

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Budget Estimates 2023-24 – 31 May 2023
Answers to questions on notice from the Veterans' Affairs portfolio

Question 2

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Claims backlog data tables

(FADT Hansard Proof 31 May 2023, p 76)

Senator Ross Cadell asked:

Senator CADELL: This will be taken on notice because I don't expect it to be delivered today. Answer to question on notice 44 in the supplementary budget estimates contained data tables on the progress of the claims backlog until the end of February 2023. Could that exact same data in exactly the same format be updated to include progress from July 2021, the beginning of the year, up to as frequently as you can for the inquiry by the return of answers to questions on notice?

Ms Frame: It would be monthly.

Senator CADELL: Up to May 2023 would be great.

Ms Frame: Yes, we can date that.

Answer

The tables below provide progress on the claims backlog for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 up to and including May 2023.

From November 2022, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) changed the way it calculated the number of veterans with claims.

The count of veterans with claims in the backlog provided in tables 1A and 1B for the period July 2021 to October 2022 was a count of the number of veterans with one or more claims in the backlog. If a veteran had claims in more than one claim category, they were counted multiple times. For example, if a veteran had an Initial Liability claim and a Permanent Impairment claim in the backlog they would be counted twice.

The total number of individual veterans with claims in the backlog provided for the months November 2022 to May 2023 in table 1B counts each veteran once, regardless of how many claims they have in progress across multiple claim categories. For example, if a veteran had an Initial Liability claim and a Permanent Impairment claim in the backlog they would only be counted once.

In relation to the information in tables 4A, 4B, 5A and 5B, the time taken to allocate a claim for processing and the overall time taken to process a claim has continued to increase over the months as a result of the growing number of new claims lodged. As claims lodgements outstripped DVA's ability to process, claims remained unallocated for longer, although this time taken is now reducing.

Table 1A: Unallocated claims (Backlog), impacted veterans, and new claims received (Net) – 2021-22 financial year

*The data from July 2021 to October 2022 provides a count of veterans with claims in each program with some individuals being counted multiple times. The data from November 2022 to May 2023 represents the total number of individual veterans with claims in the backlog and counts each veteran only once, regardless of how many claims they have in the backlog.

^ Due to now providing the count of individual veterans with claims in the backlog the *change in the total number of veterans with claims in the backlog compared to the previous month* cannot be provided for November 2022.

Summary	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Total number of claims in the backlog	32,200	34,181	35,860	37,303	39,097	39,474	39,969	41,152	41,825	41,937	42,139	43,855
Total number of veterans with claims in the backlog*	22,730	23,860	24,945	25,642	26,404	26,958	27,167	27,884	28,234	28,358	28,451	29,512
The number of new claims being made (Net claims received)	5,558	5,584	5,385	5,036	5,674	4,419	4,115	5,457	6,235	4,871	5,965	6,040
The percentage change in the backlog to the previous month		+6.2%	+4.9%	+4.0%	+4.8%	+1.0%	+1.3%	+3.0%	+1.6%	+0.3%	+0.5%	+4.1%
The actual change (number of claims) in the backlog compared to the previous month		1,981	1,679	1,443	1,794	377	495	1,183	673	112	202	1,716
The change in the total number of veterans with claims in the backlog compared to the previous month		1,130	1,085	697	762	554	209	717	350	124	93	1,061

Table 1B: Unallocated claims (Backlog), impacted veterans, and new claims received (Net) – 2022-23 financial year to date (1 July 2022 to 31 May 2023)

Summary	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
Total number of claims in the backlog	45,130	44,500	45,226	44,811	44,412	44,617	42,641	41,972	41,597	36,271	34,796
Total number of veterans with claims in the backlog*	30,513	30,245	30,510	30,191	27,661	27,913	26,919	26,637	26,494	23,627	22,994
The number of new claims being made (Net claims received)	5,677	6,747	5,595	5,335	5,791	4,690	4,433	5,467	6,348	4,746	7,075
The percentage change in the backlog to the previous month	+2.9%	-1.4%	+1.6%	-0.9%	-0.9%	+0.5%	-4.4%	-1.6%	-0.9%	-12.8%	-4.1%
The actual change (number of claims) in the backlog compared to the previous month	1,275	-630	726	-415	-399	205	-1,976	-669	-375	-5,326	-1,475
The change in the total number of veterans with claims in the backlog compared to the previous month [^]	1,001	-268	265	-319	NA	252	-994	-282	-143	-2,867	-633

Table 2A: Total On hand compensation claims 2021-22 financial year

Note: total on hand claims includes those claims that are being processed by a DVA staff member and those waiting to be allocated.

Total On hand (Backlog and Being processed)	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
DRCA Initial Liability	2,136	2,153	2,165	2,204	2,244	2,331	2,323	2,333	2,308	2,305	2,306	2,248
MRCA Initial Liability	18,072	18,391	18,896	19,437	20,331	20,513	20,819	21,161	21,343	21,688	21,840	21,958
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	1,874	2,069	2,030	2,044	2,013	2,045	2,056	2,062	2,135	2,219	2,266	2,325
Dual Act Initial Liability (VEA/DRCA)	2,948	3,173	3,262	3,349	3,503	3,584	3,531	3,533	3,575	3,596	3,531	3,484
Tri Act Initial Liability (MRCA/DRCA/VEA)	15,390	16,608	17,065	17,423	18,149	18,111	18,224	18,314	18,368	18,446	18,657	18,999
MRCA Permanent Impairment	6,229	6,211	6,172	6,152	6,240	6,245	6,314	6,486	6,882	6,953	7,150	7,476
DRCA Permanent Impairment	5,496	5,253	5,142	4,994	5,083	5,168	5,450	5,975	6,307	6,485	6,818	7,298
MRCA/DRCA Incapacity	647	655	742	726	786	862	1,054	1,088	1,087	1,204	1,194	1,205
VEA War Widow Claims	136	119	115	99	112	130	117	131	130	143	126	126
MRCA/DRCA Compensation following death	107	103	104	110	112	106	114	121	122	116	116	112
Total Compensation claims	53,035	54,735	55,693	56,538	58,573	59,095	60,002	61,204	62,257	63,155	64,004	65,231

Table 2B: Total On hand compensation claims 2022-23 financial year to date (1 July 2022 to 31 May 2023)

Total On hand (Backlog and Being processed)	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
DRCA Initial Liability	2,234	2,154	2,210	2,237	2,261	2,356	2,330	2,351	2,352	2,334	2,299
MRCA Initial Liability	22,042	22,085	22,313	22,568	22,552	23,031	22,734	22,751	22,603	22,384	22,406
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	2,430	2,609	2,553	2,572	2,568	2,634	2,508	2,512	2,493	2,392	2,429
Dual Act Initial Liability (VEA/DRCA)	3,425	3,267	3,462	3,572	3,698	3,854	3,930	4,012	4,110	4,323	4,506
Tri Act Initial Liability (MRCA/DRCA/VEA)	19,074	19,245	19,312	19,394	19,401	19,614	19,525	19,468	19,460	19,449	19,388
MRCA Permanent Impairment	7,732	7,998	8,119	8,334	8,546	9,044	9,230	9,382	9,756	10,025	10,334
DRCA Permanent Impairment	7,598	8,021	8,303	8,805	9,052	9,586	9,829	10,107	10,730	11,253	11,858
MRCA/DRCA Incapacity	1,232	1,273	1,146	1,153	1,209	1,242	1,345	1,418	1,376	1,368	1,293
VEA War Widow Claims	97	102	119	134	130	140	151	172	196	172	162
MRCA/DRCA Compensation following death	106	106	100	97	91	85	89	91	90	93	95
Total Compensation claims	65,970	66,860	67,637	68,866	69,508	71,586	71,671	72,264	73,166	73,793	74,770

Table 3A: Unallocated compensation claims by program 2021-22 financial year

Note: unallocated claims are those that have not yet been allocated to a DVA staff member for processing. It includes claims lodged within the current month.

Claims unallocated (Backlog)	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
DRCA Initial Liability	1,445	1,494	1,503	1,537	1,474	1,504	1,385	1,349	1,307	1,338	1,327	1,315
MRCA Initial Liability	12,610	13,416	14,299	14,920	15,760	15,788	16,002	16,577	16,806	16,929	16,690	16,909
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	632	1,041	992	1,048	1,029	1,073	1,129	1,154	1,226	1,275	1,315	1,405
Dual Act Initial Liability (VEA/DRCA)	1,942	1,868	1,922	1,892	1,829	1,835	1,801	1,848	1,744	1,599	1,485	1,454
Tri Act Initial Liability (MRCA/DRCA/VEA)	12,053	12,835	13,379	13,677	14,127	13,831	13,945	14,012	13,983	13,920	14,156	14,572
MRCA Permanent Impairment	2,743	2,759	2,778	2,750	2,989	3,259	3,264	3,284	3,547	3,547	3,591	4,053
DRCA Permanent Impairment	712	723	912	1,392	1,726	2,048	2,282	2,748	3,012	3,076	3,423	3,961
MRCA/DRCA Incapacity	63	45	75	87	163	136	161	180	200	253	152	186
VEA War Widow Claims	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MRCA/DRCA Compensation following death	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Compensation claims	32,200	34,181	35,860	37,303	39,097	39,474	39,969	41,152	41,825	41,937	42,139	43,855

Table 3B: Unallocated compensation claims by program 2022-23 financial year to date (1 July 2022 – 31 May 2023)

Claims unallocated (Backlog)	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
DRCA Initial Liability	1,381	1,321	1,368	1,348	1,363	1,245	1,163	1,048	1,041	756	635
MRCA Initial Liability	17,039	16,518	16,467	15,432	14,942	14,927	14,474	14,430	14,177	11,680	11,591
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	1,431	1,393	1,371	1,386	1,362	1,366	1,330	1,255	1,205	764	786
Dual Act Initial Liability (VEA/DRCA)	1,474	1,126	1,098	1,067	1,057	1,021	961	906	805	533	496
Tri Act Initial Liability (MRCA/DRCA/VEA)	14,687	14,127	14,028	13,718	13,599	13,073	12,010	11,593	11,351	9,341	8,794
MRCA Permanent Impairment	4,342	4,558	4,902	5,158	5,181	5,615	5,271	5,006	4,845	4,705	4,474
DRCA Permanent Impairment	4,410	5,011	5,465	6,110	6,261	6,616	6,709	6,940	7,364	7,687	7,688
MRCA/DRCA Incapacity	366	446	527	592	647	754	723	794	809	805	332
VEA War Widow Claims	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MRCA/DRCA Compensation following death	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Compensation claims	45,130	44,500	45,226	44,811	44,412	44,617	42,641	41,972	41,597	36,271	34,796

Table 4A: Average time taken to allocate 2021-22 financial year

Note: the average time taken to allocate is the average number of calendar days from when a claim is lodged to when it is first allocated to a DVA staff member for processing. For the period of July 2021 to February 2023, the time between lodgement and registration was not included in the average number of days to allocate to a decision maker. This error has been corrected in the March 2023 to May 2023 data. Please note this error does not impact Average total time taken to process figures provided at Tables 5A and 5B.

Average time taken to allocate (days)	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
DRCA Initial Liability	97	95	101	119	116	127	133	142	158	154	159	170
MRCA Initial Liability	122	128	146	168	155	161	159	167	178	191	213	214
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	89	101	100	119	119	131	128	137	160	162	156	164
MRCA Permanent Impairment	73	70	74	72	77	77	76	75	86	80	85	90
DRCA Permanent Impairment	33	31	28	28	31	28	33	38	43	45	57	60
MRCA Incapacity	3	2	1	1	2	2	4	3	4	5	4	4
DRCA Incapacity	1	2	1	2	3	3	7	3	7	4	4	15

Table 4B: Average time taken to allocate 2022-23 financial year to date (1 July 2022 – 31 May 2023)

Average time taken to allocate (days)	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
DRCA Initial Liability	185	200	222	214	264	295	251	243	278	300	311
MRCA Initial Liability	212	281	285	301	321	362	353	358	371	356	346
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	202	200	215	209	229	273	249	236	278	301	320
MRCA Permanent Impairment	93	96	101	108	107	104	121	135	147	154	168
DRCA Permanent Impairment	66	66	64	75	93	91	105	104	140	147	163
MRCA Incapacity	6	10	10	21	27	30	55	36	47	42	47
DRCA Incapacity	6	12	14	17	15	39	44	39	69	42	71

Table 5A: Average total time taken to process 2021-22 financial year

Note: the average total time taken to process claims is the average number of calendar days from when a claim is lodged to when the claim is decided. For Liability claims, a claim is decided when the last condition on the claim is decided.

Average time taken to process (days)	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
DRCA Initial Liability	294	310	312	376	305	310	323	335	345	353	345	376
MRCA Initial Liability	233	243	290	297	287	291	298	314	306	337	351	347
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	345	350	357	383	338	370	345	345	368	382	343	377
MRCA Permanent Impairment	221	187	209	219	212	219	240	239	237	235	248	231
DRCA Permanent Impairment	196	190	176	193	195	210	214	219	208	208	211	206
MRCA Incapacity	65	48	55	52	61	60	65	62	79	83	85	79
DRCA Incapacity	62	42	56	60	48	52	52	68	71	87	87	83
VEA War Widows Claims	75	81	78	89	88	38	72	84	80	80	70	77
MRCA/DRCA Compensation following death	158	325	192	201	319	261	133	166	320	211	262	313

Table 5B: Average total time taken to process 2022-23 financial year to date (1 July 2022 – 31 May 2023)

Average time taken to process (days)	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23
DRCA Initial Liability	371	396	423	426	471	475	469	472	476	498	507
MRCA Initial Liability	329	391	400	418	434	461	462	476	492	465	461
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	374	364	438	443	461	483	495	482	495	524	547
MRCA Permanent Impairment	237	252	257	257	249	251	275	272	268	269	283
DRCA Permanent Impairment	217	222	220	235	257	267	269	273	265	297	292
MRCA Incapacity	95	97	91	106	102	86	116	101	108	84	100
DRCA Incapacity	79	100	79	106	85	80	107	105	118	92	117
VEA War Widows Claims	76	71	55	102	77	137	117	98	62	71	99
MRCA/DRCA Compensation following death	206	146	421	224	316	149	269	263	137	44	187

Data extract date: 1 June 2023