

# Air Force Association

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The Hon Darren Chester, MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

January 12th, 2021

Dear Minister

## **DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION**

The Air Force Association would like to reaffirm its opposition to the call from certain sections of the veteran community for a Royal Commission into Veteran Suicide. In 2019, the Association's National Board unanimously expressed its opposition on the basis there had already been several studies and inquiries on the matter.

The Association welcomed the Government's decision to establish the appointment of a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention that will provide advice on early intervention strategies and processes to improve the wellbeing of those at risk rather than expending funds on a Royal Commission that will determine already known causes.

The Association was represented at the first round of talks on Defence and veteran suicide with the Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. It is confident the independent, ongoing and investigative nature of this appointment has the better opportunity to influence reforms and the development of effective support programs that will help prevent veteran suicide. As you are aware, Dr Bernadette Boss is a well credentialed legal professional and an ADF veteran of several conflicts. Her Army veteran experience provides her with the context of the unique nature of military service. We believe Dr Boss is an appropriate choice for this most important position and we urge the confirmation of her appointment.

The Association appreciates there are differing views on the need for a Royal Commission. Its opposition to this high-level inquiry should not be construed as a lack of concern for our veterans but only to support the most effective strategy to improve the wellbeing of our service personnel and prevent suicide.

Yours sincerely

Carl Schiller, OAM, CSM  
National President