict of guilty or not guilty, the entrance of a nolle prosequi or dropping the charges
 - c. Return the brief for no further action
3. Did the department or agency forward any formal complaints to the DPP regarding the handling of the brief?
 - a. If so, give details.
4. Did the department or agency forward any informal complaints to the DPP regarding the handling of the brief?

If so, give details.

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

Additional estimates 2005–2006; February 2006

Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Answer:

		2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Q1	How many briefs forwarded to DPP	46	28	51	36
Q1 a (i)	How many brief were returned without action (includes where Warning Letter issued by DPP)	17	7	36	18
Q1 a (ii)	Were actioned, ie charges laid	29	21	14	10
Note	Briefs still with the DPP			1	8

Q2 a	Number of days it took DPP to bring charges against the accused party, ie date of summons signed where known	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	Average	213	186	170	93
	Minimum	16	39	23	31
	Maximum	549	474	377	195

Q2 b	Days taken to formally bring the matter to conclusion	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	Average	447	277	345	198
	Minimum	103	84	71	106
	Maximum	1119	700	725	250

Q2 c	Days taken to return the brief for no further action	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	Average	114	85	151	97
	Minimum	9	18	7	14
	Maximum	436	393	830	355

Q3	Did the department or agency forward any formal complaints to the DPP regarding the handling of the brief	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	Response	No	No	No	No

Q4	Did the department or agency forward any informal complaints to the DPP regarding the handling of the brief	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	Response	No	No	No	No