



## The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel

### MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 21 April 2021

### CONSULTATION OPEN FOR ROYAL COMMISSION

VETERANS and their families, ex-service organisations, states and territories, peak bodies and other interested stakeholders are being encouraged to provide their input for the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide announced yesterday.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said it was vital that all those involved in the Defence and veteran support system had their say through the Royal Commission.

"Over the coming weeks I will be undertaking a public consultation process to ensure the Royal Commission is focused and based on the experiences and perspectives of those who have been impacted by Defence and veteran suicide," Mr Chester said.

"Any member of the community or any organisation is able to provide their input regarding the broad themes released on Monday 19 April and I would encourage them to provide their feedback.

"As part of this process it is important that all state and territories are involved and I have written to my counterparts in each jurisdiction to seek their assistance in consulting with the community.

"We must all work together to ensure that this Royal Commission can start promptly and put us on the path to a better understanding of suicide in the serving and ex-serving community, and importantly, how we can continue to improve the supports available to service men and women, and their families."

Following consultation, all feedback will be provided to the Attorney-General's Department which will lead the drafting of the Terms of Reference. Interested individuals, groups, peak bodies, ex-service organisations and community members are able to review the broad themes for consultation on the [DVA website](#) and can contribute to the consultation process by emailing [royalcommission@dva.gov.au](mailto:royalcommission@dva.gov.au).

Mr Chester said the Government was committed to ensuring ADF members, veterans and their families had access to the support they need, when and where they need it, especially those who are vulnerable or at risk.

"Importantly, I want to assure the Defence and veteran community that the Government will continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of serving and ex-serving personnel and their families," Mr Chester said.

"For anyone who may find this process difficult, help is available and can make a difference. Current serving members can access support through their local Garrison Health Centre or by contacting the All Hours Support Line available 24/7 on 1800 628 036.

*Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling provides free and confidential support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Help is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit [www.OpenArms.gov.au](http://www.OpenArms.gov.au)*

“Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling provides support and counselling to current ADF members, veterans and their families and can be contacted 24/7 on 1800 011 046.

“Those who wish to remain anonymous can also contact Safe Zone Support on 1800 142 072. This is a free and anonymous counselling line established for veterans and their families who may have concerns about anonymity.”

**ENDS**

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