



20 February 2023

The Honourable Meka Whaitiri  
Minister for Veterans  
Parliament Buildings  
Private Bag 18041  
**WELLINGTON 6160**

## **RESULTS: GOVERNMENT GRANT MARCH 2022 TO JUNE 2022**

### **Reference**

A. Veteran Affairs Letter - Conditional Grant: Supporting Veteran Wellbeing 15 December 2021

1. The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association (RNZRSA) is a veterans' non-government organisation (NGO) established in 1916 to promote the welfare of returned soldiers. Over the years while the philosophy has remained, the mission has changed to reflect a more holistic approach of supporting veterans and their families. The RNZRSA interprets all those that have served as being veterans.

### **Introduction**

2. The enclosed report details the activities undertaken by the RNZRSA in delivering support direct to veterans. The grant was made available (As outlined in Reference A) "to improve access to support for the veterans - in particular this grant supports front-line work to develop support for veterans with PTSD and mental injury to help them lead a healthy and productive life".

### **General**

3. Continued Government support has been critical for the RNZRSA to develop a support network that delivers modern and responsive support services. This network reduces the demand on the public health and social services sectors by covering gaps and navigating existing social service provision. Funding from the grant provides:

- Reimbursement for travel costs associated with the thousands of kilometers travelled by the many volunteers (circa 250) that make up the RNZRSA support network.
- Salary costs for RNZRSA staff and contractors.
- Mental health training.
- Veteran clinics.

### **Achievements**

4. The grant has enabled the RNZRSA to continue the transformation of frontline support services. Achievements include:

- Increased interactions with veterans at clinic roadshows conducted in Nelson/Marlborough/Westland and Otago/ Southland districts.
- Nationwide Navigator training and outreach programme conducted in Auckland, Wellington, Wairarapa/Hawkes Bay/East Coast and Nelson/Marlborough/ Westland districts.
- Veteran Support Organisations (VSO) meeting held in Taupo to better network and workshop veteran support responses, initiatives and response.
- The Covid-19 response by Returned and Services Associations' (RSAs) and the support network over the February to March lockdown period.

## Looking forward

5. It is anticipated that the impact of military service, the continued disruptions caused by pandemics, natural disasters and climate induced National State of Emergencies will continue and grow demand for RNZRSA support services. Some of the factors driving this demand include:

- Increasing local RSA engagement improving veteran support services, including supporting NZDF.
- Increasing numbers of Scheme Two veterans seeking support and requiring advocacy with ACC support for routine service injuries.
- The complexity in veteran health issues and the need to engage complimentary treatments for veteran health related issues.
- The need to advocate for individual veterans and changes to veteran policy and legislation.
- Increases in operating costs relating to compliance, training, IT and equipment.
- The need to have paid support staff to deliver appropriate responses to veteran needs due to an increasingly complex environment and greater demands.
- Responding to the four prioritises identified in Te Arataki.

## Conclusion

6. The RNZRSA will continue to provide ongoing support and seek better outcomes for veterans. The grant has provided surety and enhanced our ability to continue developing veteran services envisaged by our founders.

*Yours sincerely*



M. Donoghue  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

## Annexes

- A. RNZRSA Support Services Engagement February 2022 – June 2022
- B. RNZRSA Support Adviser Activity 2022 – June 2022
- C. Analysis of Grant Expenditure February 2022 – June 2022

## RNZRSA Support Service Engagement March – June 2022

### Number of veterans supported

1. **593** people were directly engaged by RNZRSA Support Advisors between 01 March and 30 June 2022.

- **417** were ex or current serving NZ Army
- **54** were ex or current serving NZ Navy
- **45** were ex or current serving NZ Airforce
- **57** were dependents or family engaged in support related activities
- **5** were foreign veterans or family.
- **15** were not recorded as either veterans or as family

Army service is represented as high featuring due to a number of factors. Higher numbers of people being employed overall by the Army in comparison with the other services leads to higher representation of ex and current Army personnel over a prolonged period of support. This is further exacerbated from the type of work, exposures and culture within the army verses the other services, which is consistent with international findings from research into the effects of service on western military personnel. Overall ex and current army personnel will continue to have the highest client support needs within the veteran community in New Zealand within the foreseeable future.

2. The breakdown of referrals shows that the majority of recorded referring organisations for support services was local RSAs, which is likely reflective in the amount of scheme one veteran's being engaged.

- **248** were pro-active interactions by RNZRSA Support Services
- **204** were referred from the local RSAs
- **3** were directed from VANZ
- **11** from within the NZDF via the Base Hubs or from another internal NZDF sources
- **1** from the Police
- **3** were from other NGOs (Salvation Army and Vietnam Veterans Trust)
- **89** were self-referrals to support services either locally or at district level. This likely reflects the growing awareness from the veteran community about the RNZRSA ability to help support them
- **34** were from family, friends, colleagues or other people not listed

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

An example of how Support Services engagement improves veterans' circumstances is outlined below:

The Family of a veteran who died in service needed help to access and fund mental health treatment for one of the members of the family who had difficulty in dealing with the veteran's death. This was affecting their ability to get meaningful work and had led to negative interactions with the wider family unit. Funding for treatment was not available through normal means and they could not afford it themselves. The Senior Support Advisor RNZRSA managed to secure RSA funding for a specialist treatment programme and treatment provider that was hoped would improve the family member's mental health state and their overall situation.

The outcome of the treatment programme was that the family member had a vastly improved demeanour and mental state, which then led to an employment opportunity and reconnection with the wider family, making them a productive member of society again.

4. Acting as part of a response in situations where multiple government and/or NGOs are needed to be engaged to get the best possible health and wellness outcome for veterans. While the situations may be viewed not as mental health related, a significant number of issues dealt with by our support advisors' impact on veteran's mental health.

A RNZRSA advocate acted for an elderly New Zealand Veteran overseas who had to be managed by multiple agencies and organisation to ensure their safety, deal with immediate acute issues associated with their age and then look at some long term treatment and care options to deal with mental health conditions that had led to an emergency response. The advocate acted as one of a number of organisations involved, but due to their connectedness to the wider agency, veteran organisations and community in that country they helped secure funding and treatment for the veteran as part of the wider response. The outcome ensured that the veteran's ongoing wellbeing, physical and mental health was secured for the future.

5. Acting as advocates in relation to adversarial situations where specialist knowledge is required beyond what the veteran can bring or cope with.

A veteran needed help in accessing support for conditions they were suffering from. The veteran had not received support from government agencies and was not sure whether they were entitled to receive any treatment or funding at the time.

A Support Advisor was contacted and discovered that the veteran had a number of conditions that fit the criteria for government support due to it being able to be linked to service related conditions through use of the Statements of Principles (SoPs) in relation to those conditions the veteran suffered from. The Support Advisor then helped the veteran to fill out the forms and gather the evidence required to send to the agency for a decision to be made on treatment and compensation from suffering injuries related to service. However, after processing the application all conditions listed were turned down.

The Support Advisor then advocated for a review based on factors associated with the case and conditions in a submission to the agency. Due to the work of the Support Advisor the agency reviewing officer overturned the initial decision by the agency, which granted the veteran compensation and support to treat the conditions described in the form.

**RNZRSA Support Services Activity March – June 2022**

1. Hours of engagement that Support Advisors volunteers were performing their role is broken down into the following;
  - a. **764** volunteer hours were in based on individual interactions with clients on support matters. This includes visiting clients or stakeholders, giving advice, taking enquires 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 MSD, doctor, 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, Red Wolf, 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. **883** 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 to elderly or sick veterans and/or family or devoted to training of knowledge or understanding.
  - 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 families, usually by establishing a working relation 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 welfare support services. The government grant supports direct training in mental health awareness via the Mental Health First Responder Course run by Co-liberate due to the need of third-party expertise in this area to deliver training to support advisors and partners for better delver support to clients.
  - e. **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 professionalisation 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 network for follow up enquires to assist them directly.

- f. Total reported volunteer hours for the delivery of support is **2,097** hours. This is the equivalent of approx. 262 working days (8-hour day) over the 4 month period.
- g. Total distance travelled for the above activities is **11,674** kms by volunteer Support Advisors (SAs) 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, either at their residence or at a place of their choosing, encouraging interaction and thus the delivery of support outcomes.

### **Case Management and Skills Building**

- 2. Case management involves support cases beyond the capabilities of Local Support Advisors (LSA). This requires face to face interviewing, follow up conversations, research in to legislation and medical conditions, specialist interviews and correspondence and direct advocacy between parties involved. Case management is complex and time consuming.
- 3. The government grant supports this 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 in equal parts.
- 4. Total recorded national office ongoing case management for the year is **26**. There were **2** 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 **670** hours.
- 5. Training ensures competent support delivery to the veteran community and their families. It is the corner stone of the professionalisation of RNZRSA Support Services and plays a vital role in ensuring that the veteran community receives the best possible service related to delivery of effect on their health and wellbeing.
- 7. The Mental Health First Responder (MHFR) courses were disrupted by Covid (where course were to be run in Otago and Northland), with one course paid for to be run in the 2022-2023 year. The course is practical in its approach and modified to the ex-military learning style. It was well received by students, giving practical examples and role play to attendees in managing clients with mental health needs. This 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 for support advisors to assist the primary carers in managing mental health clients, giving some relief to the suffered as well as the families. This has led to a contract for more courses to be run into the next reporting year as part of the training framework for Support Advisors.
- 8. 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 facilitated a **Veteran Support Organisations (VSOs)** meeting and workshop on collaboration, support and future initiatives that was held in Taupo with SSAANZ, VCFSA, Te Kiwi Maia, Families of the Fallen, Onward Bar and Pilgrim Bandits represented. These bodies and the RNZRSA presence on them is to ensure that the veteran voice is heard within these forums as well as giving an understanding of government agency direction in relation to issues involving current and ex serving personnel and their families. This is imparted throughout the support services network 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 likeminded VSOs who have specialised services to help in all areas of support.

9. All support advisors and managers are mandated to complete the pre-requisites of the RSA Support Services Training frame work to be eligible to be recognised within the support network. 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 persons to be able to interact with vulnerable clients safely and in keeping with their client's rights.
10. The formal SA Induction course and associated clinics continues to be rolled-out. In the reporting period two districts had clinics and four had SA Induction courses run, with **26** people trained. All RNZRSA support advisors who complete the pre-requisite requirements are eligible to attend the SA Induction and MHFR course to increase overall skill levels of RNZRSA support volunteers and selected stakeholder veteran support organisations. This gives consistency of best practice across the RNZRSA support network where the client and advisor interaction most frequently occur, in keeping with the program of professionalisation of support delivery, as well as bring consistent body of practice to the wider veteran NGO community for those who engaged in practical support.



## Analysis of Grant Expenditure March – June 2022

Balance: 250,000k

All figures are GST exclusive

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> </ul> Activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public / Private Sector Engagement Plans.</li> <li>• NZDF Engagement Plan.</li> <li>• Internal Engagement.</li> <li>• Volunteer Training and Development.</li> <li>• District planning</li> <li>• Complex case management.</li> <li>• Complaints to health &amp; Disability Commissioner.</li> <li>• Submissions.</li> </ul>	\$66,269.30
Contractor - District Support Manager (Australia)	Salary. Mileage, travel, etc. included in DSM operating	\$10,384.65
		<b>SUB TOTAL: \$76,653.95</b>
<b>Support Network Operating:</b>		
Expense claims	<u>Includes:</u> <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</li> </ul>	28,282
		<b>SUB TOTAL: \$21,747.78</b>
<b>Training &amp; Development:</b>		
Mental Health Training	• 1 x Mental Health First Responder Course	\$4,411.90
District Support Road Show	• 2 x District Road show clinics • 4 x SA Induction Courses	\$14,384.68
		<b>SUB TOTAL: \$18,796.58</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		
01 March 2022 – 30 June 2022		<b>TOTAL: \$117,198.31</b>
01 July 2021 – 28 February 2022		<b>TOTAL: \$146,878.00</b>
<b>TOTAL GOVERNMENT GRANT EXPENDITURE 2021</b> Over spend of approx. \$14,000.00 absorbed by RNZRSA		<b>TOTAL: \$264,076.31</b>