



**Mental Health  
Australia**  
Media release

# Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report

11 August 2022 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mental Health Australia welcomes the urgent and immediate recommendations in the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report, particularly the focus on improved coordination of support services for veterans and their families.

Mental Health Australia CEO, Dr Leanne Beagley says, "This interim report puts the interests of serving and ex-serving Defence Force members, and their families, at the forefront of systemic reform."

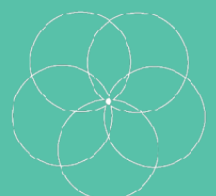
"Mental Health Australia commends the Commission's emphasis on ensuring the voice of lived experience has been integral to the Report."

"Veterans and Defence personnel offer incredible service and sacrifice to protect and promote the interests of the Australian community. In turn, the Australian community, through our government, must protect and promote the lifetime wellbeing of veterans."

"The Interim Report released today further highlights the systemic reform needed to better support Australia's veterans and their families as they transition to life after service."

"Mental Health Australia welcomes the urgent recommendations delivered in the interim report, including the following:

- Without delay the Government should implement legislative reforms to simplify and harmonise the veteran compensation and rehabilitation system
- The Government should remove the Average Staffing Level cap policy at the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to enable DVA to clear the backlog of claims for serving and ex-serving members by 31 March 2024
- Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs should improve access to information for serving and ex-serving members and their families.



“In the joint submission by Suicide Prevention Australia and Mental Health Australia – developed in consultation with both support service providers and people with lived experience of military service and suicide – there was a strong consensus regarding key underlying issues relating to Defence and veteran suicides.”

“These issues are interrelated and can be expressed in different ways, but of great significance is the moral violation from the feeling of betrayal when commanding officers, the Defence institution, or Australian society in general, do not act in veteran’s best interests.” Dr Beagley said.

“We look forward to continue working with the Commission and hold hope that the outcomes of this in-depth inquiry will contribute to the substantive reform required, and ultimately the saving of lives”

*The Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide was presented to the Governor-General, His Excellency, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) on 11 August 2022.*

*To read the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Interim Report visit [defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/royal-commission-defence-and-veteran-suicide-interim-report](https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/royal-commission-defence-and-veteran-suicide-interim-report)*

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