



transforming  
**DVA**

# DVA Protocol

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Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran  
Suicide

# Introduction

On 08 Jul 21, the Prime Minister the Hon Scott Morrison MP announced that the Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency, General David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), has signed the Letters Patent, officially establishing the Royal Commission in Defence and Veteran Suicide (the **Royal Commission**).

The following slides will provide a high-level description of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (the **Department**) Protocol for action during the Royal Commission.

The full version of the Protocol can be found [LINK](#).



# What does this mean for the Department and you?

- Throughout the Royal Commission, the Department remains committed to supporting veterans and their families through the delivery of our services. We must however, also ensure that our responses and engagement with the Royal Commission are **timely, accurate, comprehensive** and **transparent**. This is why we have established a Royal Commission Taskforce, independent to business as usual (BAU) activities.
- It is important that all staff understand how the Department will assist with the Royal Commission's work and how staff may contribute to the Department's response, how to engage with veterans, families and other stakeholders, and importantly, understand what supports will be put in place during this time.
- The Protocol will be updated as require and communicated to staff.
- Our [FAQ guide](#) will provide more information about the Royal Commission and its impact on the Department, including operational information.
- All staff need to read and understand this Protocol. To assist our staff's overall understanding of the Royal Commission and the Department's involvement, a number of resources will be established and communicated to staff as and when available.



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# Protocol for support and response to the Royal Commission

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What does this mean for staff?

## Roles, Responsibilities and Authority

FAS DVA (RCT)	Senior Executive	Taskforce	Legal	Business areas	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Report and engage on Departmental support</i></li> <li>• <i>Engage with each FAS and CHO on anticipated business impacts</i></li> <li>• <i>How divisions will assist Department's response</i></li> <li>• <i>Impacts or additional resources requirements</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Work with FAS DVA RCT to ensure timely and complete responses</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide urgent direction and guidance</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide information as required, to FAS DVA RCT</i></li> <li>• <i>Raise issues and risks to FAS DVA RCT</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Collaboration, facilitations and coordination of responses to the Royal Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>All DVA communications and media associated the the Royal Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>Work with business areas to manage Department's response and support to the Royal Commission.</i></li> <li>• <i>Keep Secretary informed of work of the Royal Commission and the Department's involvement</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Responsible for external engagement with AGD</i></li> <li>• <i>Responsible for preparation of Department submissions and Departmental witness statements for provision to the Royal Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide clearance of all documents to be provided to Royal Commission</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Provide point of contact for DVA RCT</i></li> <li>• <i>Respond to requests from DVA RCT in timely, comprehensive manner</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Work in support of the Taskforce and FAS DVA RCT on all matters and requests for information</i></li> <li>• <i>Are required to comply with any lawful direction given by a member of the Taskforce or executives</i></li> <li>• <i>Action as a priority, any RFI or assistance from the Taskforce</i></li> </ul>

# Responsiveness

The **Taskforce** is responsible for the **management, coordination, internal consultation** and **preparation** of responses to the Royal Commission.

In order to assist the Taskforce, the following must occur:

- **All staff** are to make responding to requests from the Taskforce as **highest priority**, unless otherwise advised by the Secretary or DVA FAS RCT.
- **All FAS** provide a minimum of one dedicated staff member within each line area to assist the Taskforce at short notice
- At least one main POC and one alternate POC must be identified for each affected business area

## Records management, confidentiality and privacy

### **All staff are required to:**

- *Comply with the Department's Record Management Policy*
- *Not destroy any document or record - consult Records Management Section*
- *Comply with any notices issues by Departmental staff or National Archives of Australia*
- *Only access information where directed or authorised*
- *Understand a system will be in place to record and audit access by staff to information or documentation concerning the Royal Commission*

# Code of Conduct

Inform yourself of the requirements under:

- Section 13 *Public Service Act* (APS Code of Conduct)
- Paragraphs 12 to 17 of the *Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2016*

## Compliance

All staff (APS or otherwise) are to comply in full with all protocols, policies and operating procedures in relation to the work of the Taskforce or Royal Commission.



# Staff Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our staff is important and crucial to the Department's ability to provide services in support to veterans and their families.

A Staff Wellbeing Plan has been developed and available [HERE](#).