

## **Female Veterans and Families Forum**

The first Female Veterans and Families Forum was held in Canberra on 6 December 2016, with Minister Tehan attending along with female veterans and representatives from veterans and family groups. More than 9,000 women currently serve in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), which is around 16% of the total permanent ADF.

The forum provided a platform for female veterans, partners and other family members to raise issues directly with the Government and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). There was a clear message that our female veterans do not feel they receive the recognition they deserve for their service.

There were many comments on a range of communication and transition issues raised at the forum, resulting in the development of a paper to be presented to the Minister discussing areas of improvement that are specific to families and the important role they play in supporting the veteran community.

The focus on the health and welfare of female veterans and improving access to services and information was highlighted, as was a model for future forums to achieve a collaborative voice and scrutiny on ex-service organisations to ensure evidence-based services are delivered.

**Footnote:** P.V.A. Australia Inc. National President Narelle Bromhead OAM and National Secretary Rona Lunney represented partners and families on this forum.