



## **DRAFT VETERAN FAMILY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION RESPONSE**

The Air Force Association welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft *Veteran Family Strategy and Action Plan* forwarded on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Comments follow.

### **Family support**

The Association applauds the Department's initiative to support former and serving veterans families, and the scope of the 'family' definition. However, although understanding the limits of DVA's legislative responsibilities towards veterans who are eligible for support under the three Acts, the Association is concerned for the many veterans' families who are not DVA clients.. Advice from the 'field' indicates many of these serving veterans' families in need of support are being ignored and even abandoned. Also, the scope of the Strategy appears to be faint on supporting the families of former serving veterans.

There are many veterans families estranged from the veteran. Any DVA payments may only support the veteran, which may be critical if the veteran is a perpetrator of domestic violence or impossible to live with. Veteran families, even of eligible veterans, can be vulnerable. Consequently, it seems vulnerable veterans families are not specifically covered in DVA's well-intended initiatives. Specific Action 3.2.3 should consider ALL families of veterans, serving and former serving. Recognising this vulnerability, the Association has made a commitment in its revised Constitution and Air Force Association Foundation Trust Deed to support all families of veterans.

### **Program progression**

There is concern the Action Plan has 53 specific actions of which only 6 are scheduled for completion by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and that the remaining 47 items have no planned completion date. Noting the five-year Action Plan is described as aspirational, is the Department optimistic it will complete at least the majority of these action items?

### **Performance measurement**

The Strategy and Action Plan should be periodically reviewed, and findings circulated to the ESO community. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) should be developed to measure its effectiveness. KPIs will characterise what success should look like.

Carl Schiller, OAM, CSM  
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