



A message to everyone in the Defence and Veteran communities

My name is Nick Kaldas and I am the Chair of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

I am writing to you to let you know who we are at the Royal Commission and what we hope to achieve as we deliver on the very important task that we have been set.

As you may know, on 8 July 2021 the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), issued Letters Patent which established the Royal Commission.

I and my fellow Commissioners, the Hon James Douglas QC and Dr Peggy Brown AO, will produce an interim report by 11 August 2022 and a final report by 15 June 2023. Our terms of reference are broad, and we are empowered to investigate a wide range of issues, themes and factors.

And to do this we need your help and your stories, so that we can learn as much as we can about the issues and situations surrounding the deaths by suicide of defence personnel and veterans. We want to hear, learn and then act, informed by your accounts and your experiences.

We will also review previous inquiries and research, as well as look at experiences in other comparable countries.

We will do our best to ensure that everyone, including individuals, family members, communities, organisations and their members, are supported to tell their stories. There will be a variety of ways in which this can be done: written submissions, private sessions, public hearings, and more.

We will support you with counsellors, if you need that as you engage with our process, and we will work to ensure that your own support networks, including health and family networks, are there to assist you, as they are best placed to know what works for you.

As we are currently in the establishment phase of staffing-up the Royal Commission with a group of dedicated people who will assist us to deliver on our important task, we appreciate your patience as we get things underway.

We will periodically post updates on the activities of the Royal Commission on our website. However, to ensure you are kept up to date with the latest on the Royal Commission activities, please go to our website www.defenceveteransuicide.gov.au and sign up to receive our regular email updates.

I look forward to working with you to ensure lessons are learned that will prevent future deaths by suicide.

Yours sincerely

Nick Kaldas APM
26 August 2021