



20 April 2022

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

## **RESULTS: GOVERNMENT GRANT JULY 2021 TO FEBRUARY 2022**

### **Reference**

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

1. The RNZRSA is a veterans' non-government organisation 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 RSA 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 RSA 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 RSA support network.
- Salary costs for RNZRSA staff and contractors.
- Mental health training.
- Veteran clinics.

## **Achievements**

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

- Increased interactions with veterans at clinic roadshows conducted in Westland, Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay, Gisborne, Taranaki and Manawatu-Wanganui districts.
- Nationwide Navigator training and outreach programme conducted in Canterbury, Wellington and Waikato districts.
- Contracted Mental Health First Response training in Auckland and Canterbury regions as a continuation of building the capacity of our support advisor network.
- The continuing improvement of support networks that enabled the RSA to mount an effective Covid-19 response.

## **Looking forward**

5. It is anticipated that the impact of military service and the continued disruptions caused by Covid-19 will maintain and grow the demand for RNZRSA support services. 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.
- Rising 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.

## **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 June 2021 - February 2022
- B. RNZRSA Support Adviser Activity June 2021 - February 2022
- C. Analysis of Grant Expenditure June 2021 - February 2022

## RNZRSA Support Service Engagement June 2021 - February 2022

### Number of veterans supported

1. **1,530** people were directly engaged by RSA Support Advisors.
  - **960** scheme one
  - **169** scheme two
  - **122** ex or current serving but unknown what scheme
  - **191** dependents or family engaged in support related activities
  - **26** foreign veterans or family.
  - **62** were not recorded as either veterans or as family

The scheme one and scheme two veterans were as designated under the Veteran Support Act 2014 legislation.

2. The breakdown of referrals shows that the majority of recorded referring organisations for support services was local RSA's, which is likely reflective in the amount of scheme one veteran's being engaged.
  - **621** were pro-active interactions by RSA Support Services
  - **430** were referred from the local RSAs
  - **45** were directed from VANZ
  - **24** from within the NZDF via the Base Hubs or from another internal NZDF sources
  - **11** from the department of corrections or DHB
  - **59** were from other NGOs or private organisations (Onward bar, St John's, Funeral homes, etc)
  - **255** were self-referrals to support services either locally or at district level. This likely reflects the growing awareness from the veteran community about the RSA's ability to help support them
  - **85** 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 veterans support. This enables the RSA 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 Support Services Manager (SSM) was contacted after hours reference a veteran who had been involved in an abusive domestic situation and was now found themselves with no accommodation or money for the night. The SSM got hold of the District Support Advisor (DSA) in the region to locate the veteran and assess the situation on the ground looking to secure them and find a solution to the immediate situation as well as gauge the long term need.

The DSA located the veteran, contacted the SSM and detailed that they had ascertained that the veteran had no family or friends in area for accommodation or support and that they hadn't had a meal that evening. The DSA bought them food at a local takeaway while engaging them to get a fuller picture of their circumstances, while the SSM organised emergency accommodation for them. The DSA found that there were deeper issues involved in the veteran's circumstances around mental health, addiction and employment. Emergency accommodation and meals was booked and paid for by the SSM to stabilise the immediate issue and the next day further case management was conducted to start to manage the longer term issues underlying the veteran's immediate situation.

A plan was then implemented to get the veteran to another region in New Zealand with family where they could heal, get counselling and maintain support. This was accomplished by getting them away from the domestic situation by moving their belongings out and storing them for travel to the new location; navigating travel, health and financial services to ensure that they had the ability to support themselves and heal; and engage with their employer to deal with employment based issues to give piece of mind the veteran. Their employer suspended them with pay while their future is determined and RSA is part of that process. The veteran has engaged with health services, including self-selecting to go on a dealing with addiction course, and is in a much better space.

The ability for the National Office of the RNZRSA to organize the support to the veteran is due in part to the government funding support staff to deal with the issue. The situation was alleviated by a mix of funding including the use of poppy money, stabilising the situation for the veteran and allowing for longer term plans to be put in place.

4. Acting as the lead agency in situations where multiple government and/or NGOs are needed to be engaged to get the best possible health 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 DSA acted as the advocate for a very elderly veteran who had dementia and needed to be placed in a care facility. This required the DSA to liaise with DHB staff, Social Worker, Residential Care facility and the veterans Whanau for the veteran to be able to understand the need for them to moved out of their home and into a residential facility, as well as ensure all the support was in place for a smooth transition. This was further complicated due to the Covid lock down being in place at the time.

The veteran was impacted significantly by having to move but with the DSA support in managing the complex situation between all parties via risk assessment, good and continuous communication and planning the veteran was moved and settled into their long term care accommodation.

The complex case management is part of the training framework that is funded by the government grant, which improves the capabilities of the Support Network in caring for and managing veterans acute and complex situations.

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 to find a new place to live after being evicted from their accommodation and engaged the RSA Support Services for help. Due to age and mental health issues the assigned Support Advisor acted as the advocate for the veteran as the veteran could not cope with the nature of the situation.

The support advisor needed to liaise directly with MSD and NGO social worker to ensure that the veteran retained financial support to move to the new location and to sustain them long term. The veterans living situation was challenging for mainstream government requirements to support with accommodation, so other arrangements had to be implemented by the RSA to maintain the quality of life for the veteran and to ensure their mental health needs was met.

The Support Advisor organised the move and the veteran retained their financial support, which has allowed them to retain a standard of living while they adjust to their new region and accommodation. It has also given piece of mind to the veteran improving their mental health outcomes as further support is put in place to address those issues.

**RNZRSA Support Services Activity June 2021 - February 2022**

1. Hours of engagement that Support Advisors volunteers were performing their role is broken down into the following;
  - a. **1,546** 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 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, 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. **1,647** volunteer hours were for group related events with stakeholder organisations, formal representative of the RSA Support Services at an organised event, 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 RSA 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 supportadvisors and partners for better delver support to clients.
  - e. **771** 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) 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

- f. 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.
- g. Total reported volunteer hours for the delivery of support is **3,964** hours (less travel). This is the equivalent of approx. 495.5 working days (8-hour day).
- h. Total distance travelled for the above activities is **49,049** 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, 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 **24**. There were **8** 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 **734** 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 but two courses were able to be run, with one in Auckland and the other in Canterbury. **24** students attended the courses, which was a primarily RSA Support Volunteers but included representatives from Pilgrim Bandits and the SAS Association. 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. 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. Despite the disruption by the requirements around the covid mandates a zoom facilitated transition seminar presentation on the 11 November 2021 was well received according to the feedback given. 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, and understanding of 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.
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. These 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.
10. All Support Advisor and Managers are mandated to do 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, Privacy ABC e-learning and to be police vetted. This requirement ensures 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.
11. The formal Support Advisors Induction course and associated clinics continues to be rolled-out in the reporting period. Due to the disruption of covid and the need to maintain the health of our volunteers some of the planed training and clinics has had to be cancelled and re-booked. In total five districts have had clinics and seven SA Induction courses have been run, with **64** people trained so far. All RSA support advisors who complete the pre-requisite requirements are eligible to attend the SA Induction and MHFR course to increase overall skill levels of RSA 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 in uniformed capacity to the wider veteran NGO community for those who engaged in practical support.



### Analysis of Grant Expenditure June 2021 - February 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>	51,806
Contractor - District Support Manager (Australia)	Salary. Mileage, travel, etc. included in DSM operating	20,000
		<b>SUB TOTAL: 71,806</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: 28,282</b>
<b>Training &amp; Development:</b>		
Mental Health Training	• 2 x Mental Health First Responder Course	12,000
District Support Road Show	• 5 x District Road show clinics • 7 x SA Induction Courses	34,790
		<b>SUB TOTAL: 46,790</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>TOTAL: 146,878</b>