



**PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP**

**MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL  
THE HON. DAN TEHAN MP**

**MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGED CARE  
THE HON. SUSSAN LEY MP**

### **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Government supports veterans and ADF personnel**

The Turnbull Government will increase support for veterans and ADF members, including an employment initiative to support people moving from military service to civilian life.

We recognise that the transition from the services into civilian life can be challenging for some members, and we are committed to providing the required support to re-enter the workforce. The Prime Minister will host the first Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Initiative in November – bringing together business leaders and veterans to find ways to better use the valuable skills and leadership of former service personnel into our modern economy.

We will ensure ADF members and veterans who face mental health challenges, either during service or once they have left the ADF, can access the mental health services they require.

Today we announce a review of suicide and self-harm prevention services available to veterans and ADF members. The National Mental Health Commission in conjunction with clinical experts and a reference group comprised of current and former members of Defence, will analyse the effectiveness of existing suicide and self-harm prevention services.

One suicide is one too many, and as a society we must address mental health issues together to find solutions. The Government has already announced an additional \$192 million to tackle the mental health challenges across our community.

In preparing the Government's response to the Senate Inquiry into the Mental Health of Australian Defence Force Members and Veterans, it became clear that this was a complex issue that required a forensic examination of how we tackle suicide and self-harm.

The review of services for veterans and Defence personnel announced today will build on this work by providing an independent analysis of the services provided.

The Government is announcing that in North Queensland - home to a large veteran community - the first Suicide Prevention Trial Site will be established. This will occur through the North Queensland Primary Health Network. As part of its work, the trial will focus on veterans' mental health.

This will be one of 12 innovative, front-line trials in our fight against suicide which will improve understanding of the challenges and work to develop best-practice services which we can be applied nationwide.

All of these sites will incorporate a focus on veterans and Defence personnel.

The review will provide an interim report in December and a full report in February next year.

It will consider:

- The range of services available to current and former serving members and their families
- The effectiveness of these services in supporting members and their families while they serve, as they transition from Defence to civilian life, and later in their civilian life
- Any duplication or gaps in current services and how they might be addressed
- Any barriers to current and former serving members accessing services, taking into account cultural relevance, availability of providers, employment, functional capacity and degree of ill health
- The extent to which former serving members utilise services provided by other parts of government, ex-service organisations, the private sector or non-government organisations
- Whether there is balance in the way in which the military experience is understood by and communicated to the Australian community, recognising the impacts that it can have on the mental health of those who have served but also the positive benefits that are derived from the military experience
- The reporting of and incidence of suicide amongst serving and former serving ADF members compared to the broader Australian community.

This review in conjunction with our \$6 million investment in the Phoenix Australia Centenary Institute will improve our understanding of mental health challenges and lead to better treatment for our veterans and the wider community.

Our investments complement the \$46.4 million for veterans and Defence personnel to access free mental health treatment announced in this year's budget.

The Government's response to the Senate Inquiry on the Mental Health of ADF Members and Veterans will be tabled when Parliament resumes.

The Government is funding the national rollout of an alternative dispute resolution and case management system that significantly cuts the time taken to process claims.

The Government has a responsibility to the men and women who defend our liberties. The Government is committed to action on veteran and ADF suicide and is working with the wider veteran community to achieve this.

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