



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

BILLS

**Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting
Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Thursday, 14 February 2019

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 14 February 2019	Source House
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Questioner	Responder
Speaker Chester, Darren, MP	Question No.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Defence Personnel, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Deputy Leader of the House) (09:59): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019. This bill will acknowledge and give thanks to veterans and their families for making the sacrifices they have made while serving in the Australian Defence Force.

As the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, I recognise that the Australian people value our military and those who have committed to defending our nation, and of course, as a government we are absolutely committed to putting veterans first and, indeed, putting veterans' families first.

The introduction of this bill sees the realisation of an Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant where everyone can acknowledge, support and pay respect to all who have served in the Australian Army, the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force. Australia has a proud military history and the covenant will enable Australians from all walks of life to pay homage to this.

The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant will be enshrined into legislation, providing an opportunity for the nation to recognise the service and the sacrifice of all who have committed to defend the nation, and pledge their commitment to support veterans and their families.

The bill also provides for acknowledgement of the demands and challenges that a veteran or their family may experience during and after military service. For these sacrifices, we acknowledge that additional support may be required and where support is required it will be provided in a way that is appropriate and sensitive to their individual circumstances and in a way that elevates their self-esteem.

Along with the covenant a veteran card and lapel pin will be released—those who have an eligibility for a DVA medical treatment card will receive a veteran card. The lapel pin for veterans will provide a way for the Australian community and businesses to recognise a veteran and for veterans to reconnect with one another.

The bill also includes a statement requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs to adopt a beneficial approach when interpreting legislation and applying a fair, just and consistent approach to veterans' claims so that the public may trust and have confidence in the determinations made. I thank the Prime Minister for his assistance in preparing this bill and I commend this bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.