

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

## Government must commence Royal Commission into veteran suicides

The Morrison Government must act urgently to begin a Royal Commission into the alarming rate of suicide amongst veterans after the ongoing campaign led by veterans, their families and Senator Jacqui Lambie won passage of a motion in the house of representatives with the support of the crossbench, the ALP and a handful of coalition MPs.

Like workers in any workplace, members of the ADF are entitled to basic rights and protections, including support while doing difficult and dangerous work, as well as compensation and appropriate medical or psychological care to deal with any injuries which they sustain while doing their job.

This includes mental illness which occurs as a result of military service. We should be providing assistance for members of the ADF who are doing difficult and dangerous work which puts their mental health at risk and continuing to provide support for veterans who struggle with their mental health once they come home or leave the service.

The rate of suicide in this community shows that this has not been happening, and a Royal Commission is a first step to understanding why.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil,

“All working people should be supported while doing dangerous and stressful work to prevent injury or illness. They must also be given appropriate care and compensation for any injury or illness they sustain or experience as a consequence of doing their job.

“More than ten times the number of soldiers who were killed doing their jobs in Afghanistan have died by suicide since returning home.

“It is obvious that the systems put in place to assist ADF members struggling with mental illness are failing.

“Veterans, their families and Senator Lambie have been tireless advocates for ADF members and are responsible for the outcome of the vote today.

“We support the urgent establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate the system and what can be done to provide better and more effective care for current and former ADF members.”

**Media contact:** Peter Green 0400 764 200