



Veterans Review and  
Appeal Board Canada

Tribunal des anciens combattants  
(révision et appel) Canada

# 2015

# Program Evaluation Report

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board (the Board) was created by an Act of Parliament in 1995 to provide an independent avenue of appeal for disability benefits decisions made by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC).

This program evaluation was undertaken consistent with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) Policy on Evaluation and the Evaluation Guidebook for Small Agencies.

The evaluation found that:

- The Board's program continues to fulfill a need;
- The Board's program is aligned with ongoing Government priorities and federal roles and responsibilities;
- The Board's program provides an independent and fair appeal process for disability pensions, disability awards and War Veterans Allowance decisions made by VAC;
- The Board provides applicants with timely, respectful hearings and fair, plain language decisions;
- The Board's program costs are generally stable and compare to budgeted costs. The resources used to achieve outcomes are reasonable, and appropriate performance measurement is in place. The Board continues to look for ways to improve the efficiency and economy of its program delivery;
- The Board is generally appropriately resourced, although it may benefit from a redistribution of resources given its evolving workload and responsibilities. It generally has the competencies it needs to fulfill its mandate, but its small size presents challenges to building a depth of specialized expertise;
- The Board's move to adopt more technology will continue to have substantial implications for its program delivery, as will changes VAC is making to its adjudication processes, operations and benefits; and
- Members are generally pleased with the support provided to them by the Board's administration office in Charlottetown. They find hardware and software to be generally appropriate, and receive the information they need to make decisions.

The evaluation resulted in nine recommendations for improvement, to support the Board as it continues to fulfill its mandate for fairness and adapts to an evolving caseload and new ways of working.

## 2.0 Introduction and Background<sup>1</sup>

### About the Board

Created by an Act of Parliament in 1995, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board is the administrative tribunal that provides an independent avenue of appeal for disability benefits decisions made by VAC. The Board operates at arm's length from VAC to provide a fair and independent appeal process. Its work is governed by the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act* and the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Regulations*.

The Board ensures that Canada's Veterans receive the disability benefits to which they are entitled under the law. To do this, it offers two levels of redress for disability benefits decisions: a Review hearing; and, if the applicant remains dissatisfied, a subsequent Appeal hearing. The Board also provides the final level of redress for War Veterans Allowance decisions. As independent decision makers, Board Members are not bound by previous decisions and will change them to benefit Veterans if there is reason to do so.

Administrative tribunals like the Board are highly specialized in the kind of cases they hear, and give people who are dissatisfied with decisions an avenue of appeal which is less formal, less costly, and less time-consuming than the courts.

Important stakeholders in the program are Veterans' organizations, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and VAC.

### About the program evaluation

The TBS Policy on Evaluation requires that Deputy Heads of small agencies ensure that direct program spending and the administrative aspect of major statutory spending are evaluated as appropriate to the needs of the agency.

This program evaluation responds to these requirements. It will also help the Board identify opportunities to improve program delivery, and provide information for future decision making, resourcing, and Departmental Performance Reports.

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<sup>1</sup> A portion of the background context and five of the tables included in this report are taken from the Board's Annual Report 2013-14, and draft Annual Report 2014-15.

### **3.0 Scope and Objectives**

The scope and objectives of the program evaluation were established through discussions with the Board's management team. The depth of review was tied to what could be achieved within the Board's budget and a limited timeframe. Information gathering consisted of a review of existing documentation and interviews with key personnel and stakeholders.

As recommended by TBS, the evaluation assessed the following core areas identified in the Directive on Evaluation:

#### **Relevance**

- Continued Need for the Program
  - Assessment of the extent to which the Board continues to address a demonstrable need and is responsive to the needs of Canadians
- Alignment with Government Priorities
  - Assessment of the linkages between the Board's objectives and (i) federal government priorities and (ii) the Board's strategic outcomes
- Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities
  - Assessment of the role and responsibilities for the federal government in delivering the program

#### **Performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy)**

- Achievement of Expected Outcomes
  - Assessment of progress toward expected outcomes with reference to performance targets, program reach, and program design
- Demonstration of Efficiency and Economy
  - Assessment of resource utilization in relation to the production of outputs and progress toward expected outcomes

In addition to these core areas, questions in two specific areas were addressed during the evaluation:

### **Focussed Areas**

- Resourcing
  - Assessment of the appropriateness of the Board's current resourcing
- The Information Technology (IT) and Information Management (IM) infrastructure
  - Assessment of the appropriateness of the Board's IT/IM infrastructure, including IT hardware and software, in support of Board Members

The program evaluation was tailored to achieve maximum benefit from an appropriate investment given the small size of the Board, with an operating budget of under \$10 million and a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employee base of 95 in 2014-15. The evaluation team drew upon documentation of feedback from applicants and input from the Royal Canadian Legion and the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, who represent applicants at hearings. The program evaluation covered a period of ten years for the core and resourcing areas, and five years for the IT and IM areas.

## **4.0 Approach and Methodology**

The program evaluation was conducted through a combination of document review, interviews, research and analysis.

The following documents were reviewed:

- legislation and regulations;
- Departmental Performance Reports (DPR) and Reports on Plans and Priorities (RPP);
- Annual Reports;
- the Board's logic model;
- Speeches from the Throne and current Government priorities;
- reports from the Auditor General of Canada and the Veterans Ombudsman;
- a December 2012 study of the Board's activities by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA);
- feedback from the Board's Review Hearing Exit Survey;
- applicant complaints;
- program review documentation;
- organization charts, work descriptions, policies and procedures, management plans, and progress and performance reports; and
- the Board's Business Process Redesign documentation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A complete list of the documents consulted is included as Appendix A.

Interviews were conducted with:

- the Royal Canadian Legion;
- the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman;
- the Bureau of Pensions Advocates;
- 20 Board Members as well as the Chair and Deputy Chair, and 12 staff; and
- four forecasting and IT specialists from VAC.<sup>3</sup>

An analysis was conducted of program results and workload forecasting methods.

## 5.0 Findings

### 5.1 Relevance

#### 5.1.1 Continued Need for the Program

The documents reviewed and interviews conducted during the evaluation indicate the Board's program continues to fulfill a need.

#### The value of the Board

Under the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*, the Board has full and exclusive jurisdiction to hear, determine and deal with all applications for review and appeal which may be made to the Board under the *Pension Act*, the *Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act*, the *War Veterans Allowance Act* and other Acts of Parliament.

The program supports Canada's Veterans, CAF and RCMP members, and their families in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled for service-related disabilities. There is no time limit to appeal a VAC decision to the Board.

Review hearings are conducted by panels of two Board Members in 23 locations across the country. Here, Veterans have the opportunity to give oral testimony, present evidence and arguments, and bring witnesses in support of their case. This is their only opportunity in the disability benefits adjudication process to appear before decision-makers and tell their story in their own words.

Veterans have access to free legal counsel through the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA), and are reimbursed for their travel costs to attend their hearings. The Board's process is non-adversarial, which means no one is arguing against the Veteran or defending the VAC decision under review.

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<sup>3</sup> A complete list is included as Appendix B.

If a Veteran is dissatisfied with their Review decision, they can request an Appeal hearing which is the second and final level of redress. Appeal hearings are conducted primarily in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island by panels of three Board Members who did not hear the same case at Review. While the legislation does not permit oral testimony at this level, the Appeal hearing provides a further opportunity for a Veteran, through their representative, to submit new information and make arguments in support of their case. Appeal decisions are final and binding.

Last year, the Board heard and decided about 3,900 cases, ruling favourably in 49% of Reviews and 43% of Appeals to award new or increased disability benefits to almost 1,800 applicants. The continued volume of hearings and favourable decisions issued indicates an ongoing need for an independent avenue of appeal for disability benefits decisions made by VAC.

### **Outside observations on the Board's continued relevance**

The Board's continued relevance has also been observed by several important institutions. In March 2012, the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman published a [report](#) on Federal Court decisions pertaining to the Board, in which it stated the following:

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board has a critical role to play in ensuring that Veterans and other VAC clients receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled by determining whether the laws governing the disability benefits program have been properly applied by the Department at the adjudication level and by providing applicants the opportunity to present additional evidence in support of their application.

In December 2012, ACVA published a [report](#) on the Board stating that the committee "agrees with witnesses that [the Board] has an important role to play as an independent quasi-judicial tribunal."

### **Responsive to change and feedback**

The Board demonstrates its continued relevance by being responsive to the needs of Canadians.

The program continues to adapt to changes in legislation (e.g. the payment of pensions to still-serving military in 2004, and the introduction of the New Veterans Charter in 2006) and to emerging case types (e.g. exposure to Agent Orange, post-traumatic stress disorder).

The Board also acts on concerns which are identified in a variety of ways. For example, it reduced time frames and increased available information about the hearing process after conducting a National Applicant Satisfaction Survey in 2005. In 2013, the Board launched a Review Hearing Exit Survey to gather large-scale feedback on the hearing experience. The exit survey, which is ongoing, has allowed the Board to understand what it is doing well and what more it can do to give Veterans the very best hearing experience.

Veterans, other stakeholders, and parliamentarians have told the Board it is important for Members to have a good understanding of military and RCMP work and culture. The Board has implemented a merit-based selection process (through which Members are appointed by the Governor-in-Council) which gives preference to candidates with military, medical, policing or legal backgrounds, in recognition of the people served by the appeal process and the nature of the work.

As well, Board Members receive ongoing professional development which includes training given by military and RCMP members and focuses on cultural awareness as well as the physical and mental health risks associated with their work. In 2014-15, seven new Members were appointed to the Board, all of whom have military, medical, policing or legal backgrounds. In 2014-15, more than half of the Board's Members were CAF and RCMP Veterans or health care professionals.

The Board has also acted in a timely manner to address recommendations for improvement from parliamentarians and the Veterans Ombudsman. In a [follow-up](#) to his 2012 report, the Ombudsman expressed satisfaction with the Board's significant progress to ensure fairness in the redress process through the implementation of a decision-writing checklist to improve clarity and understandability of its decisions. In a 2014 [report](#), the Office of the Auditor General noted that the Board had contributed to improving the disability benefits adjudication by putting in place a process to inform VAC of reasons for overturning its decisions.

### **5.1.2 Alignment with Government Priorities**

The documents reviewed and interviews conducted during the evaluation indicate the Board's program is aligned with ongoing Government priorities.

The Board's program supports the Government's priority of strengthening Canada's sovereignty and place in the world.

The Board's program exists to provide two levels of independent redress for disability benefits decisions made by VAC, and the final level of appeal for War Veterans Allowance applications. The program has monetary impacts and other effects such as being a gateway to other benefits administered by the Department.

Section 2 of the *Pension Act* provides a statement about the obligation that must be fulfilled to Veterans and their dependants:

The provisions of this Act shall be liberally construed and interpreted to the end that the recognized obligation of the people and Government of Canada to provide compensation to those members of the forces who have been disabled or have died as a result of military service, and to their dependants, may be fulfilled.

Equivalent provisions are reflected in the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*, the *War Veterans Allowance Act*, and the *Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act*.

In 2011 and 2013, the Government expressed its continuing recognition and support for Veterans in the Speech from the Throne.

### **Income security and employment for Canadians**

All federal organizations receiving appropriations must plan and manage their operations, and report their performance against strategic outcomes that represent enduring benefits for Canadians. The Board's program has a direct alignment to the Economic Affairs spending area and the Income Security and Employment for Canadians outcome area because its decisions may result in an economic benefit to individuals.

The Board further contributes to the Government of Canada's economic outcome through the delivery of an appeal program which contributes to the independence, quality of life, social citizenship, and standard of living of Canada's Veterans, CAF members, and qualified civilians and their families, in recognition of their service to the nation.

### **The Board's strategic outcome**

In addition, the Board's objectives are linked to its strategic outcome (presented in its [Report on Plans and Priorities](#)) of an independent and fair appeal process for disability pension, disability award and War Veterans Allowance decisions made by VAC. This is confirmed annually through the Board's [Departmental Performance Report](#).

The Board's logic model, as required by TBS, serves as the program's road map. It includes all of the Board's activities, outputs and outcomes, and each outcome states an intended result. Based on the model, it is reasonable to expect the program's activities will lead to the program's outcomes. The causal linkages are reasonable, and all elements are clearly stated. The outcomes are measurable, and the activities and outcomes address a demonstrated need.

### **5.1.3 Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities**

The documents reviewed during the evaluation indicate the Board's program is aligned with federal roles and responsibilities.

The Veterans Affairs Portfolio exists to repay the nation's debt of gratitude toward those whose efforts have contributed to Canada's growth as a nation. This obligation is the source of the Board's mandate to ensure applicants receive the benefits to which they are entitled for service-related disabilities.

The *Department of Veterans Affairs Act*, Subparagraphs 4(a)(i) and (ii) require that the federal government provide for:

“ . . . the care, treatment or re-establishment in civil life of any person who served in the Canadian Forces or merchant navy or in the naval, army or air forces or merchant navies of Her Majesty, of any person who has otherwise engaged in pursuits relating to war, and of any other person designated . . . and the care of the dependents or survivors of any person referred to . . . ”.

Consistent with this requirement, the Board provides Veterans with an independent avenue of appeal for disability decisions made by VAC.

## **5.2 Performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy)**

### **5.2.1 Achievement of Expected Outcomes**

The Board’s program provides a fair and independent appeal process for disability pension, disability award and War Veterans Allowance decisions made by VAC. Applicants receive timely, respectful hearings and fair, plain language decisions. The vast majority of written decisions are issued within the service standard of six weeks following the hearing.

The Board’s program provides applicants who are dissatisfied with a VAC decision with every opportunity to obtain the benefits they are entitled to for a service-related disability. Of particular note:

- Applicants have access to free advice about redress and representation from organizations who are experts in the legislation. The Bureau of Pensions Advocates, a free legal service provided by the Government of Canada, represents most applicants at Board hearings. Service Officers from the Royal Canadian Legion also represent applicants.
- The Board’s process is non-adversarial, which means no one is arguing against the Veteran or defending the VAC decision under review.
- The Board’s process is open-ended. Applicants who are dissatisfied with their Appeal decision can apply to the Board for a reconsideration (i.e. a reopening of the case) if new, credible and relevant evidence comes to light at a later date, or if an error in fact or law is found in the Appeal decision.

The Board’s favourability rates indicate that it is effectively fulfilling its mandate of ensuring applicants receive the benefits to which they are entitled under the law.

### Favourability rates for the last five years

Fiscal Year	Review		Appeal	
	Decisions	% Favourable	Decisions	% Favourable
2014-15	2,729	49	1,039	43
2013-14	3,213	47	1,159	43
2012-13	3,236	51	928	34
2011-12	3,636	50	1,072	29
2010-11	3,539	50	974	33

Note: The Board's systems track applications received. An application may include rulings on more than one medical condition or type of service. When a Veteran receives an increased level of entitlement or assessment for one aspect of their application, the decision is counted as favourable.

If an applicant has exhausted all of their redress options at the Board and is still dissatisfied, they have the right to apply to the Federal Court of Canada for a judicial review of the decision. In 2012-13, the Board established a target of having less than 2% of its decisions overturned by the Federal Court. The actual percentage of decisions overturned in the past three years are 0.4% in 2012-13; 0.3% in 2013-14; and 0.2% in 2014-15.

### Federal Court decisions for the last five years

Fiscal Year	Number of FC decisions	Number that upheld the Board decision	Number of decisions returned to the Board for rehear
2014-15	6	4	2
2013-14	11	8	3
2012-13	10	6	4
2011-12	14	7	7
2010-11	13	4	9

The Board monitors the outcomes of applications for judicial review to ensure that any guidance given by the Courts is reflected in its decisions and operations. It reviews the decisions with Members and integrates this direction into training and decision making/writing.

#### **The Board's logic model**

The Board's program is fairly straightforward. The expected output in its logic model is "written decisions," of which 3,877 were issued in 2014-15. A review of program documentation and interviews with key stakeholders indicate the program continues to provide the immediate results identified in the logic model of "well-reasoned decisions on disability and compensation matters rendered fairly, timely (efficiently) and in accordance with the law, to give applicants the benefits they are entitled to."

The Board's intermediate result in its logic model is to provide an "opportunity to applicants to have their cases reviewed by an independent administrative tribunal," and its ultimate result is an "independent and fair appeal process for disability pension, disability award and War Veterans

Allowance decisions made by Veterans Affairs Canada.” The Board’s program supports both of these results.

### **Performance measurement**

The Board’s Performance Measurement Framework includes the expected result that “Applicants are provided with a fair appeal process.” This indicator is assessed by the Board through a review of a sampling of audio recordings of hearings and finalized decisions. These are evaluated using ten different qualitative criteria and given a rating on a 1-to-3 scale.

The performance target is a rating of “2” or higher, which indicates expectations have been met. This scale was developed in 2012-13, and piloted and validated in 2013-14. It will be reported on for the first time in the Board’s Departmental Performance Report in 2014-15.

The 2014-15 results were considered relevant to this program evaluation and so are included here. Approximately 6% of audio recordings of Review hearings and 7% of Review and Appeal decisions were reviewed against this target. On average, the hearing recordings and decisions assessed met expectations. In addition to using this information to monitor the organization’s performance, the Board also uses it to identify training needs and to assess Member performance.

### **Feedback from representative organizations**

The Bureau of Pensions Advocates and the Royal Canadian Legion were contacted as part of this program evaluation. Both organizations indicated that the Board operates with consistency and is generally providing an independent, respectful and fair process. The Bureau suggested that the Board could be more independent in the way it uses some of the Department’s tools, such as the Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines, where it perceives a tendency for Members to interpret them as rules rather than guidelines.

It is the Board’s position, however, that each case is evaluated on its own merits. The Department’s Entitlement Eligibility Guidelines and Table of Disabilities are an important part of the medical information Board Members use as reference tools in their decision making. Other tools include current peer-reviewed medical studies and journals.

Representatives noted that Board Members thanking Veterans for their service during the hearing was especially positive. They found decisions to be timely and generally clearly written, but voiced some concern about what they perceive to be a trend towards more legalistic and complex decisions. In response, the Board is continuing to make plain-language writing a priority.

Representatives also noted that the Board accurately captures and includes the evidence presented at a hearing in its decisions. This is very important because it gives Veterans the confidence that they have been heard.

## National Applicant Satisfaction Survey

In June 2005, more than 1,500 satisfaction surveys were sent to applicants who had received a decision from the Board; 1,000 applicants responded. The results showed that:

- 50% of applicants were satisfied and 10% were neutral about the overall appeal process;
- Respondents who had favourable decisions tended to rate every aspect of the hearing and decision more positively than those who had unfavourable decisions;
- Half of the applicants understood that the Board is an independent agency; seven out of ten believed the Board conducted an independent review;
- There was general agreement that Board decisions were easy to understand; and
- The majority of respondents agreed that:
  - they were treated with courtesy and respect;
  - the hearing started on time;
  - procedures were clearly explained;
  - the location was convenient;
  - they had the opportunity to add information and to explain their case;
  - they felt at ease; and
  - the Board Members were well prepared.

Respondents identified shortening the time it takes to appeal as their number one suggestion for improvement.

Although the survey is now 10 years old, it is important to reference it here because it gave the Board valuable information to focus its efforts on continuous improvements to the appeal program. For example:

- In 2007-08, the Board introduced changes and technology to case preparation and scheduling to better meet the demand for hearings from applicants across Canada. These improvements reduced the overall time frame for cases (from registered with the Board to finalized by VAC in its payment section) by 21 days at Review and 49 days at Appeal.
- In May 2012, the Board established a team of Members and staff to review the components and language of decisions. The goal was to provide quality decisions which present information logically and accurately; address evidence and arguments; and express the reasons for the conclusion clearly and plainly. The team developed and piloted a decision-writing checklist which was implemented for Members and staff in October 2012 as part of a continued focus on decision writing. These efforts yielded concrete results: at informal feedback sessions coordinated by the Royal Canadian Legion in May 2013, military members and Veterans reported that the Board's decisions were clearer and easier to read.
- The Board also made further improvements to the hearing process to address ACVA's 2012 recommendation that it review its processes to ensure the independence of Members and their decision-making. It carried out a detailed review of its quality management and

legal services functions, and ensured Members and staff understood their roles and responsibilities.

### **Review Hearing Exit Survey**

In April 2013, the Board launched a Review Hearing Exit Survey to gather large-scale feedback from applicants on the hearing experience. The intent of the exit survey was to ensure the Board was fulfilling its commitment to provide applicants with respectful hearings and to determine if there were ways the Board could continue to improve the experience.

In 2014-15, approximately half of all applicants who had a Review hearing completed the survey, with the vast majority of applicants providing positive feedback:

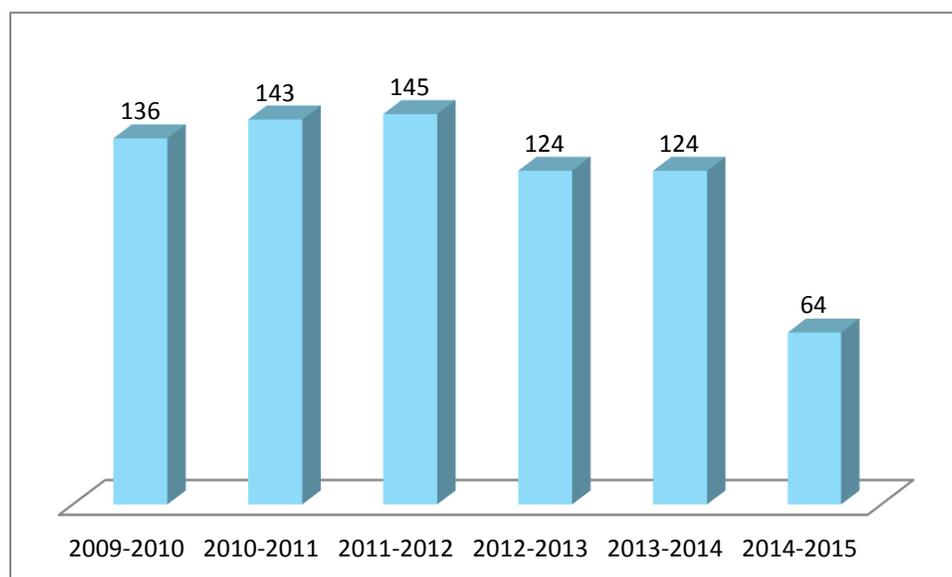
- 95% of respondents agreed that Board Members treated them with respect;
- 88% agreed the hearing was conducted in a fair manner;
- 93% agreed that Board Members listened to what they had to say; and
- 91% agreed that Board Members made efforts to put them at ease.

In addition to monitoring the results of the exit survey, the Board convenes regular meetings with the Royal Canadian Legion, the Bureau of Pensions Advocates and VAC to discuss operational, policy and client service issues.

### **Further feedback from Veterans**

The Board also monitors the number and nature of cases received by the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman (OVO) as an indicator of its achievement of expected outcomes. The charts below show a continued reduction in cases related to the Board over the past three years.

**Number of cases related to the Board received by the OVO by fiscal year**



## OVO cases per year dealing with the Board, broken down by issue type

Year	Enquiries	Service Delivery	Decision Outcome	Total
2009-2010	1	33	102	136
2010-2011	9	29	105	143
2011-2012	8	41	96	145
2012-2013	17	26	81	124
2013-2014	14	40	70	124
2014-2015	9	20	35	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>736</b>

**Enquiries** are requests for information.

**Service Delivery** includes the following: Turnaround Time, Process, Application, and Communication.

**Decision Outcome** indicates that a client was unhappy with their decision.

The 64 cases received by the Ombudsman in 2014-15 represent approximately 1.6% of the Board's decisions for that year.

The Board also has its own complaints process, which was initiated in October 2006 to encourage applicants to flag their concerns for formal resolution. Since its inception, the Board has received and addressed 63 complaints (which represents approximately 0.13% of applicants who have had a hearing with the Board).

### Reasons for awards

To help improve disability benefits adjudication as a whole, the Board recently began tracking the reasons for awarding benefits in its decisions. This initiative stemmed from an ACVA recommendation that VAC review its internal processes and policies to reduce the number of decisions overturned later by the Board. In November 2013, the Board developed a process to capture the reasons for awards at Review – including those it felt could have been granted at the previous level. This information is now provided regularly to VAC to help it improve the initial adjudication process.

As an extension of this initiative, the Board also captured reasons for awards at Appeal for a six-month period in 2014. The information gathered indicated that most favourable Appeal decisions were due to new information which was not available at Review. However, the Board also found that some (16%) of the favourable rulings could have been made at the previous (Review) level.

### Favourable decisions

In assessing the achievement of expected outcomes and the value of the Board's program, it is helpful to observe that in 2014-15, 49% of Veterans appearing at a Review hearing benefited from a favourable ruling, as a result of the opportunity to appear before decision makers and provide oral testimony along with new evidence and arguments in support of their case. Another 43% of Veterans received a favourable decision at Appeal, benefiting from the opportunity to

present new evidence in support of their case, and/or to have further consideration. This represents almost 1,800 applicants.

### **Timeliness**

Timeliness is a priority for the Board, whose process includes pockets of shared time with the Veteran and their representative. To begin the review/appeal process, a Veteran who is dissatisfied with a decision on disability benefits will contact a representative organization for advice on redress options and on obtaining additional information to support their case. When they are ready to proceed with a Review or Appeal, the representative registers the case with the Board. From the time an application is registered with the Board until the hearing is held, some of the preparation time is shared with the representative and Veteran, and therefore not within the Board’s control. Setting a hearing date is a shared responsibility, as it depends upon the readiness and availability of the applicant, the representative and Board Members.

The Board takes into account these pockets of shared time to establish a realistic and attainable service standard for the part of the process it can control, which is the time between the hearing and the decision. The standard is to issue written decisions within six weeks of the hearing, to ensure decisions are clear and well-reasoned.

The Board has demonstrated its commitment to timeliness by meeting its service standard for the vast majority of cases. The table below shows the percentage of cases which met the service standard in the past five years:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Appeal</b>
2014-15	79%	84%
2013-14	84%	85%
2012-13	87%	89%
2011-12	82%	86%
2010-11	85%	88%

In 2013, the Board established an additional service commitment: to issue its decisions within 16 weeks of the hearing being scheduled. The table below shows the Board’s performance since then:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Review</b>	<b>Appeal</b>
2014-15	95%	96%
2013-14	97%	98%
2012-13	-	-
2011-12	-	-
2010-11	-	-

## 5.2.2. Demonstration of Efficiency and Economy

The Board's program costs are generally stable and compare to budgeted costs. The resources used to achieve outcomes are reasonable, and appropriate performance measurement is in place. The Board continues to undertake activities to improve its efficiency and economy.

The Board is highly specialized in the kind of cases it hears, and gives dissatisfied people an avenue of appeal that is less formal, less costly and less time-consuming than the courts. It makes decisions in a timely manner, drawing on the expertise and experience of its Members. While the principles of fairness and natural justice are the foundation for decisions, the importance of an efficient and expeditious application of the law continues to be a critical factor in program delivery.

### Cost per hearing/case

A review of the Board's operations and funding levels completed in 2003 by an independent contractor concluded that its program met efficiency criteria. Moreover, its cost per hearing was only a quarter of the cost identified for the Workers Compensation Board of PEI, and less than half of the cost for two similar federal organizations. In 2005, the Board determined that approximately 92% of its expenses were spent on client service delivery and 8% on corporate support.

The Board continues to benefit from the economies of scale gained through its Memorandum of Understanding with VAC for internal services (such as human resources, finance, security, and IT), though these services have been reduced over the past years.

As a general indicator of efficiency, the evaluation team looked at how the cost per case has changed over the years. For a measure, it used the actual spending reported by the Board in its Departmental Performance Reports divided by the number of decisions finalized each year. Costs have increased by 25% from \$2,242 per case in 2005-06 to an estimated cost of \$2,808 in 2014-15.

This increase is largely linked to inflation. Since 2005-06, salaries (which constitute 85% of the Board's budget) have increased by 23% while inflation was calculated at only 18%<sup>4</sup>. Additional amounts above inflation are judged to be a reasonable reflection of:

- the increasing complexity of cases coming to the Board;
- the Board's increased responsibilities as a result of its inclusion in Schedule I.1 of the *Financial Administration Act* in 2009; and
- the devolution of certain costs and responsibilities from VAC to the Board.

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<sup>4</sup> The Bank of Canada Consumer Price Index was used as a proxy for operations and maintenance cost.

## **Efficiency indicator**

As noted earlier, the Board has taken steps to improve the efficiency of its program by introducing technology and changes to case preparation and scheduling practices. It continues to look for ways to better meet the needs of applicants.

The Board recently established a new efficiency indicator to identify and define a ratio to measure the cost per unit of work. This indicator will become part of its Performance Measurement Framework.

The indicator includes all actual operational salary costs, including overtime, associated with preparing and processing case files. This is being captured for the units which have direct contact with cases, including all staff in the Operations, Scheduling, Adjudicative Assistants and Quality Management units, as well as claims processing specialists in the IT Unit. Members' salaries were excluded as the Board has no control over the number or timing of appointments. These costs are divided by the total number of decisions issued, to obtain the average proxy salary costs per decision.

In adopting this approach, the Board now has a meaningful indication of the efficiency of its program. The cost information can be monitored on an ongoing basis and used to identify trends. Over the past four years, the proxy costs have been \$544 in 2011-12; \$678 in 2012-13; \$620 in 2013-14; and \$650 in 2014-15.

## **Member Selection Process**

The Board has also taken steps to establish and improve its merit-based process through which interested Canadians can apply for appointment consideration. In a [2009 report](#) to the House of Commons, the Auditor General of Canada recognized the Board for publishing its Member selection criteria and process on its website. In 2013-14, the Board made the process even more efficient by replacing the paper-based exam with an online exam for easier access for candidates.

## **Travel costs**

The Board has worked hard to responsibly manage the travel costs for holding hearings for Veterans in more than 20 locations across the country, which represent a significant portion of its base costs. Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, it reduced travel costs by more than a quarter – 28%. While some of this significant savings related to a decrease in hearings, the major benefit came from the adjustments the Board made to its travel policy and approach to scheduling Members for hearings. The Board continues to look for opportunities to reduce travel costs without affecting service to Veterans.

The Board's administrative processes are centralized at its office in Charlottetown, which houses its entire operational staff as well as about half of its Members who primarily conduct Appeal hearings. The other half of Members are based in cities across Canada and primarily conduct Review hearings.

In 2014-15, the Members located in cities across Canada each heard on average 326 cases and wrote 156 decisions. Given the caseload and travel required, efficient scheduling is necessary to achieve timely hearings. The Board establishes an annual hearing calendar to let applicants and representatives know where and when Members are available to hear cases. In planning the hearing calendar, the Board takes into account the volumes and locations of cases from previous years, and solicits input from the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (which represents the vast majority of applicants before the Board) and the Royal Canadian Legion. Cooperation among the three organizations is an important factor in being able to hear applicants' cases quickly.

### **Using videoconferencing for hearings**

Telecommunications technology is widely used by courts and administrative tribunals in Canada. Among other things, it allows them to provide a fair hearing at the earliest opportunity. Hearing participants are considered to be present, and the evidence is assessed in the same way as when everyone is in the same room.

At the Board, Veterans now have the option of having a Review hearing by videoconference (meaning one or both of the Members participate by videoconference). This technology allows the Board to hear cases more quickly, especially in locations where the demand for hearings is low. In August 2012, the Board conducted a pilot to offer an increased number of Review hearings by videoconference. As part of the pilot, the Board conducted a telephone exit survey which indicated that applicants were generally positive about their videoconference hearing.

Although videoconference hearings have been generally well received by applicants, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Bureau of Pensions Advocates, and some Board Members have voiced reservations. In particular, a common sentiment is that while videoconferencing is a valuable option in certain circumstances, it is not as beneficial as a face-to-face hearing.

### **Business Process Redesign**

For the last several years, the Board has been streamlining processes, eliminating duplication of work, and improving the quality of the program through a Business Process Redesign initiative. The goals for the Business Process Redesign were to:

- adopt efficient processes;
- identify operational cost savings;
- clearly define roles and accountabilities; and
- improve timeliness for applicants.

The Business Process Redesign team identified several areas to be simplified and generated a number of ideas and solutions. This work has resulted in concrete improvements for applicants, staff, and the organization as a whole. For example, the redesign team updated and clarified hearing adjournment procedures which had been causing unnecessary delays in some cases, and also made substantial improvements to the way in which documentation packages are prepared for hearings.

## **Strategic planning and performance measurement**

The Board has a strategic action plan to help it assess whether its use of resources is achieving outputs and expected outcomes. This plan is based on its Program Activity Architecture and provides the Board with a Performance Measurement Framework. On a quarterly basis, the Board measures its performance against identified targets and communicates results to managers. The Board also has a multi-year plan for human resources, and an annual risk management plan.

The Board's governance structure is its Senior Management Committee, consisting of the Chair, Deputy Chair, Director General, and Director of Legal Services. The Committee identifies priorities and considers strategies to improve performance.

The Board's Performance Management Framework includes the strategic outcome, program title, and Program Activity Architecture elements that are directly linked to the program activity. It includes the program's output, data source, target and date to achieve the target. Based on the Board's logic model, this framework reflects the indicators required to monitor and gauge the program's performance and to support program managers in making decisions. The Board's TBS analyst has recommended that the framework's quality could be improved by further describing the data source and identifying specific reports within corporate statistics. The Board intends to implement this recommendation when it next updates its framework.

Operational performance measurement is highly valued within the Board, and is used to monitor workload and production. The foundation for operations is a weekly Statistics Report which provides information on intake, processing, production and decision preparation. Feedback received through the Review Hearing Exit Survey and the complaints process is monitored regularly for recurrent and individual issues. A Quarterly Report is also provided to all Members and staff, which provides an update on the Board's activities including workload statistics and forecasting.

### **5.3 Resourcing**

The Board is generally appropriately resourced, although it may benefit from a redistribution of resources given its evolving workload and responsibilities. Workload forecasts have fluctuated in accuracy, which is not unexpected given the changing environment in which the Board has been working. The Board generally has the competencies it needs to fulfill its mandate, but its small size presents challenges to building a depth of specialized expertise, and operations can be under considerable risk whenever a key person leaves. The Board's move to adopt more technology will continue to have substantial implications for its program delivery, as will changes VAC is making to its adjudication processes, operations and benefits.

The Board was established in 1995 as the result of a realignment of adjudicative functions within the Veterans Affairs Portfolio. The Canadian Pension Commission (CPC) and the Veterans Appeal Board (VAB) were abolished; VAC was given the responsibility for the first level of

adjudication of disability benefits from the CPC, and the Board assumed responsibility for the first level of appeal and final level of appeal from the CPC and the VAB, respectively.

Since the Board's creation, the organizational structure and resourcing of its operations have been effective in supporting program delivery. While the number of resources has remained fairly stable over time, the workload has changed considerably: the Board receives fewer files, but a greater proportion of those files are more complex than in the past, and it has substantially more corporate responsibilities. The program evaluation concluded there could be a redistribution of resources across the Board's operations, with some areas needing more resources and other areas fewer.

## **Members and staff**

The Board has up to 25 full-time Members (including the Chair and Deputy Chair) who are appointed by the Governor-in-Council, and employs approximately 95 FTE employees to support the delivery of its program.

The Board's initial budget was established on the premise it would not carry out or pay for corporate services (administration; finance; human resources; planning; reporting; Access to Information and Privacy; information management; accommodations; and information technology), which would be provided at no charge by VAC. However, this has changed significantly over the years, resulting in the Board absorbing major expenses without receiving any additional funds.

For example, when the Board was first established, it received free support to its hearings outside of Charlottetown from VAC through a service agreement. This included: hearing rooms in district offices; the greeting of Veterans on their arrival for a hearing; the set-up of hearing rooms; the delivery of hearing dockets to Members; and a staff person to conduct the oaths and operate the recording equipment during the sessions.

In 2004 – in a time of constrained resources – VAC reduced this support. The Board became responsible for contracting with and paying for support services from the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires.

In addition, the Board was added to Schedule I.1 of the *Financial Administration Act* in September 2009 through an Order-in-Council, which established it as a separate organization within the Veterans Affairs Portfolio. It did not receive any additional resources to deal with the extensive reporting and accountability measures related to this change. The Board, like other small agencies and departments, has been challenged to meet the commitments required by reports and plans such as:

- Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP), Departmental Performance Report (DPR), and Performance Measurement Framework;
- Investment Plan, Multiculturalism Plan, Official Languages Plan, and Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan;

- Access to Information and Privacy Report, Multiculturalism Report, and Departmental Staffing and Accountability Report;
- Government of Canada Greening Initiative Plan, Public Service Employee Survey Plan, and Departmental Security Plan; and
- Office of the Auditor General audits, among other requirements.

As a result, the Board has had to do more work with the same staff and reallocate resources.

### **Using surplus funds**

The Board is also challenged to cover its needs with the current distribution between salary and operations and maintenance (O&M). Historically, O&M funding levels have been insufficient, and the Board has only been able to fulfill its mandate by using surplus funds from the salary allotment to cover O&M shortfalls. This flexibility is entirely dependent upon appointments, which is outside the Board's control.

While the Board outlines its financial situation and its need for Member appointments annually, it does not control the number or timing of them. Because the Board must plan for a full complement of Members each fiscal year, it is difficult to plan for lapses when appointments are delayed or for additional expenditures when new Members are appointed before other Members leave; as well, there may or may not be relocation expenses associated with new appointments. Given the Board's small size, the departure or hiring of several Members in one quarter can have a significant impact on expenditures.

In December 2013, an amendment to the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act* reduced the maximum number of permanent Board Members from 29 to 25; this brought the legislation in line with the Board's actual hearing requirements which have reduced over the years. The consequential reduction of \$647,000 in salary and benefits in the Board's budget, however, has significantly reduced its flexibility in transferring funds to address O&M shortfalls.

### **Increasing costs**

The Board has continued to absorb considerable inflationary increases in costs for travel, accommodations, and supplies. Base costs (human resources, transportation, courier, rentals, and telecommunications) represent 95% of the Board's overall budget.

The introduction of a new Member Selection Process in 2005 has also resulted in additional cost and effort. The Board has had to assign staff and financial resources to support new performance indicators, and a comprehensive professional development and performance feedback process for Members.

The Board's need for specialized services has also changed over the years. For example, it established its first communications position and budget in 2007 – adding a second position in 2011 – to support its strategic priority and expand its online presence and outreach to meet increasing requests from the media, parliamentarians and stakeholders.

The Board has also experienced an increase in the number of issues requiring legal expertise as a result of:

- Federal Court decisions;
- the requirement for the Board to establish its own capacity to respond to Access to Information and Privacy requests; and
- more applicants who know and exercise their legal rights.

This has increased the need for Members and staff to receive training from the Board's Legal Unit, and has required a reallocation of resources within the Board.

The establishment of the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman in 2008 also required a reallocation of resources for the Board to respond to reports, recommendations and requests for information.

### **Technology costs**

The Board has had to respond to numerous systems changes and related costs over the past several years.

Its information technology infrastructure (i.e. network) is provided and supported by Shared Services Canada through VAC, without charge to the Board. As a separate organization, the Board has its own file server and stores its information separately from the Department. Although it is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of its IT equipment, it does not have full control over this investment as VAC sets the standards for equipment and software used on the network. The Board is required to purchase any software licenses outside the corporate suite of applications provided by VAC, and pays for any focussed programming.

For example, when the Board introduced Blackberries to support its work, it had to absorb all user costs as well as annual maintenance fees charged by VAC. The introduction of its website in 2000 has also resulted in maintenance and enhancement costs.

In addition, the Board has had to invest human and financial resources into new tools to support its operations, including the development of a Wiki, for improved information sharing. The Board's staff undertook the development of the Wiki, and VAC charges the Board annually for Wiki infrastructure.

The Board must also incur additional costs related to upgrading the software which supports its operations, as follows:

- In 2014-15, it was required to upgrade its Privasoft software for processing ATIP inquiries at the request of TBS;
- In the current year, it must complete a migration to Microsoft Windows 7, undertake changes to the Board's interface with VAC's Client Service Delivery Network, and undertake considerable work to upgrade/expand the Board's Scheduling Application; and
- In 2016, it must prepare its web content for the migration to the new Government of Canada website.

## Forecasting workload

To manage its resources effectively, the Board will need to carefully manage its budget as well as forecast the incoming number of applications. The best indicators of how many applications the Board is likely to receive in a given year are the annual volumes of VAC's disability benefit decisions and favourability rates.

As the table below shows, the number of decisions at VAC has been decreasing over the last five years, as it has at the Board. During this time, the Board's Review decisions have represented between 8.5% and 10.2% of the Department's decisions with appeal rights to the Board.

Fiscal Year	VAC's decisions*	Board's Review decisions	As a % of VAC's decisions
2014-15	29,480	2,729	9.3 %
2013-14	32,963	3,213	9.7 %
2012-13	35,139	3,236	9.2 %
2011-12	35,491	3,636	10.2 %
2010-11	41,536	3,539	8.5 %

\*VAC decisions with appeal rights to the Board. This includes first applications, medical reassessments, and departmental reviews.

VAC's favourability rate (i.e. the percentage of applications that receive favourable decisions) increased considerably from 70% to 80% in 2014-15 as a result of a change in its adjudication processes. The Department is now paying greater attention to file reviews and, if needed, is initiating contact with applicants to obtain additional information. In addition, VAC has increased the number of Departmental Reviews. These changes are resulting in a greater number of favourable decisions being made at VAC.

This means that fewer cases are being appealed to the Board, but those cases are more difficult and complex.

The Board's workload can also be impacted in new ways by new programs or policies which are implemented by VAC with appeal rights to the Board. For example, the introduction of the Critical Injury Benefit in July 2015 may eventually have a considerable impact on the Board, depending on the volume of applications and the number of unfavourable VAC decisions.

As the appeal program for VAC's disability benefits program, the Board considers the Department's efforts to anticipate future workload. For example, VAC prepares an annual forecast of applicants based on historic trends, information from the Department of National Defence (DND), and mortality rates. The current forecast indicates a decline in applicants of approximately 5% for each of the next two years. However, application levels are expected to plateau around 2018-19 and then begin to increase due to aging retired CAF members. This suggests that the Board will continue to experience a decline in applications over the next two years, after which the workload will stabilize for a time, and then begin to increase.

This program evaluation looked at forecasting for Review and Appeal hearings for the seven years where data was available. There was a range of 6% to 14% higher forecasts compared to the actual number of hearings held. Eight of the fourteen forecasts were high, three were low, and three were within 3% of the hearings held.

Workload forecasting will continue to be somewhat of a challenge due to the variety of factors affecting the number of applicants who come to the Board. Given a potential surge in applications related to the new Critical Injury Benefit as well as the anticipated plateauing of intake within the next few years, the Board may want to undertake a concerted analysis of these factors to support its short and longer term planning.

## **Human Resources**

The Board continues to be a good place to work, as evidenced by consistently better than average results in Public Service Employee Surveys. The Board's most recent results from the 2014 survey are worth noting here:

- The Board had an excellent response rate of 83%, which is 12% higher than the Public Service average; and
- Levels of overall satisfaction were well above the Public Service averages, with 84% of employees indicating they would recommend the Board as a place to work and 92% of the Board employees indicating they get a sense of satisfaction from their work.

These results were confirmed by 34 interviews conducted as part of the program evaluation, which indicated Members and staff were generally proud to work for the organization and felt the organization supported them.

The Board has had a formal human resources plan since 2008, and the current Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan covers 2013-16. This plan guides decisions about people and resources by anticipating and addressing factors which may impact the Board's ability to deliver its mandate. It is also designed to enable the Board to meet its objectives under the *Public Service Modernization Act* and the elements of the Staffing Management Accountability Framework.

Within the Board, each manager has an annual budget. Resourcing is based on the needs of the Board's adjudicative process, and periodic realignments have been made to reflect new responsibilities. Resourcing is carefully monitored within each unit, and discussions take place between the Directors and the Director General on a regular basis. The Board produces extensive workload reports including intake, pending volumes and completed work, which are reviewed on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis.

The Board uses a variety of approaches for staffing, including formal competitions to fill positions on a term or indeterminate basis. It has encouraged cross-training within units, though the size of the organization makes this type of employee development difficult to achieve in many situations. Cross-training is nonetheless seen as good for the organization because it builds the potential for flexibility in assigning work and provides learning opportunities for employees.

Depending on workload and vacancies, the Board also offers acting assignments between units. These opportunities give employees an opportunity for development and help the Board's succession planning by building a pool of experienced candidates.

The Board also uses overtime as required, though less frequently over the years with the decrease in workload. Overtime is used as a temporary solution to a requirement for increased productivity, and is a viable approach given the fluctuating nature of the Board's workload.

The Board hires casual or term employees when it has a short-term need or a need for specific knowledge and expertise.

In speaking to supervisors, the evaluation team found that staff generally have the required competencies, and support for learning is a priority for the Board.

As a small organization with a number of attractive entry-level positions, the Board is challenged by the national area of competition required when hiring from outside the public service. In addition, the Board needs more bilingual employees but has difficulty filling these positions because of a lack of bilingual candidates in selection processes.

### **Operational units and changing work**

In the past five years, workload has decreased and/or changed considerably in most of the Board's operational units.

The Statement of Case (SOC) Unit, which prepares the evidence package for every case, has experienced the most change of any unit. The unit is adjusting to a heavier than usual workload, due to some of the following changes:

- In 2010, the Board changed its process for ensuring all relevant documents and decisions are included in a SOC;
- In 2010-11, electronically scanned Service Health Records replaced hard copy files and so required the unit to develop a new way of working and to address issues related to the quality of the scanning; and
- Over the past year, VAC changed its process to no longer flag key documents used in its adjudication, requiring Board staff to read large volumes of records to identify the relevant documents.

These changes, along with some difficulty in obtaining records, have all had a considerable impact on the ability of the SOC Unit to carry out its work. The Board is making efforts to provide additional assistance to operations in this area, but may need to invest further in staff and training – at least in the short term – to address the heavy workload.

The biggest change for the Adjudicative Assistant Unit, which prepares decisions for quality review, has been in the decisions themselves. As the cases coming to the Board have become more complex, the work required by Members to properly address the issues raised by applicants

has increased. In turn, the Adjudicative Assistants must spend more time and effort preparing the decisions for quality review.

The Board has also seen an increase in the volume of French hearings, requiring a number of its bilingual Members to write in their second language. This has also increased the effort needed to prepare the decisions for quality review.

The Quality Management Unit, which conducts a quality review of the decisions, has also experienced a significant change in its workload. In 2010, a 100% quality review process was implemented as compared to the previous 50-60% quality assurance of decisions. The unit is also doing more pre-hearing analytical work in support of Members.

The Board continues to explore how it can rebalance staff among the three above-mentioned units. Work undertaken as part of the program evaluation suggests this would be a worthy endeavour.

Specialized competencies within the Board are highly valued, but can be quite vulnerable in such a small organization. The Board has recently experienced, and will continue to experience, the retirement of key personnel. Given the Board's small size, it is difficult for it to develop a depth of specialized expertise. A key staff member leaving can result in a far greater impact in the loss of knowledge than would be experienced in a larger organization. The Board could make better use of its Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan in anticipating vacancies and taking action to fill them to allow for the appropriate transfer of knowledge.

Within the corporate support area, the program evaluation found the Information Technology (IT) unit in particular was under considerable pressure, given the multitude of changes with the introduction of Shared Services Canada and other initiatives. There is also a continuing demand for technology as a means of improving service, achieving efficiencies, and responding to clients' expectations for easy access to information. The Board may wish to consider increasing staff in the IT unit, particularly given the current concentration of essential knowledge to a small cadre of individual employees.

The Board as a whole continues to be challenged to adapt to a changing environment. Its client base is changing as the number of traditional Veterans (Second World War, Korean War) declines, and still-serving and retired CAF personnel increases. The cases brought to the Board are more complex than they were in the past, as is the adjudicative environment. Members are being asked to adjudicate complex applications, while at the same time respond to increased expectations of applicants for shorter wait times for hearings and decisions.

As mentioned earlier, the Board has also established and expanded its communications program to provide meaningful information about the appeal process in light of heightened public interest in the issues facing Veterans and the CAF.

The implication of all of these changes is that it is more important than ever for the Board to make the best possible use of its resources.

## **5.4 Information Technology (IT) and Information Management (IM) Infrastructure in Support of Board Members**

Members are generally pleased with the support provided to them by the Board's administration office in Charlottetown, find hardware and software to be generally appropriate, and receive the information they need to make decisions. The roles of the IT and IM units are appropriate, apart from some lack of clarity about who is responsible for the reference information provided to Members. Members are aware of their responsibilities for the security of client information.

### **Role of Board Members**

The support provided by IT and IM to Members is very important to their ability to fulfill their responsibilities.

Members of the Board are appointed by the Governor-in-Council through a competitive process. All Members must meet pre-defined experience and education criteria, and be assessed against competency-based criteria to ensure they have the skills and abilities to do the work and to maintain the confidence of applicants in the appeal system.

As of April 2015, the Board has 25 Members: 16 work out of major cities and conduct Review hearings, while 9 are located at the Board's administration office in Charlottetown and conduct primarily Appeal hearings. The Board's membership includes a cross section of experience and education including medical, legal, military, police, public service and other life/work experiences.

New Board Members undergo a rigorous training program before hearing cases. All Members take part in annual professional development from legal, medical, military, and RCMP experts to make sure they have the most recent information necessary to make fair, well-reasoned decisions for Veterans.

The role of the Members is to fulfill the Board's legislated mandate by hearing, determining and dealing with all applications. These applications may deal with matters of entitlement to a pension or award, the assessment of the extent of a disability, or specific special awards. Members have the jurisdiction to affirm, vary or reverse the decision being reviewed or appealed; they are not bound by the previous decision.

In fulfilling this role, the Members:

- make a full and fair examination of the information available prior to and at the hearings;
- conduct hearings where they listen to testimony and arguments and weigh all the evidence;
- interpret and apply the legislation based on the evidence presented; and
- render written decisions which give the reasons for their rulings.

Members are faced with a number of challenges in fulfilling their role. In particular, those who work at the Review level have a heavy workload, which generally consists of:

- travelling to a hearing location on a Monday;
- preparing for and conducting hearings in panels of two as well as drafting decisions over the next four days; and
- travelling home or to another hearing location on Friday afternoon or evening.

Review hearings take place at approximately 23 locations across Canada, to make it easier for applicants to attend and to present testimony in person.

Members of Review panels prepare for and conduct approximately 18 to 20 hearings per week, and are responsible for writing half of the decisions.

Members of Appeal panels, who sit on panels of three, prepare for and conduct approximately 18 hearings per week, and are responsible for writing one-third of the decisions. Members must read and analyze complex files for individual cases, and make and write decisions under tight time frames. Some files contain over 100 pages of documentation.

Members are required to conduct non-adversarial hearings where applicants are represented by lawyers, service officers, other individuals of the applicant’s choice, or are self-represented. Members must then make well-reasoned decisions for Veterans which will also withstand judicial review by the Federal Court.

Hearing and deciding cases in accordance with the law for applicants who have difficult health and/or personal circumstances can place an emotional toll on Members. This, combined with frequent travel, makes it even more important that Members receive the support they need.

An indication of the frequency of Members’ travel and volume of work is presented in the following tables:

**Members in Charlottetown:**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Hearings (average)</b>	<b>Decisions (average)</b>	<b>Travel Weeks (average)</b>
<b>2005/06</b>	526	209	5
<b>2006/07</b>	357	137	10
<b>2007/08</b>	366	140	7
<b>2008/09</b>	737	273	11
<b>2009/10</b>	494	185	9
<b>2010/11</b>	403	159	11
<b>2011/12</b>	507	199	11
<b>2012/13</b>	476	191	14
<b>2013/14</b>	460	172	6
<b>2014/15</b>	414	159	7

### Members in cities across Canada:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Hearings (average)</b>	<b>Decisions (average)</b>	<b>Travel Weeks (average)</b>
<b>2005/06</b>	530	241	25
<b>2006/07</b>	640	365	21
<b>2007/08</b>	619	302	25
<b>2008/09</b>	741	336	27
<b>2009/10</b>	548	277	26
<b>2010/11</b>	528	257	27
<b>2011/12</b>	438	212	24
<b>2012/13</b>	387	182	18
<b>2013/14</b>	523	250	25
<b>2014/15</b>	326	156	16

### Interviews with Board Members

Twenty Members were interviewed as part of the program evaluation. When asked if they had the information needed to make fair decisions and to fulfill their responsibilities, the majority said yes (75%), though some (25%) said it would be helpful to have more information from DND in some cases. Members did raise the difficulty of searching for certain information, as well as the challenge created by communicating across time zones. In particular, some Members (mainly those in Western Canada) talked about having a limited window of time for speaking to staff in Charlottetown.

The majority of Members interviewed (85%) reported they had the technology they needed, though a few found it was not always reliable. Approximately half were not satisfied with the Kindle, which has recently been adopted for use in the hearing rooms as a replacement for a hard copy reference binder.

Board Members expressed varying levels of comfort with technology. During the interviews, it was evident that, as could be expected, different Members had different needs for IT training. While 45% of Members said they received appropriate training on how to use their IT equipment, 55% reported they would have benefitted from more training. Members were particularly interested in receiving training on the new BlackBerrys, Microsoft Word, the Wiki, the Kindle, and the Board's Scheduling Application.

The program evaluation concluded the recent technological upgrades and migration to new software would have been eased if more training had been made available to some Members. Offering IT training tailored to the individual Member's needs would be of considerable benefit.

During the interviews, Members were asked if there was technology that would make their job easier. They viewed the implementation of electronic signatures, currently being explored by the Board, as a very positive move. At this time, the Board relies on courier services to transport decisions for signature to and from Members in the field. In addition, Members indicated that

improvements to the search capacity of the Scheduling Application would allow them to use the application more effectively.

The Board emphasizes the importance of protecting the security of digital and other information to all of its employees. New staff and Members are given a comprehensive package of information about the protection of information to read and sign their acknowledgment. All Members interviewed showed an awareness of their responsibility to ensure information is secure.

The majority of Members interviewed understood the role of the Board's IT unit (85%), and were generally very pleased with the services it provides (65%). Most Members expressed particular appreciation for the speed and willingness of IT staff to respond to any problems. However, there was some confusion among Members about when to contact the unit and when to contact the recently established Shared Services Canada. Members were less clear about the role of the Board's IM Unit.

In particular, it would be helpful for the Board to clarify roles and further define the use of the recently introduced Wiki, which is intended to be a key reference tool for Members and staff. This would reduce the risk that important information will either not be provided, or not be kept up to date.

The program evaluation concluded there would be an advantage to clearly assigning responsibility for the oversight of the provision of information to Members, including its content, accessibility, indexing and updating.

Members who are based in cities outside of the Board's administration office in Charlottetown face particular challenges. Although the Board's IT Unit provides good service in setting up their computers, these Members do not currently have on-site assistance when setting up their home offices which can create difficulties for some. The Board may wish to look at options to provide this on-site assistance when there is a need.

These Members also experience a different work environment than their colleagues, given their physical separation from them and from the staff who provide them with service. The isolation caused by this reality can make it more difficult for a Member to obtain assistance, or even to know who to call to get a question answered. It may be helpful for the Board to develop a "who to contact for what" list for Members.

During the interviews, it became evident that Members who work in locations across Canada would appreciate a greater opportunity to meet staff when they are in Charlottetown. The Board may wish to consider this when planning the annual Members' professional development session.

## 6.0 Conclusions

In conclusion:

- The Board's program continues to fulfill a need;
- The Board's program is aligned with ongoing Government priorities and federal roles and responsibilities;
- The Board's program provides an independent and fair appeal process for disability pension, disability award and War Veterans Allowance decisions made by VAC;
- The Board provides applicants with timely, respectful hearings and fair plain language decisions. The vast majority of written decisions are issued within the service standard of six weeks following the hearing;
- The Board's program costs are generally stable and compare to budgeted costs. The resources used to achieve outcomes are reasonable, and appropriate performance measurement is in place. The Board continues to look for ways to improve its efficiency and economy;
- The Board is generally appropriately resourced, although it may benefit from a redistribution of resources given its evolving workload and responsibilities. Workload forecasts have fluctuated in accuracy, which is not unexpected given the changing environment in which the Board has been working. The Board generally has the competencies it needs to fulfill its mandate, but its small size presents challenges to building a depth of specialized expertise and its operations can be under considerable risk whenever a key person leaves. The Board's move to adopt additional technology will continue to have substantial implications for its program delivery, as will changes VAC is making to its adjudication processes, operations and benefits; and
- Members are generally pleased with the support provided to them by the Board's administration office in Charlottetown, find hardware and software to be generally appropriate, and receive the information they need to make decisions. The roles of the IT and IM units are appropriate, apart from some lack of clarity about who is responsible for reference information provided to Members. Members are aware of their responsibilities for the security of client information.

## 7.0 Recommendations

### It is recommended:

- #1:** Given the results of the study on the reason for awards conducted in 2014, the Board may wish to periodically monitor the reasons for, and the rate at which, decisions are overturned or varied at Appeal.
- #2:** The Board consider undertaking a workload forecasting exercise to assist in long term resource planning.
- #3:** The Board review and possibly make adjustments to its organizational structure and resourcing approach to address the current and anticipated workload pressures.
- #4:** The Board build on the current use of its Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan to anticipate vacancies and take action to fill them to allow for the appropriate transfer of knowledge.
- #5:** The Board clearly assign the responsibility for the oversight of the provision of information to Members, including its content, accessibility, indexing and updating.
- #6:** The Board explore options for tailoring IT training to the needs of individual Members.
- #7:** The Board clarify and communicate the role of Shared Services Canada versus the role of its IT Unit.
- #8:** The Board provide Members who work in cities across the country with an increased opportunity to meet staff directly when they are in Charlottetown.
- #9:** The Board look for options to increase the accessibility of support from its administration office for Members who work outside of Charlottetown, particularly those in Western Canada.

## 8.0 Management Response and Action Plan

Recommendation #1	Management Response	Office of Primary Interest	Planned Action	Action Complete Date
<p>It is recommended, given the results of the study on the reason for awards conducted in 2014, the Board may wish to periodically monitor the reasons for, and the rate at which, decisions are overturned or varied at Appeal.</p>	<p><b>We accept, in part.</b></p> <p>The Board recognizes the potential benefit of monitoring the reasons why and the rate at which Review decisions are overturned or varied at Appeal. The information may help the Board improve its decision making, while helping Veterans and their representatives be better prepared at Review. The desired result for all involved is fewer decisions brought forward to Appeal.</p> <p>The Board notes there are many factors involved in an Appeal Panel’s decision to vary a Review decision, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new and/or more persuasive arguments from representatives;</li> <li>• new evidence;</li> <li>• the fact an Appeal hearing is a <i>de novo</i> hearing, whereby all of the evidence is reviewed as though it had not been reviewed before;</li> </ul>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Director General</p>	<p>The Board will continue to monitor the rate at which decisions are overturned at both Review and Appeal, while continuing to monitor the reasons why decisions are overturned or varied at Review.</p> <p>The Board will continue to ensure its decisions meet its established standards and obligations of procedural fairness through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Performance Review of all Board Members, which includes a review of decisions and Review hearing recordings; and</li> <li>• a monthly review of Review hearing recordings and associated decisions, selected at random.</li> </ul> <p>The Board’s Quality Management Unit will continue to review the decisions made by Board Members, to identify trends, issues, and individual and collective training needs.</p> <p>The Board will also continue to develop and deliver in-time and</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the time elapsed between the Review and Appeal hearings, during which a new policy has been written or a new medical consensus regarding a medical condition has been reached.</li> </ul> <p>The Board also notes applicants have the right to bring forward a decision with which they are not satisfied, including a Review decision to an Appeal Panel.</p>		<p>continuous training, to ensure Members have the most current medical and policy information to assist in their decision-making.</p> <p>The desired outcome in continuing with the above processes is ensuring quality Review decisions while minimizing the need for Appeals.</p>	
<b>Recommendation #2</b>	<b>Management Response</b>	<b>Office of Primary Interest</b>	<b>Planned Action</b>	<b>Action Complete Date</b>
<p>It is recommended the Board consider undertaking a workload forecasting exercise to assist in long term resource planning.</p>	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>The Board will renew its approach to workload forecasting. It has conducted a forecasting exercise in the past, but found the models used provided an inaccurate depiction of the Board’s workload.</p> <p>There are a number of variables affecting workload forecasting, both at the Board and at the Department. The Board’s workload is tied to the number of annual decisions made by the Department with</p>	<p>Director General</p>	<p>The Board will continue to communicate on a regular basis with the Department to obtain accurate workload information, which may proportionately affect the Board’s workload.</p> <p>The Board will also work with the Department to establish accurate forecasting models. This approach will allow the Board to assign and reallocate resources where most needed and as required, in order to provide timely, respectful hearings and fair, plain-language decisions to applicants.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>

	<p>appeal rights to the Board. The introduction of expanded benefits to CAF Members and Veterans, such as the Critical Injury Benefit, as well as changes to the Department's adjudication model, are expected to influence the Board's workload. This will require continuous monitoring as a forecasting model is developed.</p>			
Recommendation #3	Management Response	Office of Primary Interest	Planned Action	Action Complete Date
<p>It is recommended the Board review and possibly make adjustments to its organizational structure and resourcing approach to address the current and anticipated workload pressures.</p>	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>The Board underwent an organizational restructuring process in 2013-14, which saw a transfer of duties from one directorate to another, to allow for a better alignment of roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The Director General has tasked all managers with reviewing their work areas, in order to determine where further adjustments may be required in the organizational structure.</p>	<p>Director General</p>	<p>All managers will review their respective areas and report to the Director General no later than 31 March 2016.</p> <p>From this review, further actions will be determined and implemented as required.</p> <p>The Board will continue to make adjustments to its structure and resource allocation approach as it identifies workload pressures. It is actively cross-training personnel, to be ready to move staff from low to high demand areas if required in the future. The Board must be forward-thinking in its approach, and plan for both the short- and long-term, in order to ensure it continues to meet</p>	<p>31 March 2016 for the report to the Director General.</p> <p>ONGOING monitoring of workload pressures throughout the Board, in order to be responsive and active in resolving gaps in workforce areas.</p>

Recommendation #4	Management Response	Office of Primary Interest	Planned Action	Action Complete Date
<p>It is recommended the Board build on the current use of its Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan to anticipate vacancies and take action to fill them to allow for the appropriate transfer of knowledge.</p>	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>The Board notes the Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan (IBHRP) currently guiding its work runs to 2016.</p> <p>Before building on its use of the IBHRP, the Board must first complete a new Strategic Plan. This will drive the next iteration of its IBHRP.</p>	<p>Director General</p>	<p>The Board has already started the work required to update the IBHRP.</p> <p>The new plan will define the Board’s progress into 2020. The Board has identified a need to review the IBHRP biannually, as well as on an “as needed” basis, to ensure vacancies are filled in a timely manner. This will ensure valuable corporate knowledge is transferred and retained.</p> <p>The Board’s commitment to regularly review the plan will allow it to be flexible in meeting its workforce needs, while ensuring it continues to provide timely, respectful hearings and fair, plain-language decisions to applicants and their families.</p>	<p>End Fourth Quarter 2015-16, for the implementation of the Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan 2017-2020.</p> <p>ONGOING review of the IBHRP, in conjunction with Recommendation #3.</p>

Recommendation #5	Management Response	Office of Primary Interest	Planned Action	Action Complete Date
<p>It is recommended the Board clearly assign the responsibility for the oversight of the provision of information to Members, including its content, accessibility, indexing and updating.</p>	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>The Board recognizes the need to clearly define who is responsible for overseeing, maintaining and providing the general resources Members require as they make decisions on applications for disability benefits.</p>	<p>Chair Director General</p>	<p>Over the last calendar year, the Board has been migrating information used by Members and staff to the Wiki, in order to provide Board personnel with the most current policy and medical information in real time.</p> <p>The program evaluation identified a need for an increased use of new information management media, including the Wiki, as well as a clearer definition of the roles and responsibilities related to its use and the benefit to the organization.</p> <p>In conjunction with the planned actions for Recommendations #3 and #4, the Board will approach this recommendation in two phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: Identify the unit or position(s) responsible for overseeing the provision of information;</p> <p>and</p> <p>Phase 2: Define the roles and responsibilities of the unit or position(s) tasked with the dissemination of information to Members, and the use of the Wiki by Board personnel. This is to</p>	<p>Phase 1: End Fourth Quarter 2015-16, for the identification of the unit or position(s).</p> <p>Phase 2: End First Quarter 2016-17, for the completed definition of roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>ONGOING, for the updating of the information, as well as training as new processes are developed and new information becomes available (as required).</p>

			be clearly communicated to all Board Members and staff, and will include ongoing and updated training to all personnel.	
<b>Recommendation #6</b>	<b>Management Response</b>	<b>Office of Primary Interest</b>	<b>Planned Action</b>	<b>Action Complete Date</b>
It is recommended the Board explore options for tailoring IT training to the needs of individual Members.	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>The Board recognizes the need to provide information technology training to its Members and staff, to ensure they are able to carry out their work in a timely fashion.</p> <p>IT training is given to Members to help them use the tools they are provided for their work.</p> <p>Members, in turn, are encouraged to build on this training by using the tools and accessing the built-in assistance functions in the software. Board staff are also available for trouble-shooting.</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Director General</p>	<p>The Director of Operations and Professional Development recently started work on creating a list of the core competencies and required skills for Members, which will include IT as a specific component in the selection process.</p> <p>Staff and Members are working together on this list and a related survey, which will allow the Board to better determine whether and where gaps and deficiencies exist in the IT training of Members. The training programs will address these deficiencies.</p>	<p>End First Quarter 2016-17, for the completion of the list and survey, and implementation of individualized training plans.</p> <p>ONGOING, for the needs assessment and training of Members.</p>

Recommendation #7	Management Response	Office of Primary Interest	Planned Action	Action Complete Date
<p>It is recommended the Board clarify and communicate the role of Shared Services Canada versus the role of its IT Unit.</p>	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>In reviewing this recommendation and the procedures in place governing the provision of IT services, the Board has determined there is a need to clarify and communicate the role of Shared Services Canada in the provision of help to Members.</p> <p>The Board will clarify in writing to all personnel that there is no need for anyone to seek out or approach Shared Services Canada for any IT reason. All IT-related questions can be referred to and handled appropriately by either the Board's IT unit or VAC's IT unit.</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Director General</p> <p>Chief of IT</p>	<p>The Board will remind its personnel to direct their IT-related questions to the Board's own IT unit. Should there be a need, the IT unit may then refer them to the VAC IT unit or handle the issue on their behalf with VAC IT.</p>	<p>Immediate.</p>
Recommendation #8	Management Response	Office of Primary Interest	Planned Action	Action Complete Date
<p>It is recommended the Board provide Members who work in cities across the country with an increased opportunity to meet staff directly when they are in Charlottetown.</p>	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>The Board agrees deployed Members benefit from meeting staff when they are in Charlottetown, and has consistently provided this opportunity.</p> <p>It is a key component of</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Director, Operations and Professional Development</p>	<p>The Board will review the opportunities it has consistently provided to Members, to determine whether and where improvements may be made.</p> <p>The Board will also examine the feasibility of including specific meeting</p>	<p>End First Quarter 2016-17, for completion of the review of the current opportunities offered.</p>

	<p>the training for new Members, which is done at in Charlottetown. Upon arrival, Members are given a tour of operations and are introduced to staff. Any staff who are absent during the visit are encouraged to introduce themselves to the Members on their return.</p> <p>When deployed Members are in Charlottetown for a training seminar or an all-staff meeting, time is allotted in the schedule for them to meet with staff.</p>		<p>times in Members' schedules when they are visiting Charlottetown, to facilitate communication with specific operational units. The Board will further examine the possibility of scheduling specific consultation periods with Operations units at set, regular intervals for Members working outside of Charlottetown.</p>	<p>ONGOING, in the provision of opportunities.</p>
<b>Recommendation #9</b>	<b>Management Response</b>	<b>Office of Primary Interest</b>	<b>Planned Action</b>	<b>Action Complete Date</b>
<p>It is recommended the Board look for options to increase the accessibility of support from its administration office for Members who work outside of Charlottetown, particularly those in Western Canada.</p>	<p><b>We accept.</b></p> <p>The Board recognizes the need to provide support for all Members, regardless of their location across Canada.</p> <p>The Board must balance this need with the reality of the difference in time zones and work locations.</p> <p>For example, there are currently three Members working west</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Director General</p> <p>Director, Operations and Professional Development</p> <p>Director, Strategic and Corporate Services</p>	<p>The Board will approach this recommendation in three phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: Communicate the current availability of staff to all Members working outside of Charlottetown;</p> <p>Phase 2: Conduct an information gathering and analysis exercise, as to the needs of all Members when they are on the road or in their respective home locations across Canada, with recommendations;</p>	<p>Phase 1: End First Quarter 2016-17.</p> <p>Phase 2: End Second Quarter 2016-17.</p>

	<p>of Ontario, while all of the Board’s operational staff work at its administration office in Prince Edward Island.</p> <p>The Board notes it provides staff support during hearing times for all locations (i.e., until 1700hrs Atlantic Standard Time/1300hrs Pacific Standard Time). It agrees to investigate whether this is meeting the needs of all Members, and to consider options for improvement.</p>		<p>and</p> <p>Phase 3: Implement the selected recommendations.</p>	<p>Phase 3: End Third Quarter 2016-17.</p> <p>ONGOING, after implementation.</p>
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## Appendix A – List of documents reviewed

	Document
1.	<i>The Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act</i>
2.	<i>Pension Act</i>
3.	<i>Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act</i>
4.	<i>Veteran Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) Regulations</i>
5.	History of Canadian Disability and Pension Process 2003
6.	VRAB's Annual Report
7.	Observations by the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman (OVO)
8.	Veterans' Right to Fair Adjudication – OVO Report
9.	Veterans' Right to Fair Adjudication – OVO Follow-up Report
10.	Observations by Veterans' Organizations
11.	Observations made by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs (ACVA)
12.	Government's Response to ACVA on Restoring Confidence in VRAB
13.	Observations made by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG)
14.	Speeches from the Throne
15.	Information on the Prime Minister of Canada's Web site
16.	Strategic Action Plan
17.	VRAB's Reports on Plans and Priorities
18.	VRAB's Departmental Performance Reports
19.	VRAB's Logic Model
20.	VRAB's Client Exit Surveys
21.	Analyses of Complaints lodged with VRAB
22.	Results of the 2005 VRAB Client Survey
23.	VRAB's Performance Measurement Framework
24.	VRAB's Business Process Redesign mapping
25.	VRAB's Business Program Redesign observations
26.	VRAB's Performance measurement reports
27.	VRAB's Quarterly Business Framework Report
28.	Analysis of VRAB's Corporate Operations
29.	VRAB's Integrated Business and Human Resources Plan
30.	Reports of VRAB's current approach to recruitment
31.	VRAB's A-Base Review, March 2003
32.	VRAB's Organization charts
33.	A sample of VRAB's Work Descriptions
34.	A sample of VRAB's Selection Profiles
35.	MOU between VRAB and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) 2011
36.	MOU between VRAB & VAC's Veterans Services Branch and Bureau of Pensions Advocates 2005
37.	VRAB's Workload Scenario document 2007
38.	VRAB's Management reports related to systems
39.	Documentation on the role and responsibilities of VRAB IT

40.	Documentation on the role and responsibilities of VRAB IM
41.	VRAB's Digital information security procedures
42.	Directive on IT Security 2013
43.	Directive on Disk Encryption for Computers Outside of a GoC Operational Zone 2013
44.	VAC Security Standards for Access Control 2011
45.	Technical Security Standard for Portable Media Protection 2011
46.	Manager's Guidelines - Inappropriate Use of Electronic Networks 2006
47.	VAC E-Mail Policy 1995
48.	VAC Internet Acceptable Use Policy
49.	Veterans Affairs Canada Internet Acceptable Use Policy 2006
50.	VAC Policy on Information Technology Security 2013
51.	Processing Systems Resource Access Authorization form 2007
52.	Security Incident Reporting Procedures Directive 2014
53.	VAC Policy on Software Acquisition and Installation 2009

## Appendix B – List of interviewees

	Interviewees
1	Director, Service Bureau, Royal Canadian Legion
2	Deputy Ombudsman & Executive Director, Operations, Office of the Veterans Ombudsman (OVO)
3	Director, Legal Operations, Bureau of Pensions Advocates, VAC
4	Manager, Operational Support, Bureau of Pensions Advocates, VAC
5	Chair, Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB)
6	Deputy Chair, VRAB
7	Board Members, VRAB – (20)
8	Director General, VRAB
9	Director, Strategic and Corporate Services, VRAB
10	Director, Operations and Professional Development, VRAB
11	Director, Legal Services, VRAB
12	Chief, Information Technology, VRAB
13	System Support Analyst, Information Technology, VRAB
14	Business Support Analyst, Information Technology, VRAB
15	Project Manager, Business Process Redesign, VRAB
16	Manager, Information and Business Projects, VRAB
17	Supervisor, Quality Management Analysts, VRAB
18	Supervisor, Pre-Hearing Case Coordination, VRAB
19	Supervisor, Adjudication Assistants, VRAB

20	Director General, Information Technology, Information Management and Administration, VAC
21	Director, Benefit Operations, Disability Programs Directorate, and National Quality Coordinator Service Delivery Branch, VAC
22	National Program Manager, Disability Adjudication, VAC
23	Senior Project Statistician, Statistics Directorate, Finance Division, Human Resources and Corporate Services Branch, VAC