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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Veteran's Affairs

### Tasmanian hearings commence for Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Today, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide will begin the Tasmanian leg of its public hearings, being held at Wrest Point, Hobart.

This is an important opportunity for serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel and their families, carers and supporters to have their say and share their experiences.

The Tasmanian Government supports the important work being done by the Royal Commission and the work being undertaken by the Australian Government at the national level to improve outcomes for our veterans and their families. Supporting the wellbeing of our veterans, and acknowledging their service and sacrifice is very important.

The Tasmanian Government will be making a submission. To assist the Royal Commission, this submission provides information on the Tasmanian Government's programs and services that support our veterans and information provided through two recently funded studies.

This includes the Tasmanian Government funded Supporting our Veterans Report produced by RSL Tasmania in 2019 and the Tasmanian Veteran Needs Assessment and Wellbeing Support Service Feasibility Report that was undertaken by the University of Tasmania in 2021 and jointly funded by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments.

As Minister for Veterans Affairs, I will be giving evidence at the Hobart hearings today. There are a number of ways people can engage with the Royal Commission and support and counselling is available to help people share their stories.

The Royal Commission has qualified counsellors, social workers and psychologists with experience in trauma, mental health and suicide prevention. Support can be accessed by calling 1800 329 085 (9am to 5.00pm AEST, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays).

Veterans and their families can also contact counselling service Open Arms by calling 1800 011 046. Open Arms also provides peer support, mental health training programs, group treatment programs, suicide prevention and resilience training and crisis accommodation support. Open Arms is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you are thinking about sharing your story with the Royal Commission, you are encouraged to contact the Defence and Veterans Legal Service that has been established to provide free, independent legal advice to serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel and their families, carers and supporters. The service is independent of the Royal Commission, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The Defence and Veterans Legal Service can be contacted Monday to Friday on 1800 331 800. You can also find out more about the service being provided by the Defence and Veterans Legal Service through visiting their website.

These hearings are open to the public and will also be livestreamed on the Royal Commission's [website](#).

Members of the public and organisations or institutions are also invited to make submissions to the Royal Commission until Friday, 13 October 2023.

The Royal Commission also provides detailed information on their website about [how to share your story](#).