



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Defence Sub-Committee

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Issued: 24 June 2013

Chair: Senator Mark Furner  
Deputy: Dr Dennis Jensen MP

## **New report released into the care of Australian Defence Force personnel wounded and injured on operations**

The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade today released its report on the inquiry into the care of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel wounded and injured on military operations.

Defence Sub-Committee Chair, Senator Mark Furner, said that the Committee had welcomed the opportunity to examine the treatment of wounded and injured veterans, their repatriation to Australia, rehabilitation, and return to work; or if necessary, their transition out of the ADF.

“We had the honour of meeting a number of wounded and injured veterans,” Senator Furner said. “Not all of their wounds and scars are necessarily visible.”

Central to the Committee’s inquiry is the role of the departments of Defence and Veterans’ Affairs in supporting Australia’s wounded and injured. The Committee has recommended that communication and coordination between agencies must be improved; the compensation and entitlement process must be simplified; barriers to accessing existing services for female veterans must be removed; veteran identification and tracking within the health system must be improved; access to health care should be fully uncontested; and research into the needs of the veteran community should be a priority, particularly with regard to mental health issues and suicide.

“For various reasons, unfortunately a number of veterans still appear to ‘fall through the cracks’,” Senator Furner said. “This has to end.”

The Committee looked closely at concerns surrounding the mental health of veterans and the broader service/ex-service community, including depressive and anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Since 1999, over 45,000 Australians have seen operational service overseas. The Committee wants to highlight to Defence, DVA and the broader support and health care community that 20 per cent of the veterans of recent conflicts could be susceptible to post-traumatic stress disorder, and that as many as 50 per cent of servicemen or women can expect to have some form of mental health issue at some point in their life. We do not necessarily see this as a ‘wave of sadness’, but certainly something we as a nation are duty-bound to prepare for,” Senator Furner said.

The Committee particularly wanted to acknowledge the 253 soldiers and sailors injured in Afghanistan, and remember the 39 who have not returned.

The report is available at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/jfadt>

**For media inquiries**, contact the Sub-Committee Chairman, Senator Mark Furner on 02 6277 3423 or 07 3881 3710.

**For all other inquiries**, contact the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade secretariat by phone on 02 6277 2313, via email at [jscfadt@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscfadt@aph.gov.au) or visit the inquiry website at [www.aph.gov.au/jfadt](http://www.aph.gov.au/jfadt).