

Statement

The Hon Natalie Suleyman MP

Minister for Veterans
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Youth



Monday, 9 September 2024

STATEMENT FROM THE MINISTER FOR VETERANS

Today the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide handed down its final report.

This will be a difficult time for some in the Defence and veteran community.

We extend our highest gratitude to the brave veterans and families who contributed to the Commonwealth Royal Commission by sharing their stories and lived experiences.

The Victorian Government acknowledges the release of the Royal Commission's final report, and we thank the Commissioners for their important work.

We also acknowledge the joint statement released today by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence the Hon Richard Marles MP and Minister for Veterans Affairs the Hon Matt Keogh MP and their commitment to a timely response.

Veteran suicide is a national tragedy, and it is our collective responsibility to address this issue with compassion and action. The loss of a veteran has far-reaching consequences, affecting not just their loved ones, but also the broader community and all who have served.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide shines a light on the wellbeing challenges faced by our veterans and their families. This is a landmark opportunity to continue on a path to greater understanding that will help make sure our ex-service community receives the support and assistance they deserve.

We will carefully review the findings and recommendations of the final report – in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government and other states and territories – for the benefit of all who have served, continue to serve, and will serve in the future.

We continue to support Victoria's veterans with a range of initiatives including the Veterans Card – Victoria, Public Sector Veteran Employment Strategy, RSL Active program, and pilot Recognition of Prior Learning for Veterans program.

We also support veterans through long-running grant programs that fund community organisations for commemorative activities and facility upgrades, and initiatives that educate the community about our war and peacekeeping history.

A key pillar of our continuing support for our veterans is engaging, listening, and working with veterans and ex-service organisations.

I understand many veterans, service personnel and family members may find this period difficult or distressing.

Around-the-clock support is available from the following organisations:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Open Arms: 1800 011 046 or openarms.gov.au
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 or suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- Defence Member and Family Helpline: 1800 624 608
- Defence All-hours Support Line: 1800 628 036 - for ADF members and their families

Media contact: Georgina King 0419 001 409 | georgina.king@minstaff.vic.gov.au