



DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL OFFICE

A member of the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations

2 August 2019

MEDIA STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - NEED FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE, NOT ILL- CONSIDERED AND INACCURATE CRITICISM

The Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA) has become concerned at the recent increase in ill-considered and oft-times inaccurate criticism of DVA by some in the media and on social media platforms. Commentary borders at times on crass enthusiasm for a story and less about the care of veterans. DVA and its staff in recent years has performed remarkably well in coming to grips with the many and varied challenges they are facing.

Whether it is veteran suicide, which is surely a national problem, veteran homelessness, the transition of individuals from the ADF to civilian life, the availability of psychological support, veteran employment or the myriad of other services it provides the leadership and staff of DVA are responding positively.

In commenting on the situation, the National President of DFWA, Kel Ryan, stated that it was all too easy to criticise, to highlight in the public space where issues or decisions sometimes do not satisfy expectations, leading to baseless and inaccurate assumptions being made about DVA in the discharge of its statutory duties.

As someone who has been involved in veterans' issues at local, state and national level for over thirty years, Kel Ryan stated that he 'could attest that DVA is in a better space now than at any other time in the past'.

He proffered that the availability of a huge range of support services for veterans today is a world away from their utter scarcity in the post-Vietnam period where none existed for a long time. The availability of these services is universal, social media, a phone call, the local ex-service organisation or mates.

To better serve the interests of the veteran community, including their families, a considered and constructive dialogue is vital, not the current over the top uninformed negative coverage.

Contacts

Executive Director:

Alf Jaugietis (0438) 282 284

www.dfwa.org.au

National President:

Kel Ryan (0418) 759 120

DFWA – Voice of the Defence Community