



MEDIA RELEASE

VETERANS — ‘NO’ TO ROYAL COMMISSION EX-SERVICE ORGANISATIONS ROUND TABLE RESOLUTION

22 June 2019

The call for a Royal Commission into veteran suicide must be denied.

Suicide among the veteran community is one part of a national tragedy. Suicide must be addressed as a national issue.

The impact of suicide on families and the wider Australian community is immeasurable. The rate of suicide across all sections of society must cause us all to reflect on what we as individuals and collectively as a nation can do better to meet the needs of those among us who are suffering mentally and physically.

The incidences of suicide among veterans of the Australian Defence Force is a heartbreak that pains us all. This pain is particularly felt among the various ex-service organisations that are often called upon to answer the question of, “Why?” Why did this happen?

“*The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans*” (dated 15 August 2017) is the report of the Senate Inquiry into the rate and causes of suicide among veterans of the ADF. The Reports’ 24 recommendations provide a way forward and identifies strategies to address the tragedy of suicide among the veteran community. These Recommendations must be implemented in full by government, the ADF and DVA.

The fourteen ESO members of the Ex-Service Round Table (ESORT) resolved at its quarterly meeting on 20th June 2019 that government, the ADF and DVA must implement all the recommendations of this Senate Inquiry and those of the many other studies of recent years in order to address the rate of suicide among the veteran community.

To pursue yet another inquiry will add a further burden to families and those individuals who, for a variety of reasons, suffer because of their service. The additional cost of extra studies and the time spent will further divert the nations focus from confronting this national tragedy. Calls for a Royal Commission into the suicide rate and its causes among members and former members of the ADF, while well meaning, are not supported.

Suicide must be addressed by governments and communities across the nation. To focus on one section of the community has the potential to deny a focus on the many other elements of the community who also suffer mentally and physically in the service of the nation.

This is a time to unite to solve this national tragedy not to divide us as a nation.

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