



The Hon Andrew Gee MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel
Federal Member for Calare

MEDIA STATEMENT

16 August 2021

Support available for Australians who served in Afghanistan

This is a distressing time for many of our Defence personnel and veterans who served our nation in Afghanistan with courage, dignity and honour, and made such a significant contribution to the allied military effort.

We must never forget the 41 Australians who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Australia owes a great debt of gratitude to all our veterans who served with distinction and their families who supported them.

Over the past 20 years our nation has been unwavering in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan.

I understand many of those who served our nation in Afghanistan may feel frustrated, concerned and distressed at what is unfolding there.

My primary concern is the wellbeing of all of our veterans, Defence personnel, here at home and abroad, and their families.

I have asked the Department of Veterans' Affairs to contact the families of ADF members who lost their lives in Afghanistan, as well as any veterans the Department is aware of who could suffer adversely as a result of what is currently happening in Afghanistan.

I encourage anyone who served in Afghanistan to reach out to support services available to them and their families if they need it.

For those who are not currently registered with DVA, please know that help and support is there for you. Please call DVA if you would like to access services or call Open Arms for counselling support.

ADF personnel, veterans and their families can call Open Arms 24 hours a day on 1800 011 046.

If you need to talk but don't want to disclose your name, please call Safe Zone Support which offers anonymous counselling service for ADF personnel, veterans and their families. Its free and available 24/7. You can call 1800 142 072.

Please also reach out to any mates and their families who you know may be finding it difficult at this time. Although COVID restrictions are keeping us apart, there has never been a more critical time to ensure we stay connected.

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