



11 February 2021

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

Tēnā koe Minister

## **Expenditure Analysis - Government Grant July 2019 to June 2020**

### **Reference**

A. VA Letter - Conditional grant: Supporting veteran wellbeing 23 October 2019

### **Introduction**

1. As requested at Reference A, please find enclosed a report on the expenditure of the Minister's grant to the RNZRSA for FY 2019/20, highlighting the number of veterans supported by increasing knowledge, skills and access to or by delivering support direct to veterans.
2. The Minister has made the grant available to improve access to support for the veterans - in particular this grant supports the RNZRSA in its front-line work to develop support for veterans with PTSD and mental injury to help them lead a healthy and productive life.<sup>1</sup>

### **General**

3. The RNZRSA is a specialist body that understands the needs of Veterans and their families. We continue to serve in our unique role as a trusted and reliable organisation, working together with Veterans' Affairs New Zealand (VA), NZDF, other Government agencies and partner NGOs to address issues that impact Veterans. RNZRSA supports the Government's goals for our Veterans, providing direct support to and feedback from those we serve to inform decision-makers in the relevant sectors.

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<sup>1</sup> VA Letter 23 October 2019 - Conditional Grant: Supporting veteran wellbeing

Our support services strategy goal is to achieve the vision:

*“In 2020, people who are affected by their service will promptly seek RSA assistance, confident that they will receive world class, timely, relevant and professionally delivered support services according to their need that will contribute to the best possible health and wellbeing outcome for themselves and/or their families and their dependents.”*

4. Continued Government support has been a critical part of the ability of the National Office to develop an improved support network that delivers modern and responsive support services. Throughout the year sizeable sums of the money collected through the Poppy Day appeal are expended in the administration of the RNZRSA Support Services Network. This money is better spent on the direct support to our Veterans. The annual Government grant thus affords us the opportunity to ensure the maximum amount of donations are spent directly on providing support deliverables to Veterans.

5. The benefits of such a system are many. It provides RNZRSA with the resources to increase its influence and leadership of the provision of support across the organisation. It reduces the demand on the public health sector by covering gaps and/or complementing existing services. The grant also provides a vital and tangible means to recognise the value of our volunteers. It provides reimbursement for travel costs associated with the thousands of kilometres travelled and hours spent, in often demanding and stressful situations, to increase the quality of life, health and wellbeing of Veterans and their dependents.

### **Reflection and achievements**

6. The Covid lockdown has a significant impact on overall plans for the use of the government grant. A number of training courses and projects could not be run or completed due to the lockdown. The response required by the RSA to ensure the ex-service community was prepared and assisted during this time redirected much of the RNZRSA resource to managing the impact of the lockdown on vulnerable veterans and their families.

7. Despite Covid-19 the 2019/20 financial year saw a continuation in the transformation of RSA support services to develop and deliver better support to our eligible people. It is a multi-year journey and the Government grant has played a significant role in working towards this goal.

8. By ‘partnering for effect’ we have made particular progress in this area among post-1974 younger Veterans and serving NZDF personnel. This was especially important during the Covid lockdown period, where the majority of the RSA members fell into the vulnerable persons category, so engaging other veteran organisations to fill the gaps in support were crucial.

9. The use of technology to achieve efficiencies continues to develop with a new online activity recording and expense claim process being put into place at the end of 2020 financial year. This will give greater transparency and accurate statistics of the Support Services delivery of support to the veteran community.

10. While the RSA support network is still evolving at district and local levels, we have nevertheless continued to serve our people. Through formalising training expectations through the training framework, professionalisation of the support service workforce is improving, most notably by consistency of vision, practice and expectation. Most encouraging is the increase in younger generations of ex-service personnel taking on support work.

### **Looking forward**

11. It is anticipated that the outcomes achieved over FY 2019/20 and the disruption caused by Covid-19 will continue to drive demand for RNZRSA support services. Accordingly, the surety provided by the Government grant allows the RNZRSA to confidently continue with its professionalisation of support. Some of the factors driving this demand will include:

- a. Increasing local RSA engagement with the strategy and improving performance.
- b. Increasing integration of RSA support within NZDF.
- c. Increasing numbers of Scheme Two Veterans seeking support.
- d. Increasing numbers of people seeking ACC support for routine service injuries.
- e. The impact of Covid-19 domestically and internationally, economically and health related.
- f. The operational tempo of the NZDF.
- g. Rising complexity in Veteran health issues.
- h. Operating cost increases relating to compliance, specialist training and development, and equipment.
- i. The pool of volunteers is decreasing nationally and the average age of RSA volunteers is increasing

## Conclusion

12. The RNZRSA will continue to seek to provide ongoing and better support for our people. Advocacy within the public and private sectors will focus on reconnecting agencies into a distinct 'Veteran Sector', aimed at delivering better health and wellbeing and remembrance outcomes for those affected by their service. Consistency of the delivery of reference materials, training and professional development activities, combined with ongoing face-to-face engagement with RNZRSA, will continue to improve performance. It will continue to maintain and develop relationships with the public and private sectors, to enhance delivery of support aimed at delivering better health, wellbeing, advocacy and remembrance outcomes for those affected by military service.

19. Once again, on behalf of the RNZRSA and our Veteran community, I would like to thank you and your parliamentary colleagues for this grant. It has provided surety and enhanced our ability to actively work on improving support for our Veterans and their dependents.

*Yours sincerely*



B.J. Clark  
**NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

## Annexes

- A. RNZRSA Support Services Engagement FY 2019/20
- B. RNZRSA Support Adviser Activity FY 2019/20
- C. Analysis of Grant Expenditure FY 2017/20

## Executive Summary


4436 people assisted by Support Advisor


3450 family members engaged by support services


918 scheme one veterans assisted


75 scheme two veterans assisted

### Covid Response


 9930 phone calls during lockdown


 993 home delivers recorded


 South East Asian Veterans Association (SEAVA) + Soldiers Sailors and Airman Association of NZ (SSAANZ)  
Partnered with RSA for delivery of services.


 Volunteer base increased from 141 to over 300


### Support service delivery


 2735 hours visiting veterans.

 755 hours spent meeting other stakeholder organisation

 485 hours formal representation at events

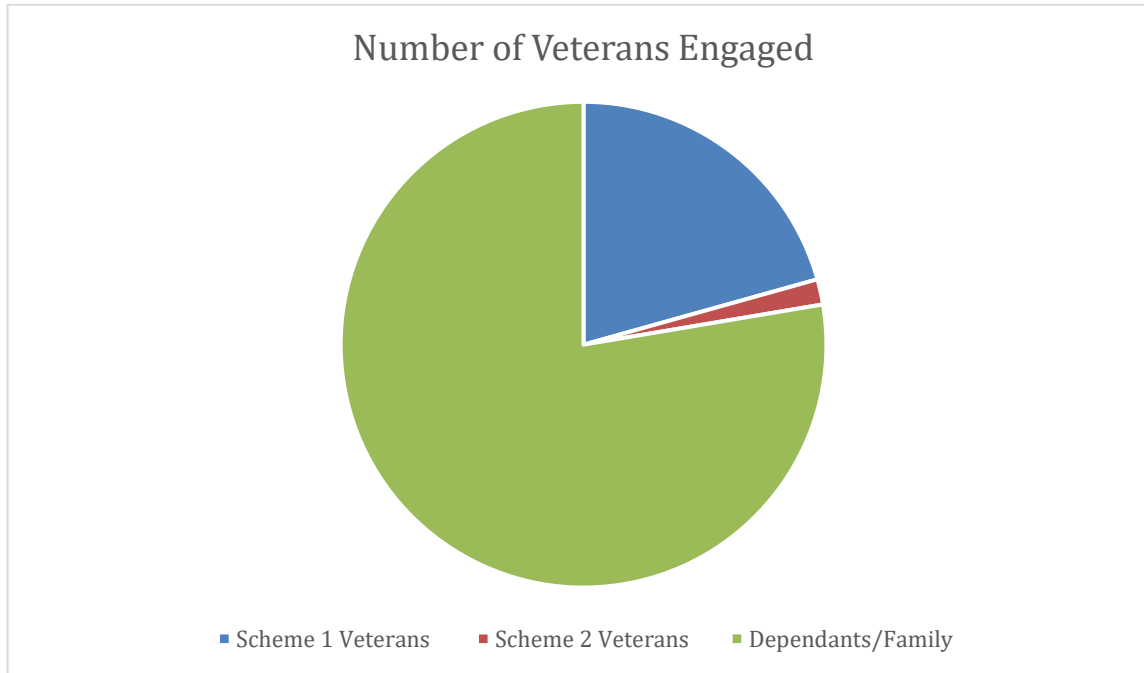
 91 hours spent on training

 5295 hours spend delivering support services.

 54,446 kms travelled by volunteers

## RNZRSA Support Service Engagement FY 2019/20

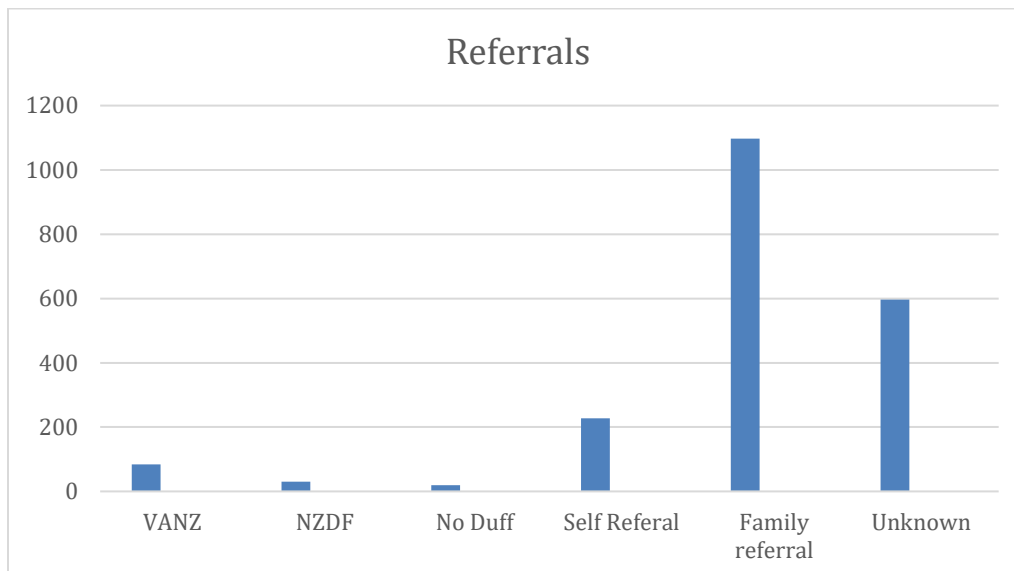
### Engagement with Veterans



**4436** people were directly engaged by RSA Support Advisors. **918** were designated scheme one and **75** were designated scheme two under the VSA14 legislation. The other **3450** were dependents, family or stakeholders engaged in support related activities.

### Referrals

The majority of recorded referring organisations for support services was local RSA referrals at **2382**, which is likely reflective in the amount of scheme one veteran's being engaged.



**84** were directed from VANZ and **30** from within the NZDF via the Base Hubs in Linton or Burnham or from another internal NZDF source.

Self-referrals to support services either locally or at district level was **227**, while **1097** were from other sources (family, friends, or other agencies not listed), which likely reflects the growing awareness from the ex and current service community about the RSAs ability to help support them.

**19** referrals came from No Duff directly to the DSMs or RNZRSA. **597** had no referring organization due to it being directly attributed to a Support Advisors own enquires or not being recorded.

### **Support Service Delivery**

In all cases the engagement by Support Services with ex and current service personnel and their families directly improved their circumstances. The government grant facilitates this engagement through RNZRSA Support Services. Support Services are delivered by financial support:

- to alleviate hardship,
- provide for medical assistance or procedure, and
- to allow access to education for vocational training that would otherwise be out of their reach.

### **Case Study – Provision of financial support**

**An acute case where an ex-service person suffering from Post Traumatic Stress needed immediate funding for accommodation, food and travel for them and their children to stabilize their immediate situation.**

- Without the funding they would have been homeless
- Without any income to sustain the necessities of life

The ability of the RNZRSA to give immediate financial support to an ex-service person and mental health support is in part due to the government fund. Through using the funds to employ full time support staff to deal with the issue that day. The acute situation was alleviated by the use of emergency Poppy funds, and a robust grant policy, stabilising the situation for the ex-service person this enabled a longer term plan to be put in place for the person to get them to a sustainable position and a contributing member of society.

### **Connection to Other Services**

The RNZRSA collaborates effectively with other government agencies or specialised NGOs to improve the circumstances of ex and current serving personnel in financial, mental, social or physical health areas.

## **Case Study – Collaboration**

Op Prison Assist has seen **19** ex service personnel engaged as part of a development support programme run between the Department of Corrections and the RNZRSA Support Services Operations Manager. The position of the RNZRSA Support Services Operations Manager is paid in part by the government fund. This was a pilot programme.

- Two people engaged with the RSA, who have now moved outside of the justice system, but remain in contact with their RSA Support Advisors. Two are on post sentencing conditions with ankle bracelets and are supported by RSA Support Advisors. One is awaiting sentence and has engaged RSA Support Services for ongoing support.
- Five ex service personnel are currently seeking support and are waiting for a RSA Support Advisor to be assigned and three have been identified but are still to be approached to see if they want to engage with the RSA. One recently released and has requested RSA Support and five have requested, but not taken up the offer of Support as yet. Three RSA Support Advisors who visited Ex-NZDF inmates had already received the formal induction package.
- Support activity with ex-service people has been in connecting family and engaging support for them; arranging Psychologist/Psychiatrist court reports; arranging counselling; advice on eligibility for Veterans' Affairs entitlements and how to apply; MSD support advice on release and acting as their advocates with Case Managers and Probation Officers.

## **Feedback on Support Advisor Induction training**

A Support Advisor who recently went through the induction process found the course very informative and provided them with sufficient knowledge on personal safety and privacy matters, reinforcing professional standards required of a Support Advisor.

All ex NZDF inmates who have engaged with a RSA Support Advisor have reported being appreciative of the help they have received, especially when under home detention. The development of the support programme has been instrumental in helping Veterans to make a clearer, positive step going forward.

## **Making A difference**

Background: Acting as the lead agency in acute and emergency situations where multiple government and/or NGOs are needed to be engaged to get the best possible health outcome for veterans.



## Case Study Covid 19 Lockdown

The RSA Covid-19 response was aimed at supporting the veteran community, as the majority of RSA members are vulnerable due to old age, existing health conditions or both. Veteran Affairs New Zealand requested RSA support for their clients who may have needed help to maintain isolation during lockdown Alert State 4. Essential service status was granted by MSD to RSA Support Services approved staff and volunteers. This workforce was used to deliver physical assistance to vulnerable veterans in isolation by providing delivery of goods and medicine.

Protocols and operating procedures were developed to assist and give knowledge to volunteers to be as effective and safe as possible, while collaborating with other agencies and entities.

- RSAs establish contact with their members to touch base with their vulnerable veterans for reassurance and to give early warning to the District Support Manager (DSM) of who needed particular assistance during lockdown.
- This contact established the circumstances and needs of veterans, which ranged from simple inquiries and referrals to other agencies or businesses, to RSA initiated delivery services and physical checkups for those veterans who need help in negotiating the lockdown restrictions.
- A social media site was established for critical communication to volunteers. Over 300 people engaged with this group.

### Results:

- A total recorded **9930** phone calls to members was completed by the RSA. This doesn't include regular calling to members during the lockdown period, so the total phone contacts will be higher in reality.
- A total of **993** home deliveries were recorded. This ranged from grocery shopping, picking up medicine or other goods, and home deliveries of meals for those in need. Due to the age of many of the volunteers that put them into the vulnerable bracket if they should be infected with Covid-19, stakeholder organisations were contacted to assist in the physical deliveries or checking of vulnerable veterans where required.
- The membership networks of South East Asian Veteran's association (SEAVA) and Soldier Sailor Airmen's Association of New Zealand (SSAANZ) identified other ex or current service personal volunteering to help. This effectively doubled the registered national volunteer support base from **141 to just over 300**. It was truly a combined veteran initiative, led by RNZRSA Support Services, that made sure that the whole veteran community got through lockdown.

## **Case Study – Long reach and Specialist Support**

Acting as their advocates in relation to adversarial situations where specialist knowledge is required beyond what the veteran can bring or cope with. An example of such a case involved an overseas veteran who had multiple mental and social health issues which was referred to RNZRSA Support Services from another NGO, who had been contacted about the case by associates of the veteran.

RNZRSA Support Services assessed the situation and brought in local volunteer contacts to support immediate needs of the veteran and secure accommodation for them via RSA funding. The best solution in consultation with the veteran was to bring them back to New Zealand where they could be linked into VANZ and other NZ agencies to stabilise and facilitate recovery to a self-sufficient lifestyle.

This required

- enquires with the veteran's family to assess if they were able to provide primary care and accommodation,
- engagement with DIA for emergency passport,
- activation of local RSA support in the region to bring the veteran back to and support the family,
- health specialists for ongoing health treatment and MSD assistance for initial financial support.

The situation took the RNZRSA staff member 9 consecutive days to resolve before the veteran was stabilised with their family with supports in place. The Government grant assisted in the delivery of the outcome by supporting a full-time employee that was crucial to be able to co-ordinate the stabilisation and return of the veteran.

## RNZRSA Support Services Activity FY 2019/20

Hours of engagement that Support Advisors volunteers were performing their role is broken down into the following;

- **2735** volunteer hours were in 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 RSA 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, 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.
- **755** volunteer hours were for meetings with stakeholder organisations. These are physical or teleconference/video linked meetings between organisations representatives related to Support Services activities. For example, establishing protocols between local ACC representative and the Support Advisors to better facilitate support for RSA clients. 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.
- **485** volunteer hours were as a formal representative of the RSA Support Services at an organised event e.g. being a guest speaker at a formal event such as a Grey Power meeting or as a recognized stakeholder at a charity event to raise awareness of Support Related issues. The need to raise awareness and funding for veterans or their families' better assists delivery of RSA support services locally and nationally as it de-stigmatises the needs of those suffering from health issues, raises funds and widens public understanding of the issues.
- **91** Volunteer hours was devoted to training delivery of knowledge or understanding, to organisations that enhance the delivery of welfare Support Advisor activities. Training includes presentations to organisations, groups and individuals representing and promoting the activities of the Support Advisor role. This includes induction training of new Support Advisors/Support Advisor assistants. Training received e.g. 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 due to the need of third party expertise in this area to deliver train to support advisors and partners to better deliver support to clients.

- **1227** 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 Advisor at the local RSA AGM). Continued internal messaging to local RSAs and stakeholders is essential to 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 in their need.
- Total reported volunteer hours for the delivery of support is **5295** hours (less travel). This is the equivalent of approx. 661 working days (8-hour day).
- **1475** hours were recorded for travel for the above activities, with 54,466 kms traveled 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, either at their residence or at a place of their choosing, encouraging interaction and thus the delivery of support outcomes.

## **Case Management**

Case management involves support cases beyond the capabilities of Local Support Advisors. This is specifically advocacy related cases generally with veterans in dispute with Veterans Affairs or ACC, where a review or appeal is required due to disagreement on the determination of circumstances of the veteran's eligibility to financial entitlements or benefits. This requires face to face interviewing, follow up conversations, research into legislation and medical conditions, specialist interviews and correspondence and then a review meeting or going to an appeal panel. Case management is complex and time consuming.

The government grant supports this by covering administration of a chief advocate and support advisor admin in pursuing a review or appeal, 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.

Total recorded national office ongoing case management for the year is 30. The stages of case management are broadly broken down into initial investigation, preparing for review, or preparing to appeal. The oldest case dates back to 2016. Time spent on ongoing cases is **1993** hours.

## **Skills Building**

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.

One MH101 course was run in the 2019/2020 year. 25 students attended, being a mix of NZDF Navy personnel, Veteran combined Forces Surfing Association (VCFSA), The Afghan Veterans Interpreters Association New Zealand (AVIANZ) and RSA Support Advisors. More courses were planned but the Covid-19 lockdown prevented those courses being run. This course is well received by students by giving confidence 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.

RSA Support staff attended, and continue to be invited to attend, the various military wellbeing expos held at various camps and facilities as well as the transition seminars. Both transition seminar presentations in the 2019/2020 year were well received according to the feedback given. The new NZDF transition coaches have been engaged by RNZRSA for future development opportunities. The presence of RSA presenters and attendees allows for engagement with NZDF personnel in a pro-active manner, imparting knowledge of support avenues, or in the case of transition seminars, understanding of the needs around preparing for a cultural change in working and social environment. This acts as a preventative initiative in terms of support where the individuals can pro-actively seek support or prepare themselves for the changes to occur, rather than struggle and need to be engaged once things have become dire.

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. This support initiatives for the veteran community to access appropriate support through collaboration with relevant agencies (e.g., NZDF) by ensuring that the veteran voice is heard within these forums by RSA representatives 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.

Work is completed on the RSA Support Services Training frame work that has formalised all Support Advisors and Managers pre-requisites. This requires them to understand and sign a code of ethics, Privacy ABC e-learning and to be police vetted, as part of the pre requirements of being part of RNZRSA Support Services. This requirement is ensuring that support advisors or managers are fit and proper persons to be able to interact with vulnerable clients safely and in keeping with the client's rights.

A formal induction course is near completion for general role out for all RSA support advisors who complete the pre-requisite requirements to increase overall skill levels of RSA support volunteers and for selected stakeholder veteran support organisations. This will give 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.

**Analysis of Grant Expenditure FY 2019/20**Balance: **250,000k**

All figures are GST exclusive

Activity	Remarks	Expenditure
<b>National Office Staff and District Support Manager (DSM) Operating</b>		
DSM Operating	9 x DSMs, all voluntary. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mileage.</li> <li>• Travel</li> <li>• Accommodation.</li> <li>• Meals.</li> </ul>	25,570
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>• Covid-19 response</li> <li>• Public / Private Sector Engagement Plans.</li> <li>• NZDF Engagement Plan.</li> <li>• Internal Engagement.</li> <li>• Advocacy.</li> <li>• Volunteer Training and Development.</li> <li>• District planning.</li> </ul>	121,839
Contractor - RNZRSA Advocate / Adviser	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex case management.</li> <li>• VA and ACC reviews and appeals.</li> <li>• Complaints to health &amp; Disability Commissioner.</li> <li>• Submissions.</li> </ul>	17,000
Contractor - District Support Manager (Australia)	Salary. Mileage, travel, etc included in DSM operating	30,000
		<b>TOTAL: 194,409</b>

<b>Local Support Adviser (LSA) 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> </ul>	29,086
		<b>TOTAL: 29,086</b>
<b>Meetings:</b>		
• Venue Hire		624
• Catering		265
• Minute Taker		2083
• Support Services Forum		2471
		<b>TOTAL: 5,443</b>
<b>Training &amp; Development:</b>		
Mental Health Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x Mental Health 101 Course @ 6,000</li> <li>• 2 x Social Health Organisation courses @ 5000</li> </ul>	16,000
		<b>TOTAL: 16,000</b>
<b>Consultants / Contractors:</b>		
Manual of Practice		2,000
		<b>TOTAL: 2,000</b>
<b>Projects:</b>		
• NZDF Engagement Plan	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-deployment Family Information Packs.</li> <li>• Transition 'Thank you' Packs.</li> <li>• Attendance of leadership and command courses / forums.</li> <li>• Assist NZDF Transition project.</li> <li>• Wellness expo attendance and material</li> </ul>	3,586
		<b>TOTAL: 3,586</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>250,524</b>

**Notes:**

- Covid-19 affected the ability of the RNZRSA Support Services to use all the Grant for initiatives it did have planned for the 2020, including further training courses in mental health and support service delivery.
- National Office Staff operating costs were raised this financial year to increase its capability to deliver direct support (by means of paid FTE).



- DSM and LSA Operating costs dropped on the previous FY. This is consistent with the impact of covid-19 on the ability to go out and conduct support activities and conservative management of resources nationally, as well as the increase in local RSAs meeting costs associated with support due to increase engagement with the support role of the RSA.
- Mental Health included one MH101 Mental First Aid course for 25 people and courses part funded by RNZRSA Support Services run by the Veteran Combined Forces Surfing Association (VCFSA) and Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen Association of New Zealand (SSAANZ) respectively to deliver social health support to scheme 2 veterans, with 20 and 16 attending the respective organisations courses.