



National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention

15 September 2021

To the veterans and members of the Australian Defence Force, families, friends, and others in the wider Defence community who have engaged with my work,

I am writing to let you know that my appointment as the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention concludes today. It has been my very great privilege to engage with you in the course of this extremely important work.

Earlier today I handed the Report of my Independent Review of Past Defence and Veteran Suicides to the Australian Government. My report contains 39 recommendations to the Government about immediate actions that can be taken in support of efforts to prevent these tragic deaths by suicide in the Australian Defence and Veteran community.

I understand my Report will be tabled in Parliament, and referred to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (Royal Commission) to inform its inquiries. The Government will decide when the Report will be tabled. Once it has been tabled, the Report will be available on my website at nationalcommissionerdvsp.gov.au, where you will also be able to order a hard copy.

I want to especially thank everyone in the community, including families and those experiencing suicidality, who came forward to share their deeply personal experiences with me. The courage you have demonstrated has been humbling, and your insights have greatly enhanced this important work.

The Government has announced that subject to the passage of legislation, the functions and powers of an ongoing National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention will commence either after the Royal Commission concludes, or at an earlier point if recommended by the Royal Commission

I hope that in due course we will see the permanent establishment of a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. In the meantime, if you are interested in doing so, I encourage you to engage with the Royal Commission. I am very pleased that the crucial task of inquiring into Defence and veteran suicide will continue through the Royal Commission.

Commissioner Nick Kaldas APM, the Chair of the Royal Commission, has asked me to give you the attached letter, and fact sheet, introducing you to the Royal Commission, inviting your participation, and setting out the legal assistance available to people who wish to engage with the Royal Commission.

More information about the Royal Commission is available on their website, which is accessible at defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au. If you have any further questions, you may wish to contact the Royal Commission at dvsrsrc.enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au or by phone on 1800 329 095.

My revised reporting deadline of 15 September 2021, was set by the Supplementary Terms of Reference issued to me by the Government on 6 August 2021. These revised Terms of Reference are available on the Office of the National Commissioner website at nationalcommissionerdvsp.gov.au/publications/terms-reference-independent-review.

These Supplementary Terms of Reference ensure my work complements, but will not duplicate, the work of the Royal Commission. The earlier Terms of Reference provided by the Government on 8 December last year are also available on my website at the link above. Those Terms of Reference provide greater detail about the focus of the Review.

Again, I sincerely thank you for your courage and resilience in sharing your personal experiences, stories and insights with me. Again, it has been a privilege to work with you.

Yours sincerely

Dr Bernadette Boss CSC

Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention

Attachments: Letter from Commissioner Nick Kaldas APM
Factsheet – Legal Assistance – Defence and Veteran Suicide Royal Commission