



Reactivating the Repat

There is still time to tell the State Government what you think.

Community Consultation closes on 16th September 2018

Thank you to those who responded to the recent invitation to express your view on how the Repat site at Daw Park should be re-developed.

All of your responses have been reviewed and appear in the summary below.

Full marks to those with an eye for detail who will have noted that our task has been amended from a request to help “Regenerate” the Repat to one of “Reactivating” the Repat!

When ratified by respective ex-service organisations (the RSL, VVA and VVF), this summary will be presented to the Veterans Health Advisory Council (VHAC) and in due course to the Minister for Health.

On Wednesday 15th August 2018 SA Health hosted an “Engagement Launch” at Flinders at Tonsley. It was an interesting event with a number of stakeholders putting forward what they would like to see developed on the Repat site.

There was no particular presentation made in respect of specific “Veterans Services,” however Nathan Klinge, CEO of RSL Care SA gave a presentation on proposed Homeless Veterans Accommodation and like services that RSL Care SA may be able to deliver.

As a part of the presentation the next steps in the consultation /development process were revealed. They are detailed below. They provide a clear view of the process from today until the “reactivated” Repat site commences operations from 2019.

A brief summary of the proposed stages is:

Stage 1	Apr-mid Jul 18	Identify, Test and Develop Options – Completed.
Stage 2	Mid Aug – 16 Sep 18	Community and Stakeholder consultation.
Stage 3	Sep 18	Partnership Dialogue.
Stage 4	Oct-Nov 18	Government Endorsement.
Stage 5	Mid Dec 2018	Finalise Master Plans and Approvals.
Stage 6	From 2019	Commence site activation.

Your responses. The views that have come forward in recent weeks from members of the RSL, VVA and VVF have much in common.

They are very important because (aside from the RSL Care SA presentation made on Wednesday night) no significant coordinated veteran's proposal appears to have been made thus far.

Hopefully that will change. There will be more community consultation and I encourage you to go to www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/repata to further involve yourself in the conversation. The website will show you what parts of the Repat site are being retained and some options for the parts of the Repat that will be redeveloped. Thus far the three concept proposals on the website all show that the Hydrotherapy Pool, Repat Radiology, Orthotics and Prosthetics SA will be remain. The responses received were unanimously in favour of these facilities being retained.

One view reflected by all who responded was the desire to see the development of a "Veterans' Precinct." While they understood that health facilities must, necessarily, be shared with the community they wanted the promised "veterans focus" to be provided in more than name only.

Many veterans expressed their gratitude for the consultation opportunity they have been offered. It is clear they value the "respect" that had been shown them by way of an invitation to become involved. Many commented that the *Transforming Health* programme was a "disaster" and was delivered in a way that was disrespectful of or ignored the views of many.

The suggestions that have been made thus far are:

- The name "The Repat" is important to all veterans and should be retained.
- Some members of our community remain adamant that the entire Repatriation General Hospital be re-established or, as they put it, "come back to life." This wish is acknowledged however the vast majority of those who responded accepted that this was not possible. The Minister for Health, the Hon Stephen Wade MLC, made it quite clear during his presentation last week that it was not feasible to re-establish the "old" Repat in its previous guise.
- Establishment of a step down/step up mental health facility to cater for the overflow from the Jamie Larcombe Centre (JLC) or for "short term stay" veterans. While the establishment of the JLC has been well received by most, it is noted that it is often full to capacity with a significant waiting list. In July the waiting list for admission was reported as being three weeks. It was also noted that 85% of those using the JLC are contemporary veterans. It appears that very few Vietnam (and other non-contemporary) veterans are using the JLC and are choosing to seek private treatment. Disturbingly it has been reported anecdotally that some private service providers (eg the Fullarton Private Hospital) may be identified for closure in the not too distant future. If this occurs 28 beds will be lost. It has been suggested that the shortfall will be taken up by the Adelaide Clinic. All veterans who responded were strongly against this possible option. They argued that the Adelaide Clinic was not "veteran friendly" and has itself, a three week waiting list. The overwhelming view was that a step down/step up mental health facility created in the safe and serene environment offered by the Repat would complement the service provided by the JLC. This could ameliorate current waiting lists and provide a more comprehensive service to veterans in need.
- As a part of the recommendation above, the establishment of a secure veteran mental health facility was suggested. This is something that is not available at the JLC.
- Restoration of urology services to the Repat site. Urology services were provided at the Repat and were moved to the Flinders Medical Centre. It is alleged that waiting times have blown out from some weeks to twelve months. This is not a veteran specific service, but is one that many members of the veteran community saw as important.

- Establish a GP facility with veteran priority which can act as a specialist referral centre.
- Provision of priority clinical services to veterans with the capacity for limited elective surgery. The establishment of an “Eye Clinic” was recommended.
- Creation of single/family accommodation for regional visitors seeking treatment or visiting veteran in-patients, particularly those undergoing treatment at the JLC. It was suggested that this might be something that could be addressed in concert with RSL Care SA.
- Commensurate with the limited facilities that will be re-established on the site, re-establish the Veterans Service Guarantee that was in place at the Repat.
- Establish a café and a gym for use by in-patients, out-patients and entitled others.
- Encourage and support the on-site presence of an ex-service organisation (Colonel Light Gardens RSL Sub-Branch has been suggested) or a veterans support centre
- The role of the above should include custody/care of the RGH Chapel, SPF Hall, the Peace Garden and an associated involvement in the conduct of commemorative services.
- Integrate into any re-development the “memorialisation” of the site through street names, information boards and imagery.
- Embrace and support RSL Care SA’s proposed homeless veteran support option, with a strong focus on Daw House as the preferred location and Wards 1 and 2 as a possible secondary location. It was noted however that acceptance of the RSL Care SA homeless veterans support proposal would not of itself create a “veterans precinct” and more veteran related health support would need to be established if the promise of a “Veteran’s precinct” was to be met.
- There was some preference for the re-establishment of a palliative care and hospice facility. This proposal was driven by the veteran link with the site and the fact that many current members of the ex-service community had family members who had passed at the Daw House Hospice. The contrast between the peaceful grounds of the Repat and the new facility at Flinders was noted

The suggestions above have considerable merit and there is an admirable synergy between many of them.

There is still time for you to have your say. You can support the proposals in this paper or you can add your own suggestions. Simply go to the website www.yoursay.sa.gov.au/repatriation - but do it before the consultation period closes at 5.00pm on Sunday 16th September 2018.

Remember we are a “family” and if accepted your suggestion will, potentially, benefit all within our “Veteran family.”

Bill Denny

RSL SA Repat Representative

19th August 2018