Ministerial Advisory Council for Veterans and their Families
Terms of Reference (2019)

1. Role

The Ministerial Advisory Council for Veterans and their Families (MACVF) comprises community members with a material interest in issues affecting the veterans’ community in the Australian Capital Territory. For the purposes of the MACVF, a “veteran” is defined as all current and former Australian Defence Force personnel.

The “Veterans’ Community” is inclusive of people with a direct link to defence service or a veteran. This could include widows, partners, former partners, children, parents, siblings and relatives of ex-servicemen and women, and should not exclude anyone with an evident link to or interest in matters associated with veterans’ welfare or wellbeing.

The MACVF also provides a link between the Minister for Seniors and Veterans (the Minister), veterans and the veterans’ community.

2. Objectives

1) Undertake research, monitor and provide advice about matters relating to veterans, including issues relating to mental and physical health, welfare, disability, ageing, employment, social inclusion and participation;
2) provide a forum for the veterans, their families and the veterans’ community to act as a contact point and communicate directly with the ACT Government;
3) promote the wellbeing of the veterans’ community;
4) promote cooperation and collaboration across organisations dealing with issues affecting the veterans, their families and veterans’ community; and
5) investigate matters referred to the MACVF by the Minister for response on behalf of the veterans’ community.

3. Functions

1) Provide advice and introduce issues to Government on any matters relating to veterans, their families and the veterans’ community;
2) ensure the objectives of the MACVF are met to the maximum extent practicable;
3) facilitate a collective approach to raising issues with the Minister; and
4) consult across the veterans’ community when developing advice.

The MACVF will:

1) Hold a Community Consultation Forum each year;
2) consult with key stakeholders to identify concerns related to policies and programs for veterans and their families;

3) provide a mechanism for information sharing between key stakeholders on issues that affect the veterans, their families and the veterans’ community in the ACT;

4) develop a two-year Work Plan within three months of the start of the MACVF’s term and submit it to the Minister for endorsement;

5) provide a report on the MACVF’s work to the Minister at the conclusion of the MACVF’s term; and

6) conduct other activities as appropriate.

4. Membership

Structure
The MACVF will consist of a minimum of eight to a maximum of 12 members, including a Chair and a Deputy Chair. Individual community members, including the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair, will be appointed by the Minister.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the MACVF are encouraged to nominate a proxy to support them in their role on the MACVF. When the member attends, the proxy is an observer and may not vote. When the member is absent, the proxy may vote as an ex-officio member in place of the member.

It is the intention to have a fifty per cent rotation of MACVF members each term to provide continuity for the work of the MACVF.

5. Composition and Representation
The Minister will give consideration to choosing members to provide a broad range of knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience relevant to the veterans’ community.

MACVF members must demonstrate an understanding of the matters that affect veterans and their families. Members should also possess the ability and motivation to make a positive contribution within the veterans’ community.

The Chair and members will be drawn from the ACT veterans’ community, of which no less than half of the members will be current or ex-members of the Australian Defence Force.

The Minister has the discretion to appoint additional members, including representative members with expertise for particular projects as outlined in their Work Plan.

The Minister will appoint a Ministerial Liaison Officer, who will attend meetings as a non-member.
6. **Secretariat Support**

Secretariat support to the MACVF will be provided by the Community Services Directorate. The Secretariat is responsible for:

1) developing agendas;
2) distributing the agenda and meeting papers in appropriate formats;
3) taking minutes and distributing them to members within two weeks of MACVF meetings;
4) monitoring action items arising from MACVF business and assisting in their implementation, including liaising between the MACVF and government agencies;
5) supporting members to complete paperwork for reimbursement; and
6) arranging venues and refreshments for meetings.

7. **Terms of Appointment**

1) appointments will be for two years, or as determined by the Minister;
2) a member may serve no more than two consecutive terms;
3) the MACVF may form working groups to progress their Work Plan; and
4) the Minister has discretion to appoint additional members to casual vacancies.

8. **Leave of absence and apologies**

1) if a member is unable to attend a meeting, they are required to submit an apology to the Secretariat stating the reason for the absence. Apologies are noted in the minutes;
2) proxies and/or observers will not be accepted to replace the absent member, other than as noted under “Structure”;
3) if a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without leave from the Chair, their term may be cancelled;
4) members may apply for a leave of absence from their MACVF responsibilities for up to three months. This must be agreed to by the MACVF for it to be effective; and
5) for a period of absence of longer than three months from MACVF responsibilities, the request must be submitted to the Minister for agreement.

9. **Resigning from council**

Members may resign from the MACVF at any time. All resignations must be provided in writing to the Minister, stating their intention to resign from the MACVF, with a copy provided to the Chair. The appointment of replacement member is at the Minister’s discretion.
10. Role of the Chair

The Chair is responsible to the Minister for the oversight of the MACVF. The role of the Chair is to:

1) be a public spokesperson for the Council;
2) facilitate discussions between members on the MACVF’s Work Plan;
3) ensure all members have equal opportunity to contribute ideas, opinions and concerns;
4) maintain a positive and constructive atmosphere at MACVF meetings by encouraging courtesy, respect and openness;
5) ensure that any action arising from the Work Plan or meeting is appropriately assigned to members; and
6) liaise with the Secretariat to develop meeting agendas and ensure the progression of actions arising from meetings.

11. Operation

General Meetings

1) The MACVF is to meet a minimum of four times and a maximum of eight times a year.
2) Working group meetings may be held as necessary.
3) A draft agenda will be developed prior to each meeting by the Secretariat. In developing the agenda, consideration will be given to any direction provided by the Minister. The agenda should link to the MACVF Work Plan.
4) The agenda and papers are to be circulated to members at least one week before the meeting.
5) Meetings are to be facilitated by the Chair, or in their absence the Deputy Chair, or in their absence a member nominated by the members present at that meeting.
6) Whenever possible, decisions of the MACVF are to be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by a majority vote of those members present and noted in the minutes. The advice provided to the Minister will include the diverse range of opinions of members.
7) A member who abstains from voting, or does not agree with the majority ruling, can request to have their concerns noted in the minutes of the meeting.
8) At each meeting, MACVF members are to provide updates on consultations they have attended on behalf of the MACVF, and any significant issues related to projects under the MACVF’s Work Plan.
12. **Quorum**

In order for decisions to be made at meetings there is to be a quorum of at least half the total current number of members plus one.

13. **Confidentiality**

All MACVF papers, minutes and any other papers are provided to the MACVF to support them in their role and are not for public distribution. The MACVF may choose to publicly release certain documents with agreement of the Minister.

14. **Business between Meetings**

The Chair may conduct business between meetings on behalf of the MACVF. This may include preparing correspondence. The Chair may delegate this to the Deputy Chair, or other members, as required.

All submissions and significant correspondence sent on behalf of the MACVF must be cleared through the Chair and the Minister (with the exception of correspondence to the Minister).

Members are expected to advise the Secretariat when they have completed agreed actions arising from previous meetings.

The MACVF may deal with some matters out-of-session such as policy submissions and correspondence.

15. **Open Access Information Scheme (OAIS)**

From 1 January 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2016 (the FOI Act) came into effect. Under the FOI Act CSD is required to publish reports and recommendations prepared by MACVF.

To ensure full compliance by CSD under the FOI Act, MACVF reports and recommendations must be provided to CSD (via the secretariat) no later than 30 days after finalisation of the document.

The secretariat will assess the document and apply a public interest test, which will examine the information in a document and identify factors for either public disclosure or non-disclosure.

The assessment and document will be approved by the relevant CSD OAIS Information Officer, being a staff member at Director level or above.

Where information in a document is approved for public release it will be uploaded to the ACT Government OAIS portal.

Where a Chair or member has specific public interest concerns about a report or recommendation, these need to be provided in writing by the Chair to the secretariat at the same time as the relevant report or recommendation is provided.

The Chair and the Deputy Chair may represent the MACVF at meetings and forums when attending on behalf of the MACVF. The Chair and the Deputy Chair must represent existing MACVF policy in the public domain, including the media, as needed to discharge the MACVF Work Plan.

Members representing the MACVF are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct and report back to the MACVF on official activities.

Formal speeches and papers that are delivered by a member on behalf of the MACVF or the Minister must be cleared by the Chair and the Minister prior to their presentation.

All contact with the media on behalf of the MACVF requires consultation with the Chair. Any information to be released to the media on behalf of the MACVF must be cleared through the Chair and the Minister.

The Secretariat will update the Community Services Directorate’s website with the MACVF’s work, including:

1) work Plan;
2) progress reports;
3) speeches; and
4) submissions.

17. Reimbursement of Expenses

The Chair and Acting Chair will be paid per diem at a rate determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal. The Deputy Chair and members are entitled to access the Community Engagement Payment of the Community Services Directorate. Claims will be limited to a maximum of 12 per annum. Payments will be coordinated by the Secretariat.

Reimbursement is in recognition of the work undertaken by members of the MACVF to fulfil its role. Members are expected to actively contribute to the work of the MACVF, including: supporting the Chair and Deputy Chair; taking part in community consultations and other business; maintaining links with the community; and acting in accordance with the provisions of these Guidelines. The Community Engagement Payment Policy and claim forms are available from the MACVF Secretariat.
18. **Governance Principles: Appointments, Boards and Committees in the ACT**

Governance Principles: Appointments, Boards and Committees in the ACT provides guidance on appointment processes, legal and ethical requirements, as well as operational matters including induction, meeting procedure and performance.

It is available on the [Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate’s website](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/wac/ageing/councils).

19. **Termination**

The Minister retains the discretion to terminate a member’s appointment to the MACVF for serious breaches of the Code of Conduct or lack of attendance.

20. **Dissolution of Council**

The Minister for Seniors and Veterans may dissolve the MACVF by notice in writing to members.

21. **Review of Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed every two years.

22. **Contact Details**

**Secretariat**

Ministerial Advisory Council for Veterans and their Families  
Office for Seniors and Veterans  
Community Services Directorate

**Address:**

GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

**Phone:** 6207 0555

**Email:** communityparticipation@act.gov.au


1 ‘2.6.8. Government policy on boards and committees seeks to achieve and maintain 50% representation of women on all government boards and committees, and also increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability, persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and community organisations’, [Governance Principles 2017](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/wac/ageing/councils).