



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE

29 July 2020

NEW INITIATIVE STRENGTHENS HOUSING SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Improving understanding of veteran homelessness among housing providers will be the focus of a new set of industry standards, training materials and a toolkit being developed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA).

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said any instance of veteran homelessness was concerning and this initiative will strengthen the relationship between housing providers, DVA, ex-service organisations (ESOs) and Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling.

“Where DVA is made aware of a veteran who is homeless or at risk of homelessness, all of these organisations work together to ensure they are appropriately looked after, and this joint initiative between DVA and CHIA will raise further awareness of veterans' unique risk factors,” Mr Chester said.

“Partnering with CHIA on this work is vital as it represents all community housing providers across Australia, managing more than 100,000 rental properties, which will allow us to connect with veteran communities in all states and territories.

“The Australian Government is committed to better understanding homelessness among veterans and will continue to support initiatives, such as this one, so that we are delivering quality services to those who may be struggling post-service.”

There are many factors that can contribute to homelessness, such as relationship breakdown, unemployment, and mental health issues, and the Government is focused on mitigating these factors before veterans and their families find themselves at risk of being homeless.

This has included Defence adopting a needs-based approach to transition, better employment support, free mental health care for life, and payments for those veterans in financial stress while their claim for compensation is in progress with DVA.

Mr Chester said currently there was no single source of data on veterans' homelessness and the Government has actively sought to better understand and address the risk factors and the instances of homelessness in the veteran community.

“In 2021, for the first time the Australian Census will have a question about Australian Defence Force service, which will provide valuable data on the veteran community and allow Government to better deliver services and support for veterans and their families, including homelessness services.”

While the states and territories have primary responsibility for delivering housing and homelessness services, the Australian Government provides more than \$6 billion per year for housing and homelessness services for all Australians, including veterans.

Veterans who are struggling with their living situation or are at risk of homelessness are encouraged to contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs on 1800 555 254 or Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling on 1800 011 046 who will work with them to access the most appropriate care.

ENDS

MEDIA CONTACTS:
Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820
DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT.

Unless otherwise indicated in this document, it is Copyright of the Commonwealth of Australia and the following applies:

Copyright Commonwealth of Australia.

This material does not purport to be the official or authorised version. Reproduction and use of this material is subject to a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Australia License](#).

You should make independent inquiries and obtain appropriate advice before relying on the information in any important matter.

This document has been distributed by LexisNexis Australia. All queries regarding the content should be directed to the author of this document.