



THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

THE HON MATT KEOGH MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL

VETERANS PRIORITISED IN FEDERAL BUDGET

The Australian Government is investing in a better future for Defence personnel, veterans and families, responding to important recommendations put forward by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and delivering on commitments from the Federal Election.

Our veterans have protected us and in return we must look after them. Key investments made in this Budget seek to improve the claims process for veterans, simplify legislation and ultimately better support Defence personnel, veterans and families as they not only need, but deserve.

In implementing the Government's Response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's interim report, the Australian Government will;

- invest \$233.9 million to engage 500 new frontline staff at DVA to eliminate the compensation claims backlog, delivering on a key election commitment made by the Government;
- invest \$9.5 million into developing a pathway for simplification and harmonisation of veterans legislation;
- invest \$87 million to modernise IT systems in the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), improving claims processing;
- commit \$24.3 million to provide increased support to veterans who are having their claims processed and to improve modelling capabilities needed to forecast and manage future demand for DVA services; and
- commit \$15.5 million to support DVA's continued and timely engagement with the Royal Commission.

The Budget delivers on our election commitment to provide long-term benefits for Defence personnel, veterans and families, with significant investments including;

- \$46.7 million for 10 new Veterans' and Families' Hubs across the country, more than doubling the size of the existing network, providing critical services to veterans and families in areas with significant Defence and veteran communities.
- \$24 million to deliver the Veteran Employment Program, which will not only support veterans as they transition to civilian life, but also champion veteran employment by raising awareness of the skills and experience veterans have to offer the civilian workforce.
- \$4.7 million for the development of the Operation Navigator smartphone application to better support Australian Defence Force personnel as they transition to the civilian workforce.
- \$97.9 million for a \$1,000 increase to annual Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) payments, providing additional financial support to around 27,000 of our most vulnerable veterans.
- \$46.2 million to boost Defence personnel and veterans' home ownership.

The Australian Government recognises the important role ex-service and community organisations play in supporting Defence personnel, veterans and families and the Budget commits \$8.1 million to community focused programs that not only support, but pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our veterans. These commitments include marking war graves, the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Sydney and combating veteran homelessness in Darwin.

The Government is committed to providing practical services and supports to Defence personnel, veterans and families to ensure a better future for the veteran community.

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