



# DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE ASSOCIATION

PO Box 4166 KINGSTON ACT 2604 • (02) 6265 9530 • [www.dfwa.org.au](http://www.dfwa.org.au)

## MEDIA RELEASE

### SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL COMMISSIONER FOR DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION

07 February 2020

The Defence Force Welfare Association welcomes the Prime Minister's announcements to establish a National Independent Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, and a Families Advocate within the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The National President, Kel Ryan, congratulated the Prime Minister for making some positive steps forward in supporting our Defence members, veterans and their families:

"The poor mental health, physical health and wellbeing of some transitioning veterans far too often results in financial distress, homelessness, substance abuse, incarceration and tragically suicide.

"It is critical the Independent Commissioner and the Families Advocate examine the entire spectrum of inter-related and complex issues which impact on the wellbeing of veterans and their families.

"The true impact of the transition process from military service to civilian life demands urgent attention," said Ryan.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced the appointment of a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. The Commissioner will be independent and empowered with 'Royal Commissioner-Like' authorities—to call witnesses, compel evidence and have the remedies available to those who will not cooperate. It will extend to the private sphere, to not-for-profits and charities as well as government departments including Defence and Veterans' Affairs.

The Prime Minister also announced the establishment of the Families Advocate within the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Families Advocate will assist the families of veterans' dealing with various issues.

**End**

#### Contact Information

National President, Kel Ryan	<a href="mailto:president@dfwa.org.au">president@dfwa.org.au</a>	0418 759 120
Executive Director, Alf Jaugietis	<a href="mailto:national@dfwa.org.au">national@dfwa.org.au</a>	0438 282 284

#### About

The Defence Force Welfare Association was established in 1959 for the purpose of promoting and protecting the interests and welfare of current and former members of the Australian Defence Force, veterans and their families