



23 January 2024

The Honourable Chris Penk  
Minister for Veterans  
Parliament Buildings  
Private Bag 18041  
**WELLINGTON 6160**

## **Expenditure Analysis - Government Grant July 2022 to June 2023**

### **Reference**

- A. Veterans' Affairs Letter - Conditional grant: Supporting veteran wellbeing, 13 March 2023
- B. Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mo ngā Mōrehu ā Tū me ō Rātou Whānau: Veteran, Family and Whanau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework

### **Introduction**

1. As requested in Reference A, please find enclosed a report on the expenditure of the Minister's grant to the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association (RNZRSA) for FY 2022/23, highlighting the number of veterans supported by the grant and the types of support provided.
2. The Minister has made the grant available in two parts. The purpose of Part 1 is to improve access to support for veterans. This grant supports the RNZRSA in its frontline work to support all veterans (those who have attested into the NZDF) and underpins our workplan in supporting the Te Arataki Action plan in two of the four priority areas namely: Priority area Two: prevention and wellbeing promotion; and Priority Area Four: professional and service development. The purpose of Part 2 is to address a specific project in line with priority areas identified in the *Veteran, Family and Whanau mental health and Wellbeing Policy Framework – Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mo ngā Mōrehu ā Tū me ō Rātou Whānau*, the provision of accommodation support.

### **General**

3. The RNZRSA is a non-governmental organisation that supports veterans and their whānau. We work in partnership with Veterans' Affairs (VA), New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), other government agencies and partner NGOs to address issues that impact veterans. The RNZRSA supports the Government's objectives for our veterans, providing direct support to, and feedback from, those whom we serve.

4. The Government's grant has been instrumental for the RNZRSA National Office to maintain the support network that delivers responsive support services to veterans and their whanau. This network reduces the demand placed on public health and social services by identifying gaps and/ or complementing existing services. The grant also provides a vital and tangible means to recognise the value of our volunteers by providing reimbursement for travel costs associated with providing support. Ultimately, the annual grant is used to fund the activity of the RNZRSA Support Network to enable it to deliver essential support to veterans and their whanau.

### **Reflection and achievements**

5. This reporting period has seen further tangible progress in providing support to our veteran community. This reflects the priorities described in reference B. Development continues from a purely volunteer-based workforce to an integrated model of volunteer and paid staff. Continued Government support has been a critical enabler of the RNZRSA's ability to develop and sustain its support network.

6. The training and outreach programme in FY22/23 included health and wellbeing clinics and standardised training. A Hui at RNZAF Base Ohakea to review the national training framework and set the future direction was a highlight. Outreach clinics are now a significant part of RNZRSA's support services offering. Going out to veterans in their communities is extremely beneficial in addressing support needs early. Our experience is that many are not connected with the support that is available.

7. We continue to engage with the wider veteran community and government agencies to widen support to the post-1974 cohort of former and currently serving NZDF personnel. The current economic and social environment necessitates supporting the veteran community collaboratively with our partners, including opportunities to share knowledge and expertise across the sector. This is only possible as a result of the grant.

8. The RNZRSA MSD employment project is an initiative formally started in February 2023 as part of a widening of RNZRSA support outreach, especially to the younger cohort of former service people. The project purpose is to assist veterans and their whanau from military to civilian life through an employment and wellbeing lens, to remain in meaningful employment, and to find career pathways by building on the skills and capabilities that military service provides. This aligns with the RNZRSA philosophy that the process of transition from service person to civilian sets the foundation of a veteran's wellbeing into the future.

9. With the release of the Te Arataki Framework that sets out the issues facing former and current serving people, the RNZRSA's support services continue to evolve to meet new and emerging needs. We remain focused on providing support to veterans as the core purpose of the organisation, and have launched the RSA Accommodation Project. With the government grant we continue to support those service people with mental health and wellbeing issues to ensure every veteran's life is fully lived.

### **Looking forward**

10. Cohorts of NZDF deployments from the mid to late 1990s to today will require support, as was the case with previous generations and early identification of need, together with proactive outreach, will be key to providing support to this group. Accordingly, the surety provided by the Government grant allows the RNZRSA to keep pace with the support needs of the veteran community, now and into the future. Some of the factors driving future demand for support services include:

- a. RNZRSA returning to its core purpose of supporting former and current military personnel.

- b. Increasing numbers of Scheme Two veterans seeking support.<sup>1</sup>
- c. Increasing numbers of people seeking ACC support for routine service injuries.
- d. The impact of Covid-19.
- e. Global economic, health and climate related challenges.
- f. The NZDF commitment to regional and national emergency related deployments.
- g. NZDF response to global issues on behalf of New Zealand's international obligations.
- h. Continued research and knowledge into specific veteran health issues.
- i. The use of complimentary treatments for veteran health related issues.
- j. The rising need for advocacy.
- k. Continued compliance costs, including cost pressures.
- l. The need for paid support staff due to the complex nature of support, and the support needs of veterans.

## **Conclusion**

11. The grant has provided surety and enhanced our ability to continue developing the veteran services envisaged by our founders in 1916. This report details what support has been provided, however the numbers detailed in the annexes are not a true reflection of all of the work the RNZRSA does in the community. Supporting veterans' and their whanau across Aotearoa New Zealand is why the RNZRSA's exists. On behalf of the RNZRSA, we remain committed to providing ongoing support for veterans and thank the Government for its ongoing commitment to this important work.



Marty Donoghue  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

## **Annex**

- A. RNZRSA Support Services Engagement FY22/23
- B. RNZRSA Support Adviser Activity FY22/23
- C. Analysis of Grant Expenditure FY22/23

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2020/21 year, 100 Scheme Two veterans needed support. In the 2022/23 year, this number increased to 178.

**RNZRSA Support Service Engagement, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023****Number of Veterans Supported**

1. **1781** people were directly engaged by RNZRSA Support Advisors between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, of which **80%** are identified as current or former uniformed service personnel.<sup>2</sup>
  - **992** were ex or current serving NZ Army
  - **234** were ex or current serving RNZN
  - **163** were ex or current serving RNZAF
  - **271** were dependents or whanau engaged in support related activities
  - **48** were foreign veterans
  - **24** were ex or current serving NZ Police
  - **49** were not recorded as either veterans or whanau

New Zealand Army service (50 percent) is the largest group. The needs of this group will increase over time, consistent with international findings from research into the effects of military service on western military personnel. Overall, ex and current NZ Army personnel will continue to have the highest client support needs within the veteran community in New Zealand.

2. The breakdown of referrals below shows that the majority of referrals for support services was via RNZRSA Support Services. The increase in engagement and outreach, which is a feature of the RNZRSA's operating model, is one possible reason for this.
  - **810** were proactive interactions by RNZRSA Support Services by individual Support Advisors, through the support network or via a Support Clinic.
  - **473** were referred from the RNZRSA outside of Support Services (Local RSA, District Executive, National Office, etc).
  - **274** were self-referrals to support services either locally or at District level.
  - **91** were from friends or whanau.
  - **34** were directed from VANZ.

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<sup>2</sup> Only information recorded is used in this report. Approx. 10 per cent of the overall RNZRSA Support Network records their work so actual interactions will be much higher overall. It doesn't include administration or group based activities.

- **32** were from other Government agencies.
- **37** were from within the NZDF via the Camp and Base Hubs or from other NZDF sources.
- **30** were from other NGOs.

## **Case Studies**

3. Engagement with RNZRSA Support Services directly improves veterans and their family's circumstances. The government grant reimburses costs for our volunteers and pays for staff to be employed in veteran support functions. This enables the RNZRSA to provide a network of volunteers and expertise in support services to provide assistance to volunteers and overall leadership of the veteran support capability.

### **Persona One**

A younger veteran that has mental and physical injuries needed assistance to get alternate therapy treatment for their injuries that was not funded by government. The veteran found that the alternate treatment was better than what had been offered by main stream medical treatment options and had given them superior relief from the symptoms of their injuries. The treatment successfully improved the quality of their day to day life, however the cost was not sustainable for them.

The veteran received funding from the RSA for the immediate treatment need cost to relieve the symptoms of their injuries. Empathy and understanding of the veteran's situation also improved their overall wellbeing and health outcomes, as well as giving them control over their ongoing treatment costs for the medium term.

Longer term RSA is going to negotiate with the alternative health treatment provider to provide treatment at a significantly reduced rate for the veteran so that they can continue to manage their injuries, further improving their long term health and wellbeing outcomes, especially in terms of employment and social health. This would be extended to the wider veteran community as another veteran centric treatment option. The case also provides an advocacy platform for wider recognition and support for alternate treatments to manage injuries.

4. Working in partnership with other government agencies and NGOs, RNZRSA Support Services seeks to get the best possible outcomes for veterans.

### **Persona Two**

A government agency referred a veteran client to the RNZRSA Support Services to support them in a longer term outreach program for the health and wellbeing outcome of the client coming back into the community. The client had no long term job prospects, no permanent accommodation and no assets to support a sustainable lifestyle. Their health and wellbeing situation was one of addiction issues and poor social health connections.

The RSA Support Advisors involved put a plan in place to support the veteran in integrating back into the community with work and supporting them with their mental and wellbeing issues. Part of this support reintroduced them back to their military skillsets and work ethic to keep them focused to remain a productive member of society. Utilising the resources of government agencies as well as the RSA support structure the Support Advisors attended to the social health issue as well as strengthened the mental health aspects of the client. This has led to an enhanced wellbeing outcome in conjunction with partnership with the government agency and another NGO organization that will deliver an employment outcome and reintegration of the veteran back into the community supporting overall social and mental health outcomes.

5. RNZRSA Support Services act as advocates in situations where specialist knowledge is required.

### **Persona Three**

A veteran engaged RSA support services to help them advocate for compensation from the government over injuries and illness sustained from conditions of service overseas. The case stemmed from mental health trauma, which subsequently led to adverse physical health outcomes for the veteran. The application for compensation was initially denied and was taken up by the RSA National Office advocate on the veteran's behalf.

On reviewing the application and researching the factors surrounding it the Advocate found reason to request a review of the case. The Advocate found that the physiological and physical environment contributed heavily in behavioral changes to the veteran that aggravated physical health effects that directly correlated to the illness the veteran suffered from post service, as well as the adverse mental health effects suffered at the time. The RSA Advocate successfully argued that compensation was a just outcome for the veteran allowing them to receive treatment from compensation by the government who had placed them in this situation. Additionally the Advocate also had the government recognise other conditions not covered in the original claim, giving the veteran a better quality of life in terms of mental health and prolonged life expectancy from the initial pre-compensation outlook.

**RNZRSA Support Services Activity, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

1. Hours of engagement that Support Advisor volunteers were performing their role is broken down as follows:
  - a. **1,970** volunteer hours were in based on individual interactions with clients on support matters. This includes visiting clients or stakeholders, giving advice, taking enquiries and functioning as an advocate on behalf of clients. It includes home visits, hospital /rest home visits and includes all other client related activity e.g. To take the person to attend an appointment with MSD, a doctor, a social worker or any other face to face activity which aligns with the RNZRSA Support Advisor role. It also includes making enquiries on behalf of the person and advocating on their behalf e.g. talking to Disability Support Link, Veteran Independence Program (VIP) service providers, and engagement with VANZ, ACC, MSD, etc. All interactions allowed for a continuation of support to the clients in social health interaction, or in linking them to a health provider or support agency to manage or support their individual needs.
  - b. **2,287** volunteer hours were for group related events with stakeholder organisations, formal representative of the RNZRSA Support Services at an organised event, hospital or rest home visits for general wellbeing checks on residents and/or veteran whanau, or devoted to training or knowledge to groups.
  - c. Meetings include physical or teleconference/video linked meetings between organisations representatives related to Support Services activities. For example, establishing protocols between the justice representatives and the Support Advisors to better facilitate support for RSA clients in the justice system. These stakeholder interactions impact directly on the delivery of support to ex and current serving people and their whanau, usually by establishing a working relationship or MOU with the agencies involved to better facilitate physical, mental and social health or financial outcomes. They also support raising awareness and funding for veterans or their families to better assist delivery of RNZRSA Support Services locally and nationally. This includes destigmatising the needs of those suffering from health issues, raising funds and widening public understanding of issues.
  - d. Training includes presentations to organisations, groups and individuals representing and promoting the skills and activities of the Support Advisor role. This includes the Support Advisor Induction Course for Support Advisors and selected other veteran NGOs (for example Pilgrim Bandits), and attendance at workshops and courses that enhance the knowledge and delivery of support services. The government grant supports direct training in mental health awareness via the Mental Health Course due to the need of third-party expertise in this area to train support advisors and partners for better delivery of support to clients.

- e. **1,450** volunteer hours were devoted to other activities related to Support Services but not quantified in the other criteria, which includes internal organisational representation as a Support Advisor (for example, as the support representative at the local RSA AGM), administration tasks and communication out. Continued internal messaging to local RSAs and stakeholders is essential to the overall outreach of support and to ensure that veterans or family members who approach their local RSAs or other stakeholder organisations for help have their details passed on to the RNZRSA Support Services for follow up enquires to assist them directly.
- f. Total reported volunteer hours for the delivery of support is **5,707** hours. This is the equivalent of approx. 713 working days (8-hour day) over the 12-month period.
- g. Total distance travelled for the above activities is **79,333** kms by volunteer support advisors across New Zealand. The government grant directly supports the travel of the support advisors around the country to be able to meet ex and current service people and their families, at their residence or at a place of their choosing, encouraging interaction and the delivery of support outcomes.

## **Case Management**

- 2. Case management involves support cases beyond the capabilities of Local Support Advisors (LSA). This requires face-to-face interviewing, follow-up conversations, research into legislation and medical conditions, specialist interviews and correspondence as well as direct advocacy between the parties involved. Case management is a complex and time-consuming activity.
- 3. The government grant supports this activity by covering administration of the Senior Support Advisor (SSA) in advocacy, and supporting the ongoing training and knowledge required to be able to conduct complex case management. It is an identified niche skillset that is part lawyer, researcher and professional advocate.
- 4. Total recorded national office ongoing case management for the year is **22**. There were **6** new cases for the reporting period. The stages of case management are broadly broken down into initial investigation, research, preparation and execution. The oldest case dates back to 2017. Time spent on ongoing and new cases is **1146** hours.

## **Skills Building**

- 5. Training ensures competent support delivery to the veteran community and their whanau. It is the cornerstone of the RNZRSA Support Services and plays a vital role in ensuring that the veteran community receives the best possible outcomes for their health and wellbeing needs from the delivery of services provided by support advisors.



6. All support advisors and managers are mandated to complete the pre-requisites of the Training Framework to be eligible to be recognised within RSA Support Services. This requires them to understand and sign a code of ethics, complete the Privacy ABC e-learning from the Privacy Commissioner and to be police vetted. This requirement ensures that support advisors and managers are fit and proper people to be able to interact with vulnerable clients safely and in keeping with their client's rights.
7. A number of Support Advisor Induction courses and associated Veteran Clinics were run in the 2022-2023 financial year. Veteran Clinics are events where veterans can come and get advice on entitlements, compensation and help in dealing with VANZ or ACC forms or processes. In the reporting period three districts had Veteran Clinics. Three Support Advisor Induction courses were run, with **38** people trained to be Support Advisors. All registered Support Advisors who complete the pre-requisite requirements are eligible to attend the SA Induction and Mental Health course to increase overall skill levels of RSA support volunteers and selected stakeholder veteran support organisations. This gives consistency of best practice across the RSA Support Network where the client and advisor interaction most frequently occur, as well as bring a consistent body of practice to the wider veteran NGO community for those who engaged in practical support.
8. Two Mental Health courses were run in the 2022-2023 year in Northland and Nelson. The course is especially prevalent in high needs veterans and families where PTSD and mental health issues affect the overall wellbeing of the family, who are overwhelmingly the primary carers in these cases. This course allows support advisors to assist primary carers in managing mental health clients, giving some relief to them and their families suffering.
9. RNZRSA maintains a presence on both the **Veterans Advisory Board (VAB)** and **Veterans Reference Group (VRG)** to advocate for veteran interests as well as support government understanding and aspirations in the veteran space. We also facilitate regular **Veteran Support Organisation (VSO)** meetings and workshops, with the last one being held in Palmerston North in June 2023. The VSO are a collaboration of NGOs that share knowledge, initiatives and information to ensure situational awareness across topics related to health and wellbeing of the veteran community, and to be able to direct ex and current serving clients to a like-minded VSO who have specialised areas of support. It also ties into higher advocacy goals of making the veteran voice heard at the governmental level in areas of mental and physical health, wellbeing, conditions of service and remembrance of military service by New Zealanders. The current members of the group is the RNZRSA, Sailors Soldiers Aviators Association New Zealand (SSAANZ), Veteran's Combined Forces Surfing Association (VCFSA), Te Kiwi Maia, Families of the Fallen, Onward Bar and Pilgrim Bandits.

## **RSA Accommodation Project**

1. Traditionally some local RSAs had housing available which maintained social connections for the benefit of veterans' health and wellbeing, as well as for those who faced hardship or difficulty in finding appropriate housing. The RSA Accommodation Project aims to provide a stock take of accommodation with a view to reestablishing accommodation options for veterans. To date, a project lead has been appointed, with a plan drafted and implemented. The first phase is currently scheduled to be completed by the second quarter of 2024 and involves identifying all RSA owned accommodation in New Zealand, and ascertaining its condition and suitability. The second phase will then develop an operating model to match veterans needing housing in the regions with accommodation which may be available to them.

**Analysis of Grant Expenditure, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023**

Activity	Remarks	Expenditure
<b>National Office Staff and District Support Manager (DSM) Operating</b>		
National Office Staff Operating	2 x FTE Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mileage</li> <li>• Travel</li> <li>• Accommodation</li> <li>• Meals</li> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Public and private sector engagement</li> <li>• NZDF engagement</li> <li>• Volunteer training and development</li> <li>• District planning and coordination</li> <li>• Complex case management, including reviews</li> <li>• Complaints to the Health &amp; Disability Commissioner</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> </ul>	\$140,000
Contractor – District Support Manager (Australia)	Salary. Mileage, travel, etc. included in DSM operating	\$30,000
		<b>SUB TOTAL: \$170,000</b>
<b>Support Network Operating:</b>		
Expense claims	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mileage</li> <li>• Accommodation</li> <li>• Meals</li> <li>• Phone cards</li> <li>• Stationary</li> <li>• Postage</li> <li>• Meeting expenses</li> </ul>	\$50,000
		<b>SUB TOTAL: \$50,000</b>
<b>Training &amp; Development:</b>		
Mental Health Training	• 2x Mental Health Courses	\$6,000
Direct Support to Districts	• 3x Clinics • 3x Support Advisor Induction Courses	\$24,000
		<b>SUB TOTAL: \$30,000</b>
<b>Project</b>		
RSA Accommodation Project	• Project Manager and associated project expenses	\$25,000
		<b>SUB TOTAL: \$25,000</b>
<b>TOTAL GOVERNMENT GRANT EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>TOTAL: \$275,000</b>

Extract from email received from Marty Donoghue dated 6 March 2024 clarifying the expenditure

## Confirmation of Budget Grant Expenditure Report

Kia ora Bernadine, thank you for outlining the issues raised in our grant report dated 23 Jan for the 22/23 FY report.

I can confirm that the reduced figures are correct:

Expense Claims \$50,000 and  
Direct Support to Districts \$24,000

In terms of the RSA Accommodation Project, I can confirm the breakdown of this project was:

Project Manager Costs - Remuneration:	15,000
IT Contractor:	8,000
Travel Expenses:	\$2,000

Ngā Mihi Marty

### **Marty Donoghue**

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