



COMMISSIONER CHERNE, VETERAN FAMILY ADVOCATE

Submission to the Senate Committee on the Inquiry into the Defence Honours and Awards System

Introduction

As an Independent Statutory Office Holder of the Commonwealth and a stakeholder deeply engaged with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) community, I bring forward this submission to address critical gaps and issues in the current Defence Honours and Awards system. This submission reflects the concerns of ADF members, veterans, and veteran families, emphasizing the need for reforms to ensure transparency, fairness, and comprehensive recognition of service and sacrifice.

Issue: The current honours system does not adequately recognize the sacrifices made by ADF members who are killed, injured, or wounded in service. Additionally, the current honours system does not officially recognize the sacrifices made by ADF families when a member is killed or seriously injured in service. This oversight fails to acknowledge the vital role families play in supporting ADF members and veterans and the significant impact of service-related sacrifices on families.

Recommendation: The Senate Committee should advocate for the implementation of the 2022 Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal's recommendations, which include the introduction of Memorial Clasps, Memorial and Gratitude Stars, and accompanying scrolls. These recognitions would formally acknowledge the sacrifices of ADF members, veterans and families, ensuring their contributions are fully honoured in the official record.

Conclusion

This submission highlights critical gaps in the Defence Honours and Awards system and offers recommendations for addressing these issues. By implementing these changes, the Senate Committee can ensure that the system is more transparent, fair, and inclusive, providing comprehensive recognition for the service and sacrifices of ADF members and families. I urge the Committee to consider these recommendations to enhance the integrity and effectiveness of Australia's Defence Honours and Awards system.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely,

Gwen Cherne

Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner
30 August 2024