



RSL calls for immediate action on Defence suicides

The RSL has called on the Federal Government to guarantee lifelong, quality healthcare for Australians who choose to stand and defend our country.

RSL National President Rod White said it was time for a united effort to understand and look after the mental health and wellbeing of current and ex-serving Defence personnel.

“We must not, cannot lose any more veterans to suicide,” Mr White said.

“Our veterans and their families deserve the very best support available and it’s time the government coordinated a united approach to give them that.

“Frustratingly, we don’t even know the size of this terrible tragedy – there is no register of service and ex-service suicides.”

Mr White said RSL Branches and sub-Branched across the country are offering new ways to support those who have served.

“For example, the RSL in Queensland is funding world first research into PTSD by the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation. It also coordinated a national PTSD forum last year, bringing together 450 local and international experts who created an action plan for better PTSD care in Australia.

“The RSL in South Australia has launched a reintegration program called *RSL Active*, which provides a range of activities and services to help all veterans and their families engage with their communities and have productive working lives.

“And RSL Young Veterans in Victoria is a dynamic community of veterans aged under-60 providing friendship, support and understanding for those leaving Defence.

“In New South Wales, RSL LifeCare provides no- or low-cost housing for dozens of young veterans under the *Homes for Heroes* program, which is supported by RSL NSW and local service clubs.

“And RSL DefenceCare has an incredible track record for helping thousands of service men and women throughout their lives whenever they are doing it tough.”

Mr White said veterans young and old didn’t have to look far to find help from the RSL’s national network.

“What is needed now from Government is a proactive and collective focus on providing emotional and physical support to Defence personnel well before they transition out of service and run the risk of feeling isolated or disenfranchised,” he said.

