

THE DUNT REPORT INTO 'MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN THE ADF AND TRANSITION THROUGH DISCHARGE'

The Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, the Hon. Warren Snowdon MP, and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon. Alan Griffin MP, released Professor David Dunt's independent Review of Mental Health Care in the ADF and Transition through Discharge report on 1 May 2009 and announced that the Government had accepted the report's recommendations.

"Professor Dunt's comprehensive report compared mental health care support in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) with world's best practice and assessed the extent to which the mental health needs of serving and transitioning ADF members were being met," Mr Snowdon said. "The report highlights the successes and gaps in the delivery of mental health programs and transition services and makes 52 recommendations to improve and extend those services."

Minister Snowdon and Minister Griffin said that the Government had accepted 49 of the wide-ranging recommendations and partially accepted the remaining 3, and the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) would now implement them. "The Government is committing \$83 million over four years to start the major program of reform that will address the gaps identified," Mr Snowdon said. "Implementing the recommendations will ensure our current and ex-service personnel have easier access to best practice mental health services. Preventive activities will be delivered by staff dedicated to mental health promotion, and multi-disciplinary health teams will ensure holistic care that also considers the needs of families."

The implementation plan has 10 elements that will provide improved mental health governance and policy including; more mental health staff; increased mental health training for ADF personnel and providers; enhanced prevention strategies including better research; improved mental health rehabilitation and transition services; and better facilities for mental health services.

Mr Griffin said while many of the recommendations can be acted upon immediately, others will take several years to achieve.

"Both DVA and Defence will report regularly to the Government on their progress in implementing the recommendations.

"This Government understands the importance of robust and effective mental health support services. With more than 25,000 troops having served overseas since 1999, we must remain focused on ensuring both Departments support the growing needs of our current and ex-service personnel."

A copy of the Review of Mental Health Care in the ADF and Transition through Discharge report, and the Government's response, is available at: www.defence.gov.au/health/DMH/Review.htm