



## The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel

### MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 3 August 2020

#### PRACTICAL STEPS TO SUPPORT VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH

General Practitioners (GPs) across Australia now have access to a new 24/7 hotline to assist them in supporting the health and wellbeing of veterans.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said the Veteran Mental Health GP Assistance Hotline forms part of a \$1.4 million investment in practical steps to meet the needs of the veteran community.

"GPs play an important role in coordinating a patient's care, requesting additional tests, treatment or assessment by other health professionals, and making referrals to relevant Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) services or programs," Mr Chester said.

"The new Veteran Mental Health GP Assistance Hotline will provide GPs with access to free expert advice on the unique mental health challenges that our veterans can face from health practitioners who are clinically trained in veteran mental health.

"Our veterans make a great contribution to our country and the Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first and providing the services they need when and where they need them.

"The hotline is immediately available and GPs can access free expert advice on veteran mental health issues by calling 1800 VET 777 (1800 838 777)."

In addition to the GP Assistance Hotline, a General Advice Hotline will be available to anyone in Australia who wants to access information and resources on veteran mental health and treatments.

A Community of Practice (COP) for PTSD Trauma Recovery Program providers will also be established, creating a network of PTSD service providers dedicated to the provision of evidence-informed mental health care for veterans.

"This funding will improve awareness of veteran mental health issues in our health care system and has significant potential to have a real impact on the health and wellbeing of our veteran community," Mr Chester said.

The GP hotline and COP form part of the Australian Government's expanded services to ensure veterans and their treating clinicians can access expert advice and guidance on treatment and support for veterans with mental health issues.

This new initiative is aligned with the [Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan](#), launched in May this year. Particularly the objectives of improving the quality of care from health providers through professional development, and using shared knowledge and research to

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ensure the best available evidence informs our approach to improving veteran mental health and wellbeing.

**ENDS**

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