

# Northern Territory Minister's Advisory Council – Veteran Affairs (MACVA)

## Terms of Reference

Acronyms	Full form
MACVA	The Northern Territory Minister's Advisory Council – Veteran Affairs
The Council	The Northern Territory Minister's Advisory Council – Veteran Affairs
ADF	Australian Defence Force
The Minister	The Northern Territory Minister for Veterans
The Department	The Department of People, Sport and Culture

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## 1. Purpose

The Northern Territory Minister's Advisory Council – Veteran Affairs (MACVA) has been established to provide advice and guidance to the Northern Territory Minister for Veterans (the Minister) on issues, opportunities, and matters of interest affecting serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and their families living in the Northern Territory.

MACVA plays a key role in:

- Representation – ensuring the voices of veterans and their families are heard, respected, and incorporated into government decision-making processes.
- Connection – strengthening the link between the veteran community and Government, fostering collaboration and building trust.
- Awareness – identifying and raising issues of concern in the veteran community and promoting recognition of the contribution and service of ADF members and their families.
- Acknowledging the findings from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and ensuring recommendations are appropriately reflected in Northern Territory policy.
- Opportunities – supporting and guiding Operation Thrive and other initiatives that enhance veteran health and wellbeing and social connectedness

Through this work, MACVA contributes to creating a strong, inclusive, and supportive environment where the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families are acknowledged and valued, and where practical actions can be implemented to improve their quality of life across the Northern Territory.

## 2. Authority

MACVA is a non-statutory advisory group established by the Minister for Veterans. It holds no delegated powers to act on behalf of the Minister, or to commit the Minister or government to any actions. The Terms of Reference aligns to the [Northern Territory Government Boards Handbook](#).

## 3. Objectives

The objectives of the MACVA are to:

1. Provide independent advice on the needs, challenges and opportunities facing veterans and families in the Northern Territory.
2. Identify emerging issues unique to the Northern Territory veteran community including transition, healthcare access (including mental health) and regional service delivery gaps.
3. Strengthen the connection between Government, Defence, ex-service organisations and the wider community.
4. Support the Northern Territory Government's consideration of matters raised through the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, ensuring that the findings, recommendations, and ongoing response are informed by the lived experience of veterans and their families.
5. Support Operation Thrive and other government initiatives by guiding the implementation, monitoring the effectiveness and ensuring the needs of the veteran community are being met.

## 4. Membership

### 4.1. Composition

Community membership of MACVA comprises of up to 15 members including:

- The Chair of the Council
- Deputy Chair of the Council
- 13 community members

A member from the following organisations, which represent a group of persons with lived experience, may be an ex-officio with the MACVA :

- Department of Veterans' Affairs (Australian Government)
- Defence and Member Family Support (Department of Defence, Australian Government)
- Australian Defence Force
- Defence Families of Australia
- Defence NT (Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet, Northern Territory Government)

### 4.2. Term of appointment – Council Members

Term of membership shall be three years from the date of appointment. The Minister has discretion to consider reappointment.

### 4.3. Member selection and nomination

The Minister will appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair from among the community members based on their skills, knowledge, experience and broader community representation.

Casual vacancies will be filled by a public expression of interest processes coordinated by the Secretariat. Membership will reflect the service history, social, economic, gender, and regional diversity of the Northern Territory veteran community.

## Role of the Chair and Deputy Chair

### 4.4. Nomination

Nominations for the Chair and Deputy Chair will be sought, as required, through either an expression of interest process for new community members or from currently sitting community members by the Office of Veterans Engagement and Support, Department of People, Sport and Culture (the Department).

All nominations received will go to the Minister for consideration and official appointment before the next meeting.

### 4.5. Term of appointment – Chair and Deputy Chair

The terms of appointment for the Chair and Deputy Chair will be a maximum of three years. The Chair and Deputy Chair can be re-appointed by the Minister for a subsequent term.

These positions will become vacant in the case of the resignation of a member holding one of these positions or the expiry of their appointment.

## 4.6. Role and responsibilities of the Chair

A Chair must possess a good understanding of the Council's work and possess strong governance knowledge and apply sound general management principles.

The Chair is responsible for

- Leading and directing the activities of MACVA
- Assisting the Office of Veterans Engagement and Support to set the agenda
- Conducting MACVA's meetings and facilitating the flow of information and discussion.
- Ensuring MACVA operates effectively and complies with its obligations.
- Determining the necessary approach for members with real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest.
- Liaising with and reporting to the Minister where relevant.

## 4.7. Role and responsibilities of the Deputy Chair

Similar to the Chair, the Deputy Chair must be acquainted with the business of government agency relevant to the MACVA's activities. The Deputy Chair must be comfortable with taking up any or all roles and responsibilities of the Chair should the Chair be unable to do so due to illness, absence or other reasons.

# 5. Operation

MACVA will meet 4 times each calendar year. At least one meeting will be conducted face-to-face, with the remaining meetings delivered in formats that ensure equitable access and participation for all members.

Meetings will be organised in a manner that accommodates the individual access requirements of members. This may include providing additional flexibility and reasonable adjustments to support full and effective participation.

A meeting agenda and supporting papers will be distributed to members no less than 2 weeks prior to each meeting enabling adequate preparation and informed discussion. Draft minutes, Communique and Action Items will be provided to members for consideration 3 weeks following the meeting. Once approved by the Minister responsible for Veterans, the Communique will be published on the MACVA webpage.

Meetings will be facilitated by the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair will preside. Where both the Chair and Deputy Chair are unavailable, a member nominated by the Chair will act as the temporary Chair.

MACVA will seek to make decisions by consensus wherever possible. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be determined by a majority vote of members present. Advice provided by MACVA to the Minister will reflect both the agreed position and the diversity of views expressed by members.

Ex-officio members do not have voting rights.

## 5.1. Quorum

A quorum for a regular meeting will require at least 50% of appointed members to be present. Observers or any visiting experts are not included in the count for a quorum and cannot vote.

## 5.2. Proxies

Ex-officio members can appoint a proxy if unable to attend. All proxies must be coordinated by the ex-officio member unable to attend.

A community member must seek agreement in advance from the Chair, through the Secretariat, to nominate a proxy.

## 5.3. Apologies

If a member is unable to attend a meeting they must submit an apology to the Secretariat. Apologies will be recorded in the minutes. If a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without notice to the secretariat, their term may be terminated by the Minister.

## 5.4. Resignation

Members may resign from MACVA at any time. Resignations must be submitted in writing to the Minister with a copy provided to the Chair.

## 5.5. Secretariat

The Office of Veterans Engagement and Support will provide secretariat support for MACVA including invitations for the meeting, the venue, taking and distribution of minutes, and providing a meeting pack for members.

## 6. Remuneration

MACVA members do not receive sitting fees.

The Department covers the following costs:

- All travel for members outside of the Darwin/Palmerston/rural region including accommodation
- Meals and meeting expenses for any in-person meetings

## 7. Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest may arise where a member or ex-officio has a financial, professional, or personal interest in matters under consideration by MACVA . Such circumstances may give rise to a real, potential, or perceived conflict. Declaring conflicts of interest will be a standing agenda item at the commencement of each meeting.

Members and ex-officios are required to disclose to the Chair any situation or agenda item that may give rise to a conflict of interest. Disclosures should be made as soon as the member becomes aware of the conflict, either in advance of the meeting or at the time the matter is raised.

### 7.1. Managing a conflict of interest

The Chair decides if it is necessary for the member who has declared a conflict of interest to excuse themselves from the meeting when any discussion or voting on the issue is taking place. The Chair is responsible for assessing the level of risk posed by the conflict, determining the appropriate course of action and recording the reasons for the decision within the minutes. Members may also excuse themselves from a particular item or discussion.

Ways to manage conflicts of interest include:

- not take part in any discussion of the MACVA relating to the interest
- not receive any relevant MACVA papers
- be absent from the meeting room when any discussion or vote is taking place
- not vote on the matter; and/or
- resign from MACVA.

## 8. Working groups

Working groups will be directed by and report to MACVA to facilitate operational outcomes. The scope, tasks and time limited nature of working groups are to be reviewed by MACVA on an ongoing basis. Working groups may consist of representatives of stakeholder agencies and organisations who provide relevant services. Working groups inform MACVA and create coordinated outcomes to address identified issues. Working groups meet on an as needs basis as determined by the Chair.

## 9. Confidentiality

Unless otherwise indicated, all papers, minutes, and records of MACVA are confidential. At the conclusion of each meeting, or at a subsequent meeting, the Council will determine which papers (if any) may be marked for release.

Members and ex-officios may be provided with other confidential material from time to time. Such material must be treated with care and discretion and must not be disclosed to any person outside the Council unless expressly authorised.

Members and ex-officio members are expected to uphold the confidentiality of MACVA business including informal discussions, draft papers, and preliminary advice.

Where carers, professional support staff, or other persons are required to attend or assist a member, they may be asked to sign a confidentiality declaration before being granted access to MACVA materials or discussions.

Any breach of confidentiality may be considered a serious matter and could lead to review of a member's participation on the Council.

## 10. Definitions

A veteran is anyone who has served in the ADF with at least one day of continuous full-time service.

The veteran community includes individuals with a direct connection to defence service or to a veteran. This may include widows, partners, parents, children, siblings, and other relatives of current or ex serving Defence personnel.

## 11. Review of Terms of Reference

The ToR will be reviewed by the Minister for Veterans in consultation with MACVA , at least, every 3 years.