Your Address

The Date

Committee Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Department of Senate
Po Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: fadt.sen@aph.gov.au

**Review of Schedule 9 of the Veterans’ Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025**

Dear Committee,

Schedule 9 was developed without meaningful consultation with the veteran community. The government:

* Embedded oversight provisions in healthcare legislation to avoid scrutiny
* Failed to consult veteran organisations on the structure of independence
* Ignored explicit Royal Commission requirements for Governor-General appointment
* Created legislation in behind closed doors

This process violated every principle of good governance and democratic consultation. The result is legislation that serves government interests rather than veteran needs.

**THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S CONSULTATION LEGACY**

The Royal Commission spent three years consulting with veterans, families, and experts. They heard from:

* 340 witnesses, including 60 people with lived experience of suicide and of suicide and suicidality, conducted almost 900 private sessions, and received more than 5,800 submissions

This extensive consultation process identified the need for genuine independent oversight as crucial for community confidence. The government ignored this consultation and created legislation that violates the Commission's findings.

**THE PROPER APPROACH TO REDEVELOPMENT**

Genuine oversight legislation cannot be rushed. The redevelopment process must include:

* PHASE 1: CONSULTATION
* PHASE 2: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
* PHASE 3: DRAFT DEVELOPMENT
* PHASE 4: REVIEW AND REFINEMENT
* PHASE 5: PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

**THE ESSENTIAL CONSULTATION ELEMENTS**

Proper consultation must include:

**VETERAN ORGANISATION ENGAGEMENT**

* RSL, Royal Australian Regiment Corporation, Air Force, Navy, Special Forces, Peacekeepers, Defence Force Welfare Association and other ex-service organisations
* Younger veteran groups and advocacy organisations
* Women veterans and diverse veteran communities
* Regional and remote veteran representatives

**FAMILY AND SURVIVOR INPUT**

* Families who lost loved ones to veteran suicide
* Survivors of suicide attempts
* Advocates for veteran mental health support
* Researchers in veteran suicide prevention

**CONCLUSION**

The redevelopment of oversight legislation represents an opportunity to restore trust between government and the veteran community. This can only be achieved through proper timelines, genuine consultation, and commitment to the Royal Commission's requirements.

The veteran community has been betrayed once by Schedule 9. We cannot allow rushed, secretive processes to betray us again. The lives of future veterans depend on getting this right. We owe it to them, to the families who have lost loved ones, and to the memory of those we have lost to ensure that oversight legislation serves veteran interests, not government convenience.

I ask that you rescind the legislation and not amend it. It needs to be designed through transparent consultation.

Regards,

Signature

Your name