



Supporting Veteran Wellbeing Grant Report Year-ending 30 June 2020



Te Tira Ahu Ika A Whiro

**VETERANS'
AFFAIRS**

New Zealand

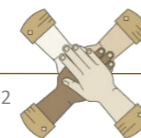
SUMMARY

The Government made a \$25,000 grant to No Duff Charitable Trust in July 2019 to support veteran wellbeing

The purpose specifically was to help improve access to support for veterans, and support No Duff to deliver front line crisis services that connect veterans to the help they need to recover and lead a healthy and productive life.

This report covers the key results of No Duff Charitable Trust for the year-ending 30 June 2020 in-line with the information requested by Government:

- **How much was achieved?**
- **How well was it done?**
- **Did we make a difference?**
- **Case studies and commentary;**
- **Issues / solutions for discussion;**
- **Appendix One – Detailed Data – year-ending 30 June 2020**



HOW MUCH WAS ACHIEVED?

Overview

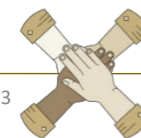
In the year-ending 30 June 2020, No Duff supported 59 veterans or their family members.

A detailed breakdown of some of the key demographics No Duff collects is included at Appendix A.

The reduced number compared to last year is reflected by the capacity reduction from October 2019; however, the rate of responses has started to increase again in 2020.

| Measure | How many? |
|---|-----------|
| Number of veterans supported | 59 |
| Referrals to emergency services | 2% |
| Connection to other services | 62% |
| Connection with other veterans | 51% |
| Direct assistance with forms & applications | 8% |

Note – some veterans are included in multiple categories, for example where they may have been connected to both other services and other veterans.



DID WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Did the veterans who approached No Duff have more support?

All veterans or their family members who approached No Duff have more support than before they did so.

Of 59 cases this financial year, 6 veterans (10%) have either chosen not to fully engage with the supports put in place, or withdrew from it with still unresolved issues. We note that in most of these instances, the reasons appeared to be mental health related, whether through impaired judgment, not realising the extent of their problems; or, despite the best efforts of their peer supporters, felt unable to step through the required processes to obtain longer term help and therefore rejected it.

Support options always remain available to them should they choose to re-engage. No Duff makes numerous attempts to keep veterans involved with the support they need where there is resistance for one reason or another.

On a case-by-case basis we assess the point at which we let the veteran know that support is always available should they choose to take it, and switch to passively monitoring their case.

Are the veterans who approached No Duff more independent?

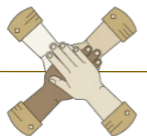
More independence is very subjective and difficult to accurately measure in numbers given the nature of No Duff's cases.

As with the veterans who have more support (and the noted exceptions), all those who approached No Duff are more independent than they previously had been with the various supports put in place.

Increased independence has been particularly evident in cases involving mental health, especially where individuals had isolated themselves, had difficulty at work and / or withdrawn from their usual activities.

During and after professional treatment and on-going peer support, individuals have re-emerged and re-engaged with family, friends, work and their usual activities.

From a volunteer / contribution perspective, these cases are the most personally rewarding for our team and is the driver behind many of the personal sacrifices our core team make.



CASE STUDIES AND COMMENTARY

Each case that No Duff supports is unique, often very complex and requires a tailored approach.

Due to the complexity and size of many cases, we have summarised a selection down to a handful of key points. It is difficult to convey the time, effort, energy and stress expended by those involved in some of these cases while trying to maintain anonymity.

Case One

No Duff was alerted to a veteran making concerning comments on social media, who was also homeless, broke and unemployed during the COVID-19 lockdown. A No Duff Ops Manager contacted him by phone, assessed his situation and safety for the night. She then contacted both WINZ and his bank to help coordinate obtaining a benefit, while also working with local social services to try and secure housing. WINZ secured emergency accommodation in the short-term and the veterans was handed over to local social services for ongoing support.

Case Two

No Duff alerted by numerous individuals that a veteran was in distress, based on comments made on social media and recent contacts. A No Duff Ops Manager made contact with the veteran, assessed the situation and then organised wrap around support by local No Duff volunteers. Once the situation was stabilised, the volunteers worked alongside the RSA DSM to help with longer term assistance, and then directly assisted the veteran with the VANZ forms and application process for ongoing help.



ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Personnel

Funding and COVID 19 have had a significant impact on personnel and our ability to maintain our level of output to our core business - supporting the New Zealand veterans' community.

During this reporting period we have changed our operations structure in an attempt to help distribute the workload and manage some of our volunteer-related challenges.

Currently No Duff has 64 volunteers (vetted and in progress) in our new volunteer and client management system (Better Impact). We are comfortable having a lower number of general volunteers as having gone through this process, they have demonstrated they are willing to put in greater effort and time. This will lead to a stronger, more dedicated and effective foundation of individuals and by extension service to responses.

We still retain the old database and are working to encourage the other volunteers (approx. 300) to transition across to the new system; we view this as an opportunity for previously registered volunteers to reassess their circumstances and commit to a more in-depth process involving police checks, privacy policies, and our code of conduct. This is an ongoing process which we are in no rush to push, and if we require a previously registered volunteer for a task, they are required to go through Better Impact first.

Once running, the Peer Supporter Course will provide an excellent opportunity to identify and further develop dedicated volunteers.

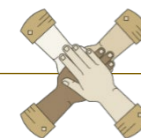
Due to the high-risk nature of a large percentage of the cases we have tended to utilise the core group of volunteer Operations Managers to respond, that have the experience to deal with the level of complexity of some of these cases. This can lead to burn-out which is something we are very mindful of and are developing strategies to minimise this.

A key point that has been identified is that, where previously, the circumstances of a number of our volunteers allowed them to contribute substantial amounts of time to No Duff's activities at no cost to the Trust, those circumstances have changed for most of our key volunteers over time, and they are unable to provide the same input they had previously.

Our volunteer base is mostly younger people with families, careers and other activities which can limit their available time to assist.

We are still struggling to find volunteers who can dedicate time for key roles such as Operations Managers to co-ordinate and mentor peer support volunteers handling responses.

While there are many well meaning people who want to help, the scale and time commitment of work required can be off-putting when trying to balance their own lives on a volunteer basis.



ISSUES IDENTIFIED (CONTINUED)

“Bounce-backs”

This year we continued to have more instances where a veteran “bounces-back” to No Duff after being handed over to longer-term providers. A number of these are veterans with significant mental injury / illness being unable or unwilling to fully engage with other support providers. A number were as a result of other support providers being slow to respond, not understanding their situation or providing inadequate/ineffective support.

As a matter of course these cases are referred back to the organisation they were originally facilitated to, as No Duff lacks the resources to provide long term support, although the second time around sees much closer monitoring of these individuals and more on-going interactions with the organisation they were referred to.

This year we recorded 13 bounce-backs, where there were only 7 last year. They ranged from people whose cases were closed from anywhere between 4 years ago to towards the end of the 2019 financial year, with only one instance of a bounce-back within this reporting period.

Veteran Feedback on Their Interactions with VANZ

We have heard some common themes, some of which VANZ may already be aware of, others we understand are not an easy “fix” due to numerous regulatory or other requirements; we are reporting them here simply as common feedback from veterans who have interacted with the VANZ system and commented to us about.

Most negative comments arose from veterans struggling with their mental health, where any administrative process can seem difficult, and in some cases too much.

Certified ID and bank account requirements on the Scheme Two form is a barrier that can seem too much to deal with. We understand that the need for the certification has changed, however the form still includes the requirement.

The difficulty in getting a GP appointment to fill out forms, and then having to get specialist appointments beyond that can be off-putting for some also and presents a challenge for No Duff trying to help them navigate the system and keep engaged.



ISSUES IDENTIFIED (CONTINUED)

Funding

No Duff's core business is directly aligned to the purposes of this grant. As previously stated, No Duff has struggled to secure sustainable funding to enable committing to hiring staff beyond short periods. As predicted, with longer-term funding security concerns our ability to conduct core business became unsustainable. Reluctantly, we were forced to announce a reduction in capacity effective 30 September 2019.

As a once-again volunteer-based charity No Duff is reliant on sourcing funding through donations from larger organisations, the general public and other sponsorship to cover operational and training development costs. Although we are very grateful for the assistance, this has highlighted the need for No Duff to become more financially self-reliant.

In order to achieve this we have been focusing on the Peer Supporter Course with the intention of that eventually generating funding. As at 30 June 2020 the testing phase of the first mentoring course is underway. Depending on volunteer capacity, we are aiming to run the pilot course before the end of 2020. We are not utilising any Government funding to develop this course.

We are also working towards attaining MSD Social Sector Standards accreditation which, in conjunction with the training from the Peer Supporter Course, will put us in a position to look at attaining funding for our work. COVID 19, and the total reliance on volunteers has slowed progress on this project.

Funding is a key area to our continued operations, once we have the volunteer capacity to dedicate to this task we hope to see more progress to allow the generation of more sustainable or sufficient funding secured for reasonable timeframes to allow us to transition back to employing staff to expand the capacity of our services once again.



ISSUES IDENTIFIED (CONTINUED)

COVID 19

Provision of core business has continued to be affected by our reduced capacity and the additional stress and uncertainty of COVID 19. To help mitigate this No Duff has sought to reduce the administrative burden by bringing in another volunteer to assist with administration, and work alongside the new Treasurer who started during the last reporting period. This has alleviated some of the pressure on volunteers who were double hatting as both peer support responders and administrators.

Responses have decreased as expected with the announcement of our capacity reduction; this financial year has seen 59 responses (107 over the preceding 12 months); we continued to have a range from straightforward to very complex.

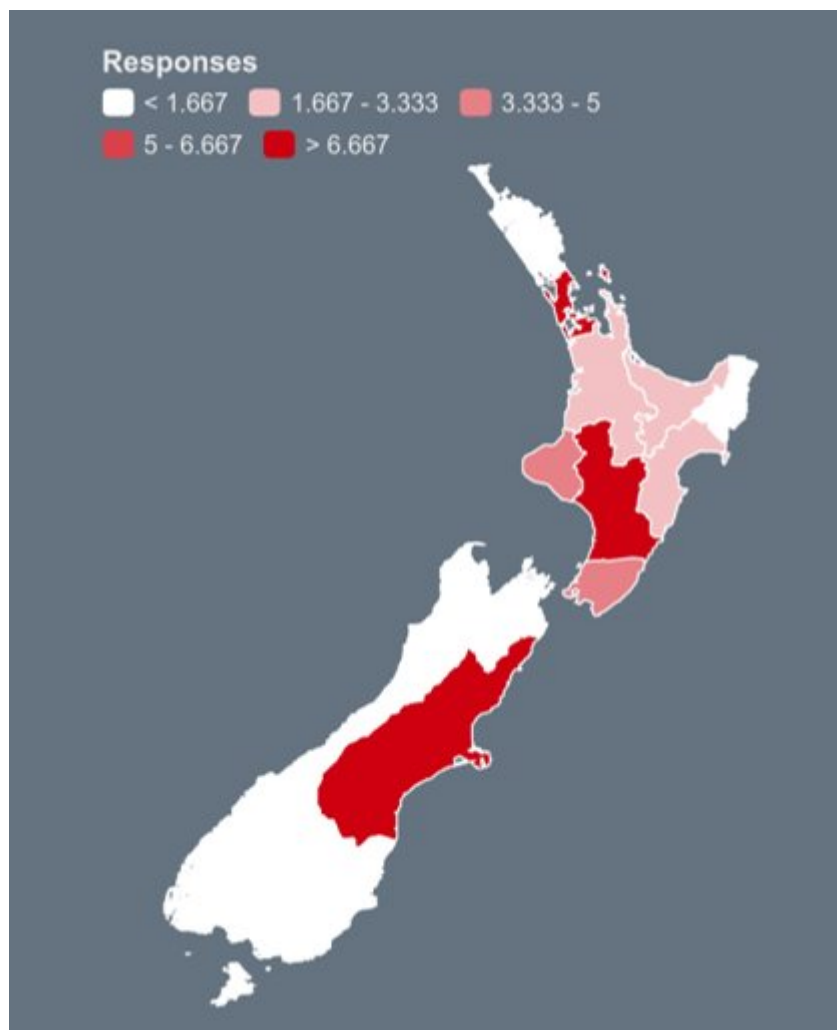
During lockdown support was provided remotely via a number of communication platforms (phone, zoom etc) acknowledging that if the threat of self-harm or harm to others was high, we would need to engage essential services such as Police or the DHB Mental Health Crisis Team as appropriate. These interventions were fortunately successful despite the challenges imposed by the lockdown.

No Duff has seen a reduction in the number of new responses over the lockdown period which was not unexpected and remained within our capacity on an all-volunteer basis. This has allowed us to continue to manage our long-term, complex cases alongside new cases. Anecdotally we (and others within the veterans support sector, including medical professionals) believe this is because our veterans are able to cope better in that type of environment, however with the continued uncertainty around job security and the follow on affects of that we suspect this may change in the near future.



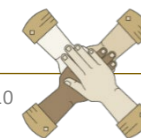
APPENDIX A – DETAILED DATA – YEAR-ENDING 30 JUNE 2020

Response by region



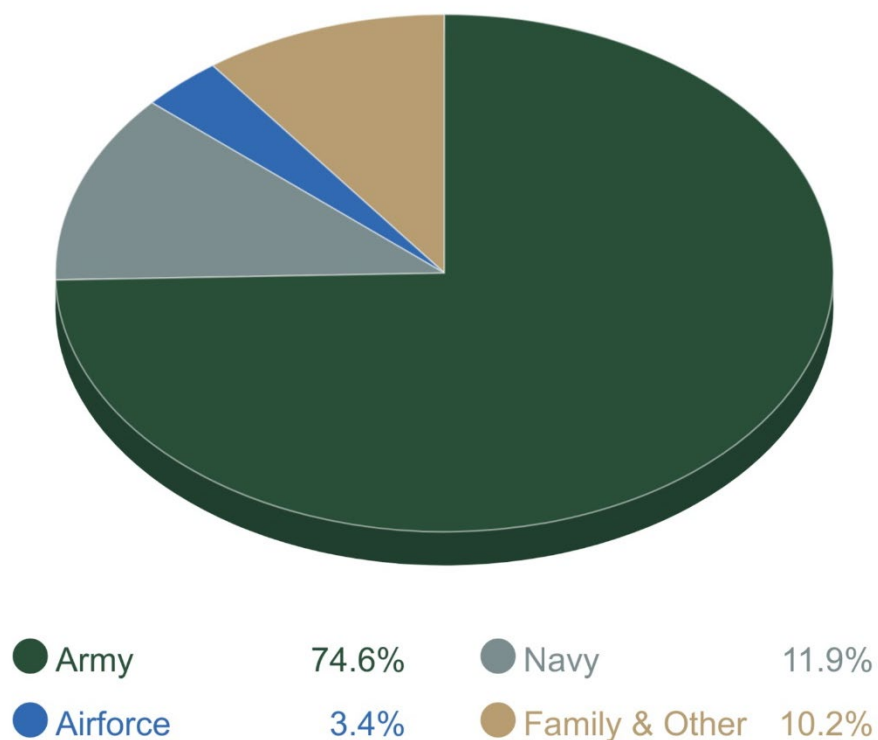
| Region | 2020 |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Canterbury | 10 |
| Manawatu-Whanganui | 9 |
| Auckland | 9 |
| Taranaki | 4 |
| Wellington | 4 |
| Bay of Plenty | 2 |
| Otago | 1 |
| Hawkes Bay | 2 |
| Waikato | 3 |
| Nelson | 1 |
| Northland | 0 |
| Marlborough | 0 |
| Gisborne | 0 |
| West Coast | 0 |
| Southland | 1 |
| International | 8 |
| No Data | 5 |
| Total | 59 |

“International” is predominantly NZ veterans living in Australia who contacted No Duff for support. Most responses were located in Brisbane, Sydney or Perth.

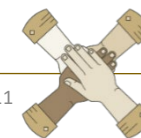
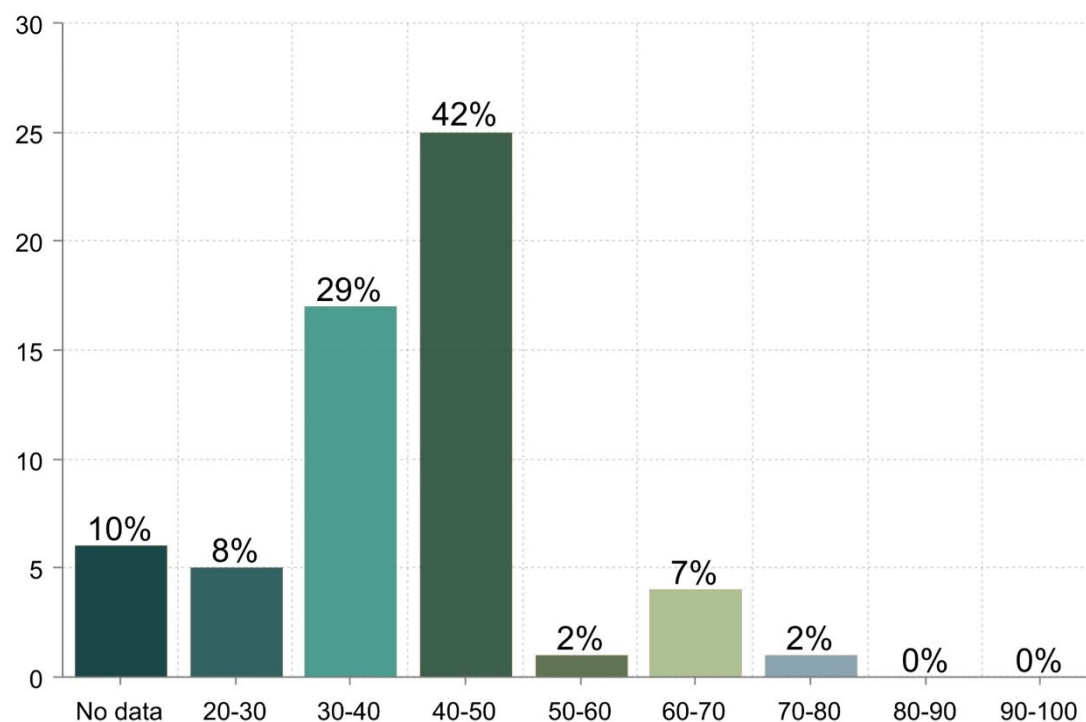


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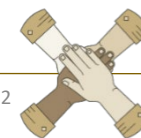
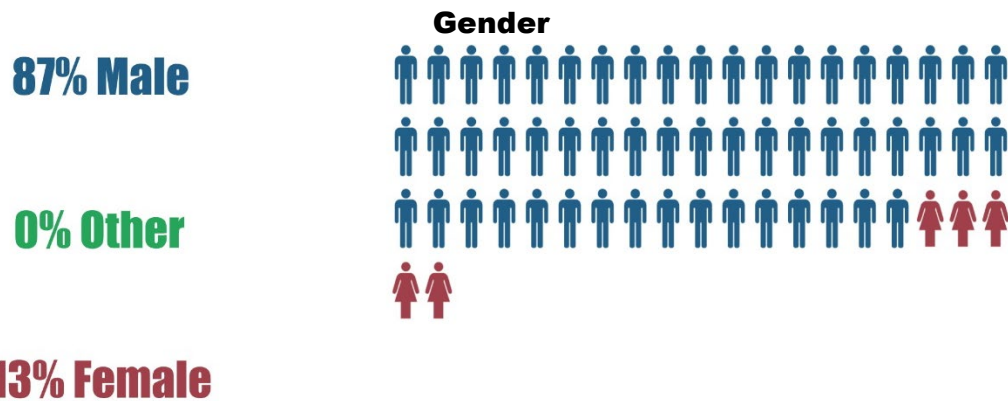
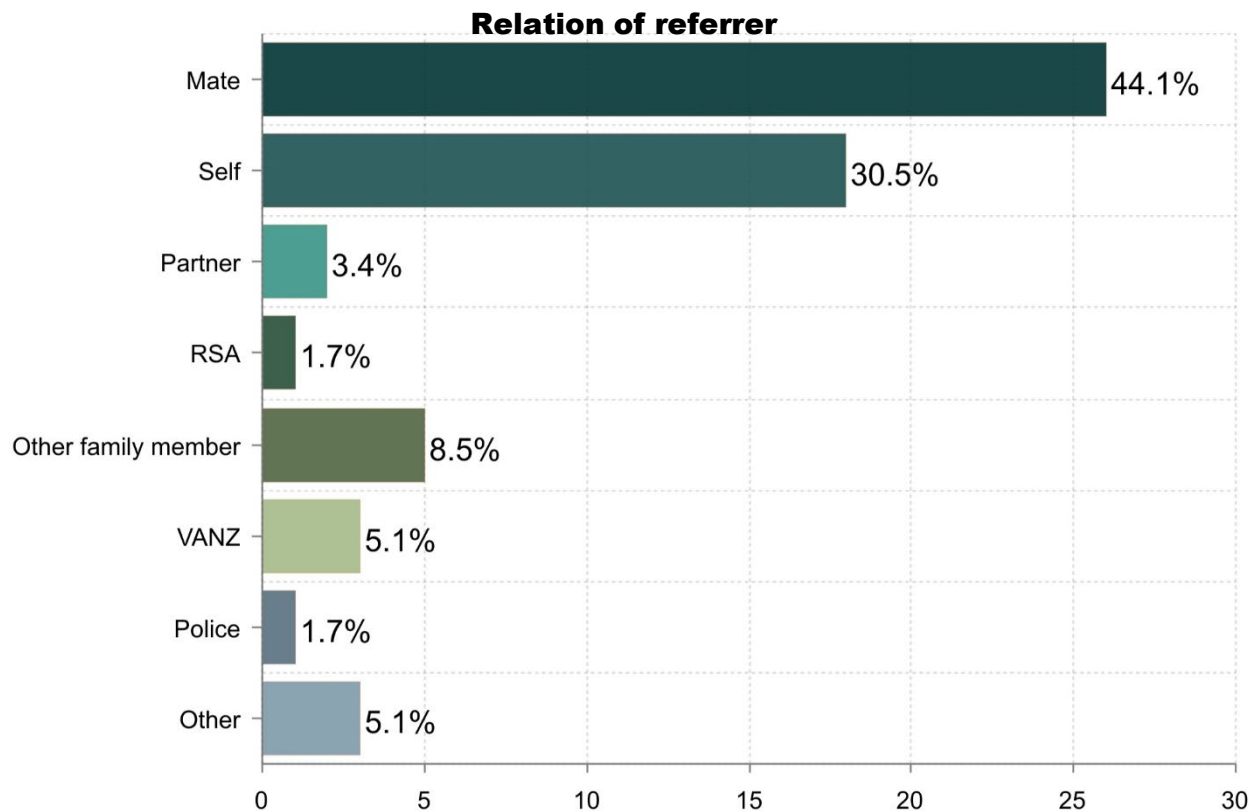
Branch of Service



Age Groups



APPENDIX A – DETAILED DATA – YEAR-ENDING 30 JUNE 2020



No Duff Charitable Trust

www.noduff.org

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