



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Minister for Defence Personnel

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC

MEDIA RELEASE

27 July 2018

NEW PRACTITIONER SUPPORT SERVICE TO ASSIST IN VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

VETERANS in rural and remote areas will have improved access to mental health experts through a Federal Government initiative.

A new Practitioner Support Service (PSS) that will provide expert advice and consultation to doctors and agencies around Australia who are supporting and treating veterans with mental health issues, was launched today by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Darren Chester.

Mr Chester said that these professionals when working with veterans who have complex issues will now be able to gain access to a panel of highly experienced veteran and military mental health specialists.

"This initiative will strengthen the ability of health professionals and ex-service organisations across Australia to provide appropriate support to veterans in need," Mr Chester said.

"The service can be accessed by calling 1800 VET777 or through the Phoenix Australia website which also provides links to best practice and professional development.

"A general practitioner, for example working with an individual veteran, in a rural or remote setting will be able to get expert specialist advice on how to best treat and support an individual with complex PTSD, pain or other mental health issues.

In 2016, the Australian Government provided \$6 million to Phoenix Australia to establish the Centenary of Anzac Centre (the Centre) to target early intervention for mental health treatment for veterans. The Centre comprises a Treatment Research Centre and a PSS.

The Centre will investigate and test new treatments for PTSD and other mental health conditions and provide expert advice and support to mental health practitioners.

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546). VVCS is a service founded by Vietnam veterans.

“The PSS is the second arm of the Centre and aims to provide a multidisciplinary focus and guidance on the treatment of complex mental health problems in veterans and military personnel.

“The PSS will engage with a network of clinical experts and other leaders in the field to ensure specific advice is matched to practitioners’ needs and will use a variety of communication methods to ensure the service is available to all practitioners.

“Phoenix Australia has been an international leader in veteran and military posttraumatic mental health for over 20 years, and through the Centre, will greatly assist DVA and the Government in developing innovative policy, programs and services to improve mental health services provided to veterans and their families.”

ENDS

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Whil Prendergast: 02 6277 7820

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

Office of the Hon. Darren Chester MP, Canberra.

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546). VVCS is a service founded by Vietnam veterans.