



24 April 2020

Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project Business Case Development: Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Stakeholders, service providers, ex-service organisations (ESOs) and interested parties, this request for expressions of interest (EOI) seeks to obtain further information and commitments to support the development of a business case to establish and operate a proposed Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre (NVWC). The NVWC Project commenced in response to a Commonwealth Government funded program, through the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), to establish six veterans' wellbeing centres across Australia (see DVA VWC Program information below). The DVA VWC Program requires that one of the centres to be initially funded by the Program is located in Nowra, NSW. RSL NSW, as the leading ESO in NSW with a strong commitment to supporting veterans and their families, accepted an invitation from DVA to be the lead organisation for the NVWC Project. Nowra falls within the RSL NSW Central Southern District. RSL NSW has appointed the President of the RSL Central Southern District Council (CSDC) to be the project sponsor and project manager for the NVWC Project Design Phase, which is developing the business case.

After completing a series of workshops and individual discussions with a wide range of key stakeholders, including currently serving veterans', their families and ESO's, we have been able to identify the key service and facility requirements to help drive the future development of the Nowra VWC (refer Attachment A – Nowra VWC Essential and Desirable Criteria). We now need more detailed information and offers of commitment in order to complete the business case. We need to build a strong case for funding in accordance with the DVA VWC Program grant opportunity guidelines and program management framework. We are seeking pledges of support and indications of likely involvement from government (Commonwealth, State and local), non-government and community organisations, ESOs, and private practice and commercial contributors to services for veterans, access to which will be facilitated through the NVWC.

The DVA Veterans Wellbeing Centre Program

The Commonwealth Government, through DVA, is moving towards a *wellbeing model* that seeks to enable and empower veterans to achieve greater independence for themselves and their families. All current and former serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members (veterans) and their families should have convenient access to affordable, high quality, comprehensive wellbeing services. Access to wellbeing services provided in local communities will help veterans and their families live their best lives during and after their service to the Nation.

Currently there are many businesses, government agencies, ESOs and community organisations involved in providing key elements of support in fostering the wellbeing of veterans and their families. The **role** of the Veterans' Wellbeing Centres is to **facilitate, co-ordinate and enable integrated support** to local veterans and their families, while helping DVA to reach out with core services. It

provides an opportunity to leverage complementary service channels and **link support services together** to create streamlined access to them. The DVA VWC Program is providing \$30M in grant funding to help establish six Centres across Australia to be located in Adelaide, Darwin, Perth, Townsville, Wodonga, and Nowra. The Nowra VWC will form part of a national network of Veterans' Wellbeing Centres.

The NVWC Project is preparing a business case and related documentation to obtain DVA funding. The Project seeks to deliver against the vision and objectives of the DVA VWC Program while supporting RSL NSW's strategic direction to improve support for veterans and their families. The NVWC Project business case will articulate plans for the establishment, development, and sustainable operation over 10 years, of the NVWC. The DVA grant of \$5M for the NVWC is available until and to be expended by 30 June 2022.

Information Required for the Business Case

The business case will describe how the NVWC and the services coordinated and provided through it will respond to the needs and priorities of local veterans and their families. A clear link will be made between the characteristics of the local veteran community, priority needs identified in the recently completed NVWC Current State Analysis & Service Profile Report (an Executive Summary is available on the NVWC Project webpage), and how the mix of services and the delivery model will meet these needs. This may include detail on how the NVWC could impact on existing services in the area, such as increased demand.

Formal evidence of support for the NVWC from stakeholders, service providers and ESOs in the form of written letters of support, willingness to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding or other agreed arrangements, will be included in the business case. Responses to this EOI document will constitute evidence of support for and interest in being involved with the NVWC.

The NVWC is a community partnership project operating in a regional and rural context. We need to engage and harness all of the resources available to make this work well for our veterans. A collaborative and consultative environment has been created through NVWC Project workshops that will be essential to the ongoing effective operation of the Centre. Strong, enduring partnerships and commitment to working together to provide holistic services is necessary to ensure effective support to our veterans.

NVWC Operating Model

The NVWC will conduct its wellbeing approach as a four-step facilitation service model, with the veteran and the veteran's family at the centre:

1. **ENGAGE** – create a positive profile and awareness, build trust and confidence, connect.
2. **ASSESS** – wellbeing needs and priorities *with* veterans and their families at whatever stage of their life journey, encourage planning futures, build self-reliance and resilience.
3. **REFERRAL** – connect clients with the services and advice required, facilitate access, and coordinate crisis management.
4. **MONITOR** – maintain contact with clients and monitor wellbeing outcomes, be prepared to offer other referrals when necessary, welcome continued connection over time.

The NVWC veteran support services will be delivered in coordination and linkage with a full range of partner wellbeing service providers facilitated through both physical and virtual colocation of services as required. The intention of the NVWC is to provide access to a holistic approach to support and assistance with appropriate and relevant multidisciplinary care that strengthens individual wellbeing and community connectedness.

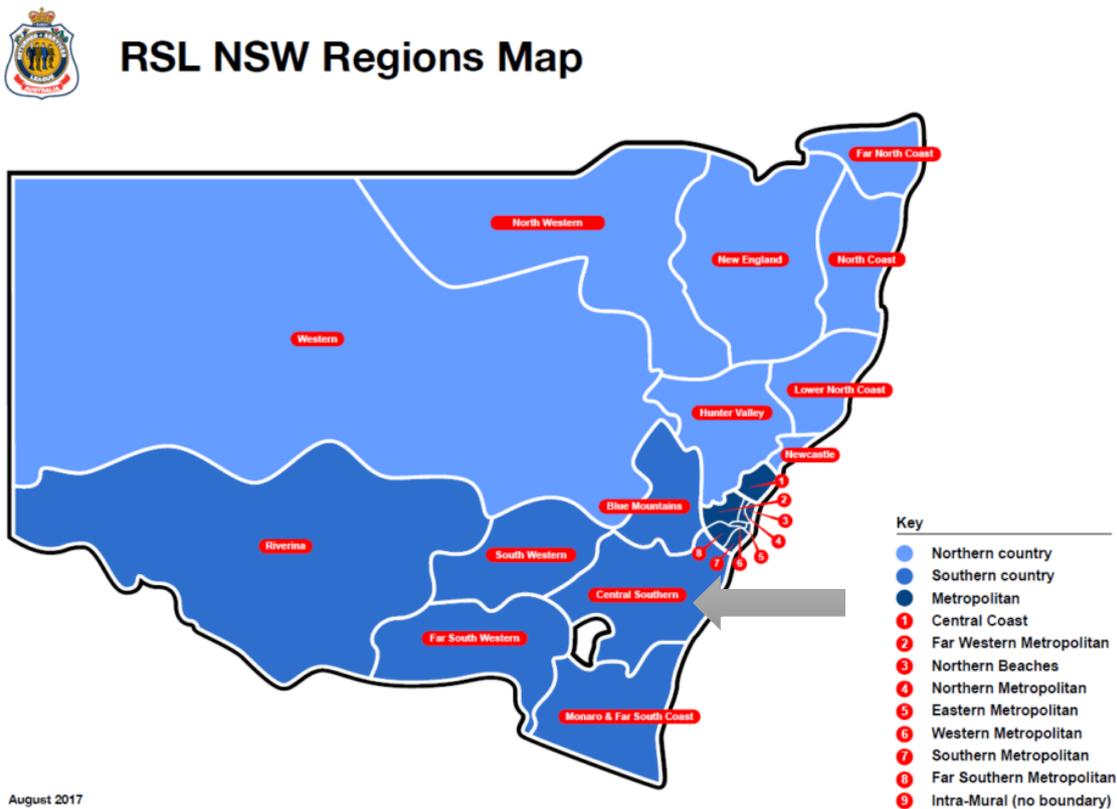
The NVWC will provide referral services to a range of health and other professionals and encourage the use of its facilities by allied health services and other wellbeing service providers. The facility is envisaged to operate as a hub for veteran support programs and activities but not provide onsite medical/clinical consulting rooms or facilities that require additional legal and regulatory compliance. Health services that can be provided from a Class 5 or Class 6 Building could be accommodated.

Linkages and referrals to specialist medical professionals and facilities are to be the mode of providing access to other health services.

Outreach

The proposed service delivery model must support the provision of outreach services to strengthen the operating infrastructure for supporting veterans and their families in the Shoalhaven, Illawarra and Southern Highlands areas, which broadly coincide with the RSL NSW Central Southern District (see RSL NSW Regions Map below). This rural-regional context comprises several small cities and a large number of towns, villages and hamlets in the surrounding landscape. The area to be serviced encompasses all or parts of ten local government areas including: City of Shoalhaven; Kiama; Shellharbour; City of Wollongong; Wingecarribee; Upper Lachlan; Goulburn Mulwaree; Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional; Wollondilly; and Yass Valley with a total population of approximately 635,000 people (data on the number of veterans who are no longer serving and live in the area is incomplete; there are more than 2000 serving ADF members plus their families living in the area).

Outreach services will operate on a planned basis, including opportunities for appointments with NVWC staff involving travel out to 'host facilities' with the requisite functionality (location, accessibility, technology) to provide greater access to support services to veterans and their families. Potentially, every Central Southern District RSL sub-Branch, and possibly some other ESOs, can act as agencies and provide access to local facilities to accommodate outreach visits. The Nowra VWC 'hub' facility will provide a focal point for veteran community programs and activities delivered by a range of service providers.



Contributing to the Service Profile

In order to meet service profile objectives, we need to demonstrate that the NVWC will engage and help facilitate access to services and support for veterans in all elements of the DVA wellbeing 'wheel', as outlined in the following diagram:



Source: DVA VWC Program

EOI respondents are requested to indicate which element or elements of wellbeing your involvement will contribute to in addressing the questions at Attachment B – Response Template. The wellbeing elements are:

1. Health,
2. Education and skills,
3. Housing,
4. Social support and connection,
5. Employment,
6. Income and finance, and
7. Recognition and respect (including justice and safety).

EOI Responses

For the Nowra VWC to be successfully established and operated, we request all organisations and agencies that can contribute and wish to be involved or be connected in some way, respond to this EOI. Supporting the wellbeing of our veterans and their families requires a coordinated and collaborative community approach. No matter how large or small your organisation, we look forward to your offers of commitment and likely contributions.

A Response Template (Attachment B) has been developed to assist organisations wishing to respond to this EOI. The structure of the response template includes the following areas:

1. Respondent Details – Provide an overview of your organisation;
2. Service Profile – Provide an understanding of the services you currently provide now and going forwards;
3. Priorities – Provide an understanding of your organisations ability to contribute to the priorities outlined in Attachment A - Nowra VWC Essential and Desirable Criteria; and
4. Budget – Provide an understanding of potential income, operating costs and capital costs.

Please see attached specific questions and information requests. Responses can be provided via the electronic template (Attachment B – Response Template (Electronic)), or for those organisations that would prefer, a PDF version is also available that can be completed manually (Attachment B – Response Template (Written PDF version)).

Organisations are requested to respond as fully as possible commensurate with their interest and potential contributions. For some this will mean providing responses to many parts of the attachment; for others this may mean responding to only a few questions appropriate to their circumstances. However, it is important to the successful progression of the Project, and the future effective operation of the Centre, that we gather all potential involvement.

Contributing to Priorities for Establishing and Operating the NVWC

Other information sought from respondents, as part of this EOI process, is needed to describe how government, non-government, community, private and business sector organisations, ESOs and partners will contribute to establishing and meeting the service profile, and implementing the operating model for the NVWC. EOI respondents are requested to indicate which components of the NVWC establishment, service profile and operating model your involvement will contribute to in addressing the questions in Attachment B - Response Template (Electronic or Written PDF version).

It is important when completing your response that you take into consideration your organisations ability to align with the essential and desirable requirements outlined in Attachment A – Nowra VWC Essential and Desirable Criteria that were identified and developed in collaboration with a range of key stakeholders groups.

Key components to consider that you may be able to contribute to in the new VWC include:

1. Staff and training;
2. Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) systems;
3. Operating model (including outreach);
4. Funding;
5. Site and facility;
6. Governance and strategy; and
7. Communications and marketing.

Contact and Submission Information

Responses to this EOI are requested to be provided by 22 May 2020. Extensions may be considered if an organisation's capacity to respond is impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

EOI responses are requested to be lodged electronically (preferred) with the NVWC Project: NowraVWCProject@rslnsw.org.au .

Manually completed responses (see Attachment B – Response Template (Written PDF version) and additional information not suitable for electronic transmission can be mailed to: NVWC Project, PO Box 369, Nowra NSW, 2541.

Further information about the NVWC Project and background Reports can be found at <https://www.nowrarslsb.org.au/nowra-veterans-wellbeing-centre/> .

For enquiries contact: NVWC Project Sponsor and Manager: Lee Corder 0427 333 034 or lccorder@gmail.com .

Thank you for your interest in and expressions of support for the Nowra VWC.

Sincerely,

Lee Corder AM

Project Sponsor and Project Manager Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre Project (Design Phase)
President RSL Central Southern District Council

Attachments:

1. Attachment A - Nowra VWC Essential and Desirable Criteria
2. Attachment B – Response Template (Electronic) or Attachment B – Response Template (Written PDF version)