



Media Release

The Hon Warren Snowdon MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Defence Science & Personnel, & Indigenous Health

*******EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT 9TH OCTOBER*******

VA050

Sunday, 10 October 2010

HELP IS A PHONE CALL AWAY ON WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, reminded Australian veterans to look for the signs of mental health issues on World Mental Health Day, Sunday 10 October.

"I can't stress enough the importance of seeking help early, either through counselling services or general practitioners," Mr Snowdon said.

"The Department of Veterans' Affairs provides services for almost 48,000 people with mental health concerns, which range from anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and alcohol abuse."

The Gillard Labor Government is committed to ensuring appropriate and accessible mental health care for veterans and former serving members of the Australian Defence Force.

"Today, I'm pleased to announce we have extended the invaluable work of the *Veterans Line* after hours telephone counselling and crisis support service, with a new three year contract," Mr Snowdon said.

Through this service, counselling is provided by professional and experienced staff trained in crisis counselling who have expertise with veterans' issues.

In 2009–10, *Veterans Line* responded to around 4600 calls for help. *Veterans Line* operates free of charge for Australian veterans and eligible Defence Force members, their families and F-111 Fuel Tank Maintenance Workers and their families.

The service is part of the VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service providing support to veterans and their families around the clock.

The VVCS and *Veterans Line* can be contacted on **1800 011 046**.

For more information visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs mental health website: www.at-ease.dva.gov.au or the World Mental Health Day website www.wfmh.com/2010world_mental_health_day.htm.

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