



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Minister for Defence Personnel

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC

MEDIA RELEASE

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PUTTING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES FIRST - NEW STUDY TO IMPROVE ADVOCACY SERVICES

A MAJOR study to improve advocacy services for veterans and their families has commenced under the leadership of the former Chair of the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, Mr Robert Cornall AO.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said the study was part of the Turnbull Government's ongoing commitment to put veterans and their families first and delivers on a significant part of the Government's response to the concerns raised in the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Reference's committee report: *The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans*.

"Veterans and their families deserve to have easy access to the best services available to them and this study has been established to ensure that happens," Mr Chester said.

"This study will go a long way to helping our younger veterans and their families navigate the compensation claims and appeals processes and it will address a number of improvements to the current advocacy model which were recommended in the report.

"Mr Cornall has an excellent track record in working with the Defence and legal communities, and I'm confident he'll bring all his experience to bear on finding new ways to ensure those who've served our nation get the best possible advocacy."

Mr Cornall will talk to younger veterans, female veterans, veterans' families, ex-service organisations, and the broader Defence community in coming months.

The latest research will be reviewed, veterans' advocacy services in other countries will be examined, and advocacy models in other areas, such as the legal services, community, and disability sectors will be looked at.

"I hope many individuals and organisations will contribute their experiences and ideas to the study," Mr Chester said.

Separate to this study, Mr Chester said the recent passage of new veterans' legislation will also have a big impact on improving the health and wellbeing of those who have served their country.

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546). VVCS is a service founded by Vietnam veterans.

For more information about the advocacy study, visit www.dva.gov.au/AdvocacyStudy or send an email to advocacy.study@dva.gov.au.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Whil Prendergast: 0427 672 815

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

Office of the Hon. Darren Chester MP, Canberra.

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