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**Government  
of South Australia**

# VETERANS' HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

## **2022-23 Annual Report**

VETERANS' HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

City Centre Building, Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide 5000

[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/VeteransHealthAdvisoryCouncil](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/VeteransHealthAdvisoryCouncil)

Contact phone number: (08) 8226 7284

Contact email: Mina.Schoeman2@sa.gov.au

ISSN: 1837-5219 (Print)

Date presented to Minister: 27 September 2023

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To:

Hon Chris Picton MP

Minister for Health and Wellbeing

This annual report will be presented to Parliament to meet the statutory reporting requirements of *the Public Sector Act 2009*, *the Public Finance and Audit Act 1987* and *the Health Care Act 2008* and the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular *PC013 Annual Reporting*.

This report is verified to be accurate for the purposes of annual reporting to the Parliament of South Australia.

Submitted on behalf of the **Veterans' Health Advisory Council** by:

**Mina Schoeman**  
**Executive Officer**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mina Schoeman', with a stylized, cursive script.

Date: 27 September 2023



## **From the Presiding Member**

### **VHAC Membership**

The Veterans' Health Advisory Council's (VHAC) role is to advise the Minister for Health and Wellbeing on the health service needs, priorities and issues for veterans and for the spouse, widow or widower of veterans and to advocate on their behalf with the Minister. The VHAC consults with ex-service and related organisations to obtain their views when preparing such advice.

VHAC's membership is comprised entirely of volunteers and includes Reservists from Navy, Army and Air Force as well as ex-serving veterans and medical specialists who deal with veterans, the following of whom were members during the 2022-23 year.

### **VHAC Nominations**

Ms Ilona Horan (Presiding Member)  
Dr Chris Butcher  
Dr Paula Dabovich  
Mr Bill Denny  
Dr Adrian De Savi  
Mr Brett Grosser  
Mr Frank Lampard  
Mr Nathan Klinge  
Professor Alexander McFarlane  
Dr Chris Veale

### **RSL Nomination**

Mr Wayne Langford

### **Ministerial Nominations**

Mr David West

VHAC's focus throughout the 2022-23 year included maintaining a watching brief on the deliberations and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and its collaboration with SA Health in the development of the Draft Veteran Wellbeing Action Plan 2023-26.

In August 2022 the recommendations from the interim report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide were considered. These initial recommendations were focused on harmonising legislation and Department of Veterans' Affairs claims administration and funding. VHAC will pay particular attention to the final recommendations and provide advice to our Minister as required.

Regarding the Draft Veteran Wellbeing Action Plan 2023-26, SA Health conducted a public consultation, and the feedback was considered and, as appropriate, will be incorporated into the Plan. A Project Plan is being developed to establish the implementation of the priority actions in the Plan.

VHAC welcomed two new members during the year; Dr Chris Veale and Mr Frank Lampard OAM, both of whom bring unique skills and experience relating to the health and wellbeing of veterans. Dr Chris Veale is the head of the Jamie Larcombe Centre, an SA Health specialist veteran mental health facility. Mr Frank Lampard is an Aboriginal Elder of Ngarrindjeri and Kurna descent. His career spans several decades in the public service, and as the Executive Director of Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders. He was appointed as a Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement and is presently a member of the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network Governing Board and is the co-Chair of Aboriginal Veterans SA. He has served in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps and was awarded the Australian Defence Medal and the Anniversary of National Service 1951-72 Medal. Unfortunately, we have been unable to achieve equal gender representation in our membership and we will continue to try to rectify this in the coming year.

VHAC's Executive Officer, Chris Lemmer, who was first appointed in March 2013, has announced his retirement to take effect from 30 September 2023. The roles and responsibilities of the Executive Officer will transition to an SA Health employee, Ms Mina Schoeman for a trial period of 12 months.



**Presiding Member**

**Veterans' Health Advisory Council**

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## Overview: about the agency

### Our strategic focus

<b>Our Purpose</b>	<p>The VHAC is established in relation to veterans and the spouse, widow or widower of veterans to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advise on their health service needs, priorities and issues;</li> <li>2. Advise on the delivery of health services;</li> <li>3. Advocate on their behalf with the Minister.</li> </ol>
<b>Our Vision</b>	Not applicable
<b>Our Values</b>	Not applicable
<b>Our functions, objectives and deliverables</b>	<p>The functions of VHAC in regard to veterans and the spouse, widow or widower of veterans are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Act as an advocate to promote their health interests.</li> <li>2. Provide advice to the Minister about any aspect of the provision of health services.</li> <li>3. Provide advice or assistance to the Minister in relation to the development or implementation of systems or mechanisms designed to support the delivery of health services or programs.</li> <li>4. Assist the Minister and the Department for Health and Wellbeing in the provision of information to, and to consult broadly with veterans in relation to health services provided by incorporated health services in the State.</li> <li>5. Consult with other bodies that are interested in the provision of health services to veterans.</li> <li>6. Provide advice to the Minister about any matter referred to it by the Minister or the Chief Executive.</li> <li>7. Provide advice to the Minister on the development and management of health services and on the resources made available for these services and in so doing, reflect the views of veterans.</li> <li>8. Provide advice to the Minister when the agreement between the Department and the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs is renegotiated.</li> <li>9. Provide advice to the Minister on the non-clinical commitments to veterans and war widows, as recorded in the 1995 'Record of Ongoing Commitments' between the</li> </ol>

	<p>Commonwealth of Australia and the State. These non-clinical commitments are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. the continuing work of voluntary bodies, including Ex-Service Organisations, is encouraged.</li><li>b. Ex-Service Organisations and communities are welcome to visit the former Repatriation General Hospital, Daw Park and areas of significance; and</li></ul> <p>The Chapel and Peace Garden are maintained at the former Repatriation General Hospital, Daw Park.</p>
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### **Our organisational structure**

In accordance with the Rules as amended in July 2019, VHAC comprises of no more than 15 members who are appointed by the Minister. Of these, 10 may be nominated by VHAC, one by the RSL, and four by the Minister.

A list of current members is included in the Presiding Member's Report.

### **Changes to the agency**

During 2022-23 there were no changes to the agency's structure and objectives as a result of internal reviews or machinery of government changes.

### **Our Minister**



The Hon Chris Picton MP is the Minister for Health and Wellbeing in South Australia.

The Minister oversees health, wellbeing, mental health, ageing well, substance use and suicide prevention.

### **Our Executive team**

VHAC is supported by an Executive Officer, Chris Lemmer, who is employed by RSL Care SA. The position is funded by SA Health through a service agreement with RSL Care SA.

### **Legislation administered by the agency**

Not applicable.

### **Other related agencies (within the Minister's area/s of responsibility)**

Not applicable.

## **The agency's performance**

### **Performance at a glance**

The VHAC undertakes an advocacy role on behalf of the veteran community.

### **Agency specific objectives and performance**

The VHAC undertakes an advocacy role on behalf of the veteran community. Refer to the Presiding Member's report for specific details.

### **Corporate performance summary**

Not applicable.

### **Employment opportunity programs**

<b>Program name</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Not applicable.	

### **Agency performance management and development systems**

<b>Performance management and development system</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Not applicable.	

### **Work health, safety and return to work programs**

<b>Program name</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Not applicable.	

### **Executive employment in the agency**

Not applicable.



## Financial performance

The Veterans' Health Advisory Council is a non-incorporated Health Advisory Council. It does not control assets, incur expenditure or receive revenue.

## Risk management

Not applicable.

## Fraud detected in the agency

Nil

## Strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud

Not applicable.

## Public interest disclosure

Nil.

## Reporting required under any other act or regulation

Not applicable.

## Public complaints

Nil.

## Compliance Statement

The Veterans' Health Advisory Council is compliant with Premier and Cabinet Circular 039 – complaint management in the South Australian public sector	Y
The Veterans' Health Advisory Council has communicated the content of PC 039 and the agency's related complaints policies and procedures to employees.	N/A