



MEDIA RELEASE

19 November 2020

Due process must be assured in ADF investigation

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) says that, despite the horrific and reprehensible allegations, all personnel suspected of alleged war crimes in Afghanistan are entitled to due process and this must be assured in the pending further investigations.

This follows today's release of the Inspector-General's report and the investigation by New South Wales' Justice Paul Brereton into alleged unlawful killings and other possible breaches of the laws of armed conflict.

The RSL views the allegations as extremely serious but speculation has already impacted adversely on veterans who served in Afghanistan, the vast majority of whom are in no way involved in the alleged conduct.

RSL National President Greg Melick said the organisation was aware of the significant strain this matter had placed on all veterans and their families. The further investigations must ensure that service personnel are treated with procedural fairness, in accordance with due process and not pre-judged.

"Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel serve in a unique and highly challenging environment and the allegations, resulting inquiry, report, subsequent announcements and media speculation have caused considerable distress and mental health concerns.

"The RSL is committed to supporting all serving and ex-serving members of the ADF through the provision of wellbeing and general support to veterans and their families.

"We encourage any former or serving personnel suffering adverse impacts and distress to immediately contact their local RSL Sub-Branch for direction to access wellbeing and other support services or call Open Arms on 1800 011 046," General Melick said.

ENDS

National media contact: Tony Harrison | tony@wearebright.com.au | 0417 318 178