



Veterans Review and
Appeal Board Canada

Tribunal des anciens combattants
(révision et appel) Canada

Annual Report 2021-22 and 2022-23



Veterans Review and Appeal Board

2021-22 & 2022-23 Annual Report

Chairperson's message

It is my pleasure to present the Veterans Review and Appeal Board's (VRAB) 2021-2022 and 2022-23 Annual Report. I am pleased to offer this report in a new and accessible format. Due to the timing of this year's report, we have combined the last two years. Going forward, the Report will provide an annual outlook.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic over the past few years, the Board continued to ensure Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members, and their families obtained the benefits they are entitled to for service-related disabilities.

In 2022-23, the Board received 6,141 applications, an increase of 30% compared to the 4,728 applications received in 2020-21.

During the same time, the Board heard a total of 5,253 cases. Of those, 4,349 were reviews, 550 were appeals, and 354 were reconsiderations.

The increased workload the Board has seen over the past few years challenged our capacity to provide Veterans with timely hearings and decisions. To mitigate these workload pressures, we explored new ways of working and sought additional funding to support the long-term effective delivery of our hearing program.

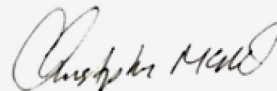
One of the process enhancements that we introduced was a new simplified hearing process to support timelier decisions and reduce the burden on Veterans and their families.

The Board was also pleased to be part of a special pilot project with the Bureau of Pensions Advocates which was implemented in 2021. This initiative streamlined cases for certain types of conditions, primarily hearing loss and tinnitus. The pilot project reached approximately 2,500 Veterans, and will help pave the way for more experimentation, innovation, and collaboration on behalf of those we serve.

In 2021, we also onboarded 10 new Members, which helped us increase our hearing capacity.

These initiatives contributed to a 94% increase in the number of hearings held for Veterans over the past two years (5,253 in 2022-23, compared to 2,704 in 2020-21). As a result of these hearings, 90% of the Veterans who had cases heard received additional benefits for their service-related disabilities.

As you read through the rest of this Annual Report, I hope you too feel the pride, in the Board's staff and Members, that I do from seeing the work they do to serve Canada's Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP and their families.



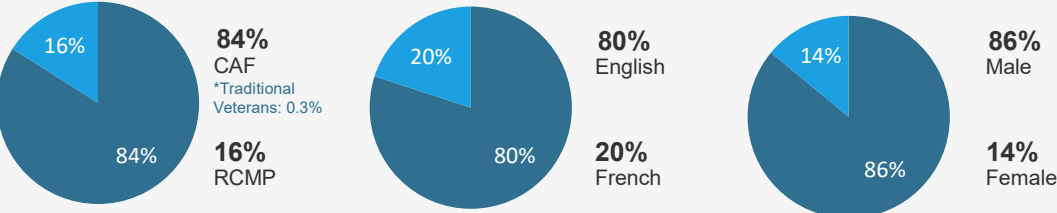
Chris McNeil
Chairperson



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Client demographics for 2022-23

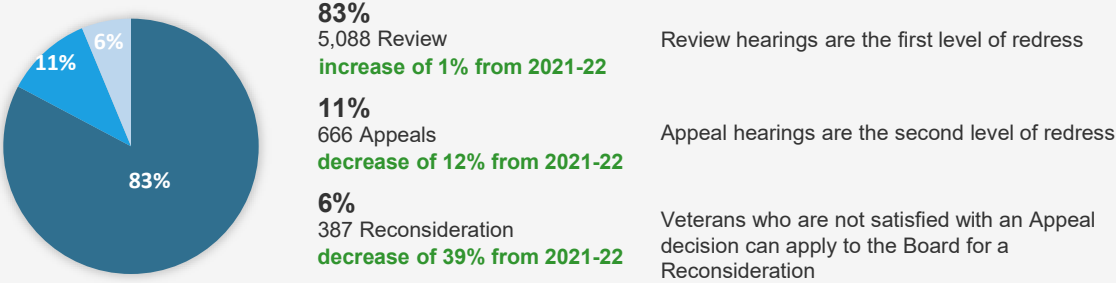
The Board ensures Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP members, and their families obtain the benefits they are entitled to for service-related disabilities. The following provides further information on the demographics of the clients that applied to the Board in 2022-23.



Number of applications for 2022-23

In 2022-23, the volume of applications received by the Board increased significantly (30%) **compared to 2020-21**

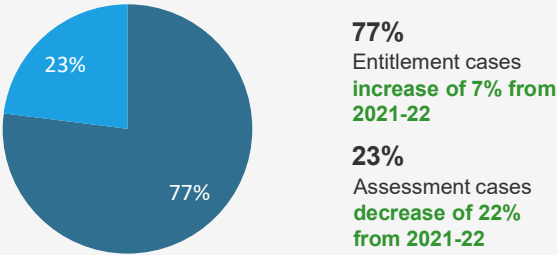
6,141
Total applications
decrease of 5% from 2021-22



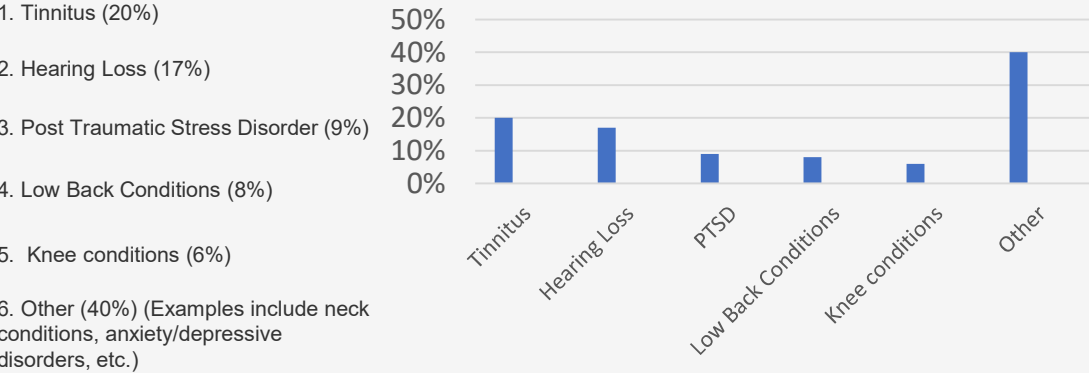
Nature of applications for 2022-23

In general, the Board receives two kinds of applications:

- those for entitlement to benefits based on the relationship between the disability claim condition and service; and
- those related to the level of assessment based on the extent or severity of the disability.

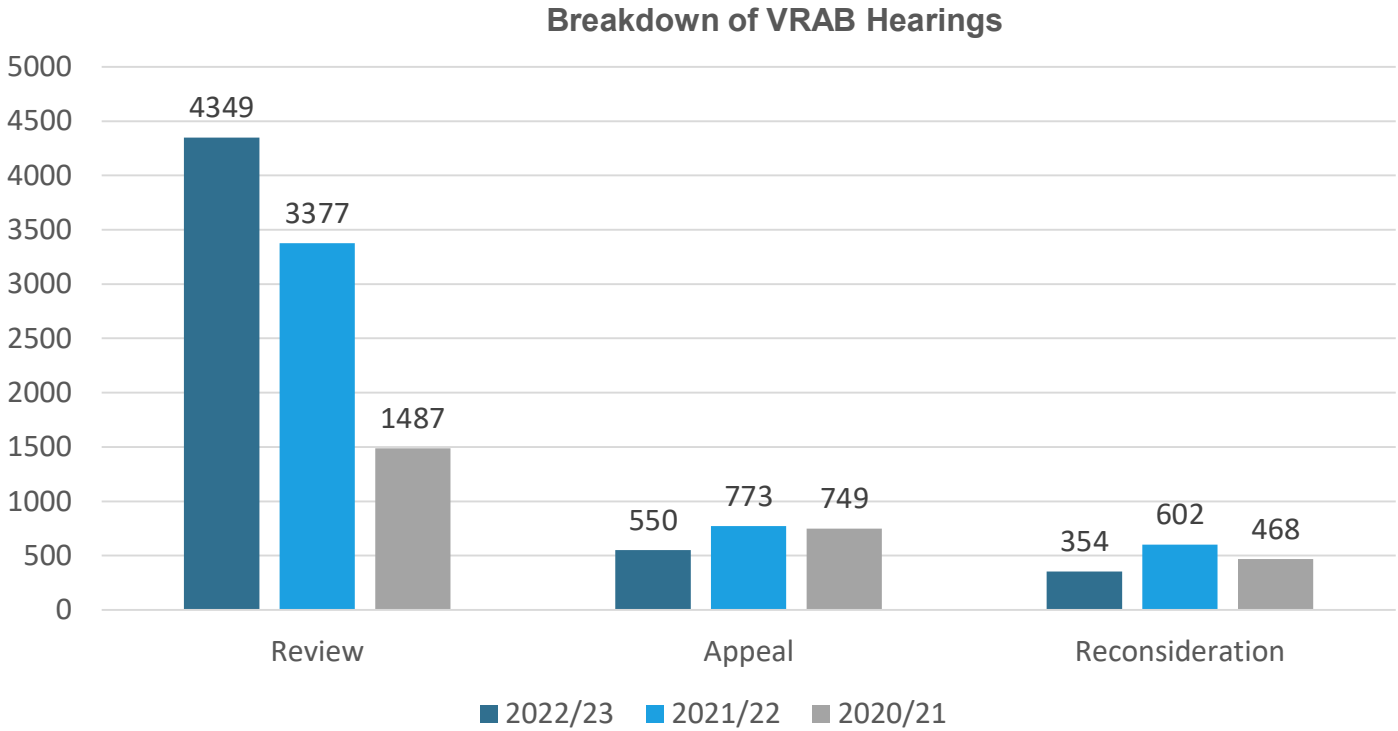


Top 5 types of conditions for 2022-23



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Did you know?

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board is an independent organization operating at arm’s length from Veterans Affairs Canada to ensure all applicants receive a fair review or appeal process.

Applicants may bring forward new information, and present arguments in support of their application for disability benefits. The Board’s appeal process is non-adversarial, which means that no one is arguing against the Veteran.

As independent decision-makers, Board Members are not bound by previous decisions. They consider every matter before them with a fresh perspective to ensure Veterans are given the best possible review of their decision.

Review: A Review Hearing is the Board’s first level of redress, an opportunity for Veterans to appear before decision-makers (Board Members) and tell their story.

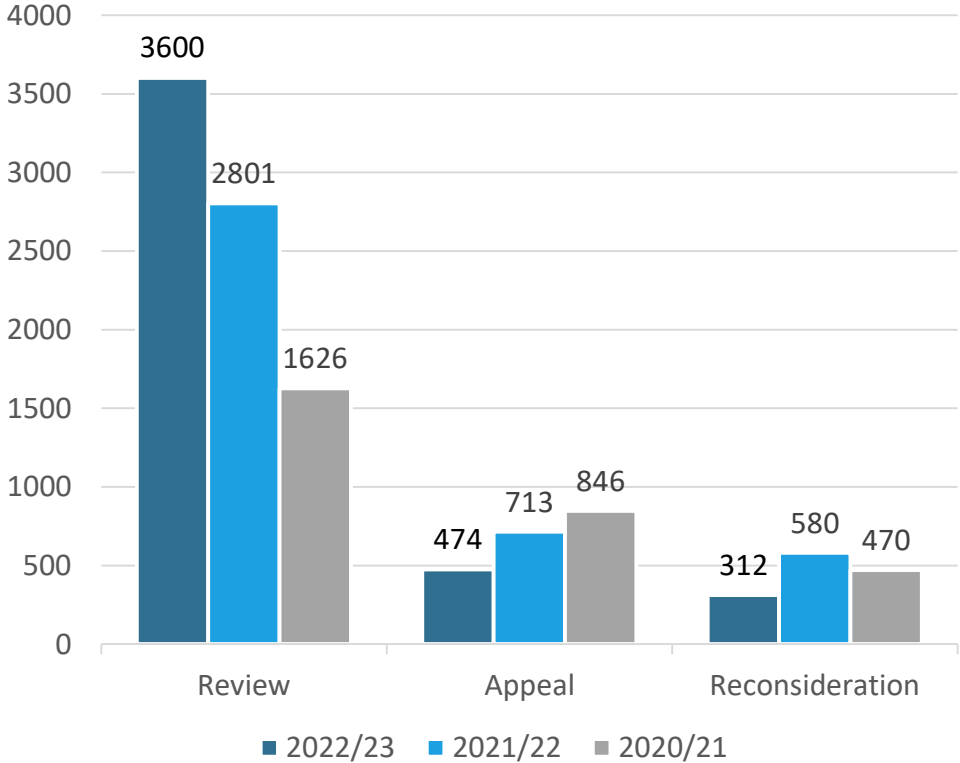
Appeal: An Appeal Hearing is the Board’s second and final level of redress. Their case will be heard by three Board Members who were not involved in the client’s Review Hearing.

Reconsideration: If a client is still dissatisfied with an appeal decision, they can apply to the Board for a reconsideration (a re-opening of their 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.

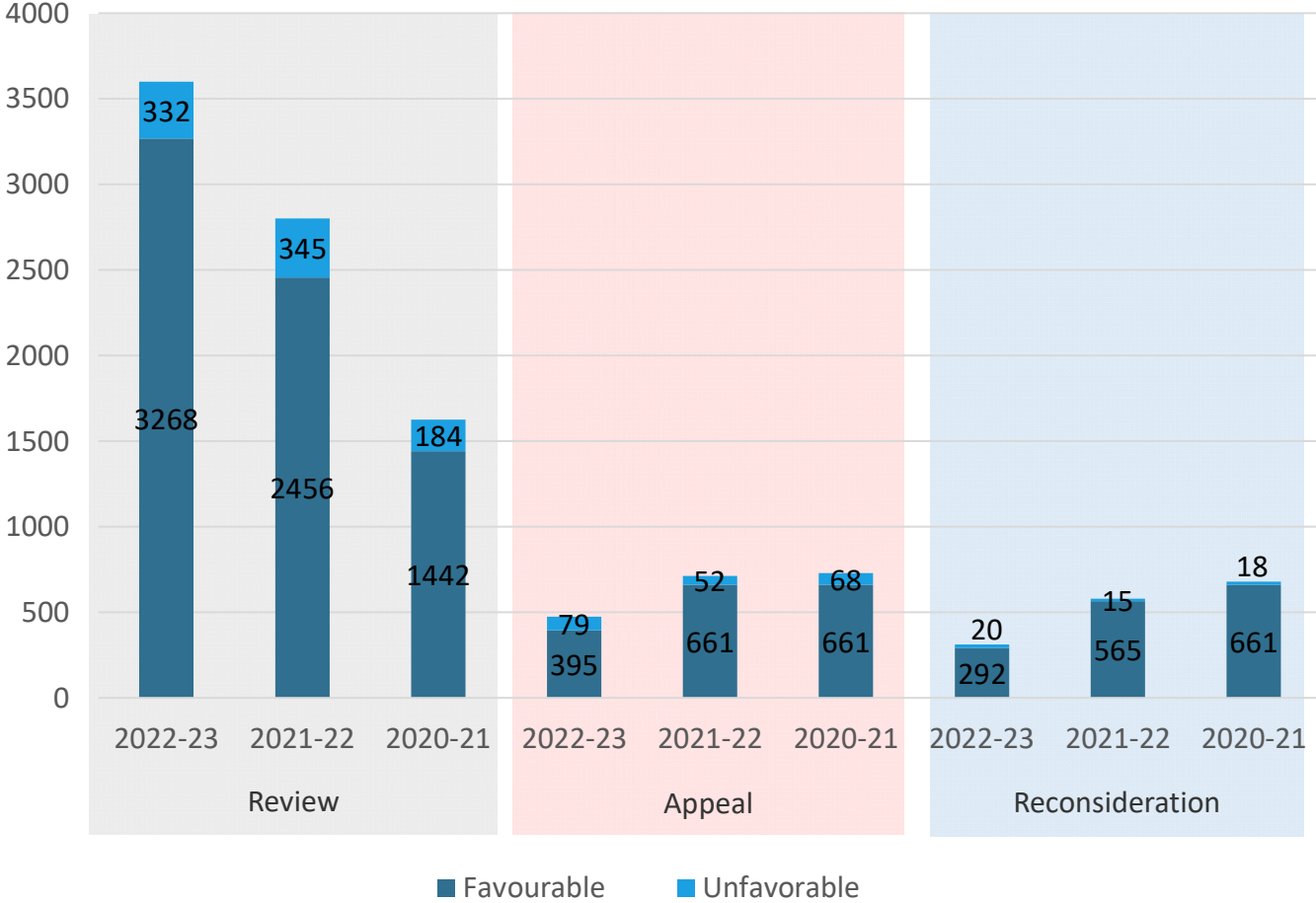
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Breakdown of Decisions Issued by VRAB



Volume of Favorable Decisions



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Telephone

Toll free for Canada and the United States
1-800-450-8006 (English)
1-877-368-0859 (French)
TDD/TYY: 1-833-998-2060

Mail Address

Veterans Review and Appeal Board
Post Office Box 9900
Charlottetown PE C1A 8V7

Website

vrab-tacra.gc.ca

Physical Address

161 St. Peters Road
Suite 165

Twitter

@VRAB_Canada
@TACRA_Canada

Highlights

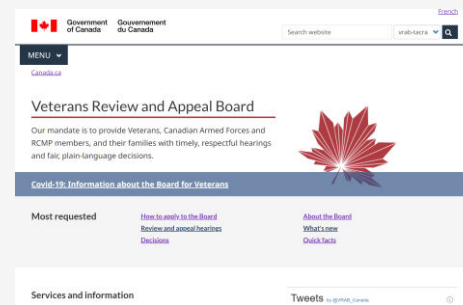
- The Board issued an Interpretation Decision (I-3) that provides clarity around compensation for those with disabilities arising from medical care.
- The mental health and wellness of our team is a top priority for the Board. In 2022, leadership hosted two virtual wellness events that included presentations on nutrition, movement and mindfulness.
- The Board's staff and Members were surveyed in the annual Public Service Employee Survey which measured employees' opinions about their engagement, leadership, workforce, workplace, workplace well-being, compensation, diversity and inclusion, and the impacts of COVID-19. The Board's latest results reported a significant increase (17%-19%) in satisfaction in many areas.
- The Board invited PEI's Poet Laureate and Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, Julie Pellissier-Lush to educate staff and Members on Indigenous history.
- As part of the Board's ongoing commitment to Diversity and Inclusion, we hosted cultural education sessions for staff and Members. Dr. Najam Chisti was invited to speak to staff and Members about the Muslim Culture, and Board Member Patrice Carrière spoke on the Metis culture.

Remembrance Day



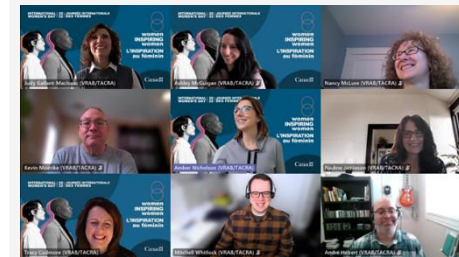
Deputy Chair and CAF Veteran, Jacques Bouchard, LCol (Retd) joined by Board Members and RCMP Veterans Wilfred Jephson and Richard Thibault, laid a wreath at the Charlottetown Cenotaph on behalf of the Board.

New Website



The Board released a new website. It was designed to enhance accessibility and aligns with the latest Government of Canada standards.

International Women's Day



Director General, Judy Gallant-MacIsaac, and A/Director of Strategic and Corporate Services, Tracy Cudmore, spoke to staff about the incredible achievements of women throughout our organization.

New Office Location

The Board completed renovations in 2022 to its new location on St. Peters Road.

This space was purposely built with those we serve in mind.

