



A message from the Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Force

20 April 2021

Colleagues

On 19 April 2021, the Prime Minister announced the Australian Government would establish a Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

The Royal Commission will examine systemic issues and common themes in past deaths by suicide. These include suspected suicides, and lived experience of suicide risks of ADF members and veterans.

We will support the Royal Commission and continue to do all we can to achieve the prevention of suicide among current and former serving members of the ADF. We are working closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs, with the shared commitment that the only acceptable number of defence and veteran deaths by suicide is zero.

The Royal Commission's Terms of Reference will be determined in consultation with the defence and veteran community, states, and territories. We expect these will cover a range of themes including: the availability and quality of health and support services; pre-service and post-service issues for members, veterans, and their families; and risk factors of current and former ADF members who have attempted or contemplated suicide.

The Royal Commission will complement the Government's existing initiative to establish a permanent National Commission to proactively deal with future issues, including taking on the recommendations of a Royal Commission.

Given the complex issues for consideration, and the importance of hearing from ADF current and former serving members, veterans and their families, Defence personnel are encouraged to participate in the consultation process.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel, the Hon Darren Chester MP, will lead a public consultation process on the draft Terms of Reference.

The [themes for consultation](#) and further information can be found on DVA's [Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide](#) website. To contribute to the consultation process, please email royalcommission@dva.gov.au. We will keep you regularly informed of progress in establishing the Royal Commission and the office of the National Commissioner, as well as further avenues for consultation as these are developed.

If you, or someone you know, is concerned about mental health or thoughts of suicide or self-harm, we encourage you to take action now by speaking with a friend, family member, your commander or supervisor. You can also contact your local Garrison Health Centre, the All Hours ADF support line on 1800 628 036, the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608, or for APS employees the Employee Assistance Program on 1300 687 327. Further key contacts for welfare support can be found [here](#).

Thank you

Greg Moriarty
Secretary

Angus J Campbell, AO, DSC
General



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