



INFORMATION BRIEF FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY VETERAN, FAMILY & STAKEHOLDER EXPERIENCE

CC: Deputy President, Kate Pope PSM

2024 Female Veterans' Policy Forum, and 2024 Veteran Families' Policy Forum

Critical Date: Nil

Reason: Routine

Recommendation(s) – That you:	
1) note the full separation of the Female Veterans' Policy Forum and the Veteran Families' Policy Forum	Noted / Please discuss
2) approve the trial of public recruitment for the 2024 Female Veterans' Policy Forum	Approved / Not approved
3) note the proposed dates and location for the 2024 Veteran Families' Policy Forum	Noted / Please discuss
<p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; font-weight: bold;">S 47F</p> <p>24/8/23</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, Alison McLaren</p>	<p>Comments</p> <p>Please provide advice on the estimated cost for hosting the Forum in Brisbane versus Canberra. The trial of public recruitment is approved.</p>

Key points

Separating the Events:

- Since its inception in 2016, the *Female Veterans & Veterans' Families Policy Forum* has been conducted in a variety of formats. In 2023, the Forum was run as two separate events, under the auspices of the single 'Forum' program.
- Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback for this approach in 2023, it is proposed these events be fully separated into two projects for 2024; a *Female Veterans' Policy Forum* and a *Veteran Families' Policy Forum*. It is probable this would be the ongoing arrangement.

Recruitment of Participants:

- **Veteran Families' Policy Forum** - In 2023, a large pool of new participants were identified by the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner, with additional input sought from the Defence Family Advocate with Defence Families of Australia. Due to the significant refresh of this group for the June 2023 Forum, it is proposed to re-engage this group. A few additional places will be made available for new participants.

- **Female Veterans' Policy Forum** – It is proposed to trial a new approach to participant recruitment for the female veterans' cohort in 2024. If successful, this could be repeated, and expanded to the veteran family cohort, for future Fora.
- Female veteran community members would register their interest in participating in the Forum via an online form (already created), available to the public for a short period at the start of the 2024 calendar year. Registrations would be reviewed internally to establish a Forum invitation list, and a reserve pool to fill spots available from withdrawals and/or future engagement opportunities.
- The new registration process would be promoted on DVA Social Media, and through veteran community networks.
- This new process would help the Forum to be refreshed regularly, ensure a diverse and representative participant group is maintained, and increase transparency around how DVA selects Forum participants.

Dates and Locations:

- Proposed dates for the **Veteran Families' Policy Forum** are 13-14 February 2024.
 - To respond to participant feedback and to demonstrate a commitment to community outreach, it is recommended that this event is held in Brisbane, Queensland.
 - The proposed dates do not clash with public holidays, school holidays or national commemorative events.
- Proposed dates for the **Female Veterans' Policy Forum** are being considered for May 2024.
 - The success of hosting the Veteran Families' Policy Forum in Brisbane will be assessed, and a decision made regarding location for the Female Veterans' Policy Forum made in late-February 2024. Canberra remains a cost effective option.

Financial Implications

No – These events would still be covered using the existing program allocation.

Background

- Established in 2016, the Forum provides a platform for female veterans and female veteran family members to raise issues directly with DVA, generate ideas to solve issues facing their communities and co-design DVA products and services to inform future policy and service delivery options, and build networks across represented cohorts.
- Unlike other DVA consultative fora, there is no appointed membership of the Forum. Participants have been identified through a variety of means over successive years. The group has always had some new participants every year

Sensitivities

- Yes. The format and attendees for the Forum have attracted some interest in the past. Changes to recruitment arrangements may attract some community commentary.
- The proposed recruitment approach has been discussed with Forum representatives, and the response was generally positive.

Stakeholders

- Yes. Changes may impact the current cohort of Forum participants, those who have attended in the past and those with aspirations to attend.
- The Minister for Veterans' Affairs has also attended the Forum every year since its inception and may have interest in changes.

Summary of attachments

- Nil

Clearance

Clearance officer comments:

Cleared by:

a/Assistant Secretary, Heather MacDonald

Select date.

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Contact:

Director, Nicholas s 47F

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Division:

Ministerial, Engagement & Communications

Consultation:

Nil