

Theme 6: Matters of Importance to the Whole Defence and Veteran Ecosystem

Update on Defence's implementation of the **Australian Government Response** to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Factsheet Themes

Defence has produced six theme-based factsheets outlining the key milestones and reforms delivered as part of the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide:

1. Serving the Nation
2. Misconduct, Complaints and Military Justice
3. Governance and Accountability
4. Health Care for Serving and Ex-Serving Members
5. Transition and Support for Ex-Serving Members
6. **Matters of Importance to the Whole Defence and Veteran Ecosystem**

Defence Priority Reforms:

The Department of Defence is implementing the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, related to the theme of **Matters of Importance to the Whole Defence and Veteran Ecosystem**. This factsheet highlights key reform on recommendations for which Defence has primary or shared responsibility.

The recommendations align with five priority areas defined by the Royal Commission — referred to as the 'lines of effort' — supported by enabling actions to reduce suicide and suicidality among serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members.

These lines of effort are to:

- prevent harm
- intervene early
- improve communication, coordination and collaboration
- build capability and capacity
- strengthen oversight and accountability.

Support Information:

Visit www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/crisis-support/helplines for information on support available internal and external to Defence.

Key Impacts:

- The establishment of the Lived Experience Advisory Forum to ensure reforms meet **real-world** needs.
- Clearer, safer processes to **prevent** and respond to family and domestic violence (FDV).
- Improved **support** and service access for Defence and veteran families through coordinated Defence–Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) initiatives.
- Enhanced **visibility** and authority of the Defence Family Advocate to strengthen advocacy for families nationwide.
- A unified and high-quality suicide data environment enabling faster insights and improved **prevention**.
- Stronger Defence data governance, integration and catalogue standards aligned with One Defence Data.
- Better **wellbeing** planning and prevention enabled by quality data for commanders across the Australian Defence Force (ADF).
- A **coordinated** Defence–DVA research system with lived experience embedded across governance, design and evaluation.

1) Preventing Harm and Supporting Defence Families

Recommendations 102-104

- Defence strengthened its response to FDV throughout 2025 by embedding clearer, trauma-informed guidance in the Complaints and Alternative Resolutions Manual and releasing a dedicated FDV Toolkit. These updates ensure commanders and managers are equipped to provide safer, more consistent and better-informed support to members and families.
- The introduction of new FDV incident categories in the Defence Enterprise Resource Planning Case Management Solution (DECMS) enhanced reporting accuracy and consistency, improving data quality and supporting more informed decision-making. This uplift aligns with commitments under the Defence Strategy (2023) and Action Plan (2024), enabling more targeted and effective interventions.
- The Defence Family Advocate (DFA) transitioned to a full-time statutory office holder in April 2024, meaning the role is now established and empowered by law. This strengthens Defence's capacity to elevate family issues and ensures sustained, high-level advocacy for Defence families.

2) Data, Governance and Enterprise-Wide Insight

Recommendations 106 & 109-113

- Transitioning the Defence Suicide Database to One Defence Data (1DD) in September 2025 has delivered more secure, integrated and accessible information, enabling faster and more reliable insights for decision-makers.
- Joint work between Defence, DVA and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to define a unified suicide data asset is laying the foundation for end-to-end visibility across the Defence lifecycle, supporting more targeted prevention and intervention efforts.
- Development of a baseline wellbeing dataset is enabling commanders to access high-quality, privacy-safe information to better understand risk and drive continuous improvement in wellbeing support.

3) Research, Evidence and Incorporating Lived Experience

Recommendation 114-117 & 121

- Defence and the DVA are implementing a unified, evidence-driven approach to people-related research, ensuring that policy, programs and services are informed by high-quality data and the lived experience of members, families and veterans. As part of this coordinated agenda, a detailed contextual review of Defence and veteran family wellbeing research commenced in December 2025 to map trends, risk and protective factors, and evidence gaps. Insights from this review will guide joint prioritisation and support future funding decisions across both agencies.
- A central Defence function for research governance, evaluation and prioritisation was created in May 2025, establishing a single gateway for all Defence–DVA research activity and ensuring effort is directed toward the highest-value issues.
- The establishment of the Lived Experience Advisory Forum in June 2025 embedded member and family perspectives directly into governance processes, helping shape research priorities, project design and evaluation so outcomes reflect real-world needs.
- Research, lived experience and innovation were further connected when DVA launched the Veteran and Family Learning and Innovation Network of Knowledge (VF-Link) model in August 2025. The model drives national-level prioritisation and improves how research insights are translated into policy and service improvements.

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