



## The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel

### MEDIA RELEASE

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### VETERANS TO BE COUNTED ON 2021 CENSUS

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will be able to locate and help more veterans under a plan to include a new question in the 2021 Census.

The Federal Government expects to have better data to help guide services and support for Australia's veterans, with a specific question asking whether someone has served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said the Census question would provide the most up-to-date figures on veterans in the Australian community.

"The Census data will provide a better understanding of how many veterans we have and where they live, allowing us to deliver the right services in the right areas to support their needs," Mr Chester said.

"The Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first and having a Census question has been a key priority for the ex-service community.

"The improved data will help inform our policy response to issues facing veterans, such as health, housing and employment."

Tabled in Parliament this week, the *Census and Statistics Amendment (Statistical Information) Regulations 2019* (the Regulations) will allow for the inclusion of the question. The resulting data will have the potential to help the federal, state and territory government agencies, and ex-service organisations better target and improve services and support, particularly for the large proportion of veterans who are currently unknown to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

"Historically, just because a person served in the ADF doesn't mean they required services or support from DVA, making it hard to give a definitive answer on how many veterans are in Australia," Mr Chester said.

"Over the past few years Defence and DVA have been addressing this challenge and now when someone enlists they are registered with DVA, and all transitioning ADF members are automatically issued with a DVA White Card, which provides treatment for any mental health condition regardless of the cause."

Veterans' Affairs Ministers from across Australia recognised the importance of this issue, unanimously agreeing in 2017 that 'a question about veterans should be included in the next Australian Census'. This was reinforced in 2018, where Ministers recognised the need for robust data on veterans' issues and strongly endorsed the need for a veteran indicator in the 2021 Census.

**ENDS**

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