

**OPENING STATEMENT**  
**SECRETARY LIZ COSSON AM, CSC**  
**2019-20 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES**  
**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE LEGISLATION**  
**COMMITTEE**  
**23 OCTOBER 2019**

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Thank you Chair, as the Committee is aware, the Department has entered the third year of our transformation program known as the 'Veteran Centric Reform'. I am pleased to update the committee that we have now over 100,000 veterans who have registered using our new on line channel 'MyService'. This new channel has seen over 66,000 claims lodged as it is allowing veterans and their families to lodge claims faster and easier. We are also seeing quicker decisions with over 80% claim acceptance rates for MRCA initial liability. As a result, we are seeing unprecedented growth in the volume of claims of around 83% in the main claim categories against the three Acts. This is having an impact on how quickly we can process claims and it is causing a backlog. A backlog we are committed to remedy.

We are making great strides in modernising our telephone system, it is making it quicker and more direct for veterans and their families to get the assistance they need.

We have digitised over 327,000 veteran files and for the first time in the organisation's history (since 2016) we now know every veteran who is leaving

the ADF and our relationship with Defence has never been stronger with our ability to leverage data from Defence as all current serving members leave the ADF.

I also recognise the passing of the Australian Veterans' Recognition Bill which includes the Covenant, as this is important to encourage all Australians to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service, and support veterans and their families.

It is important to recognise that the vast majority of ADF personnel transition well from their service, find employment or purpose and integrate into communities. They go on to lead healthy and productive lives, enriched and enabled by their military service, they further enrich and enable this nation and its economy as veterans in so many ways.

However, there are some veterans and families who need some additional support and this is where we continue to place our priority of effort. Some find the transition into civilian life challenging, others may need additional support throughout their post military life. We will continue to prioritise our efforts to deliver this support to them and their families.

I am pleased to see improvements in our client satisfaction results. Since our Transformation program commenced, overall client satisfaction continues to rise. The MyService access satisfaction rate is 4.5 out of 5 stars, and the annual satisfaction rate of veterans under 45 years of age has notably increased.

The Department acknowledges the Productivity Commission report and its findings regarding the veteran support system and I acknowledge there is more to be done to support veterans and their families.

I would like to acknowledge all the staff in DVA. I am proud of their commitment and know they work exceptionally hard to build on achievements and deliver support and services to strengthen the trust and confidence of our veteran community.

I thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee and invite your questions.