



ADSO ALLIANCE OF DEFENCE SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

**PO Box 4166
KINGSTON ACT 2604**

22 January 2016

Dear ADSO Members and Friends,

ADSO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DVA

ADSO¹ is an alliance of some of the most long-standing defence and ex-service organisations in Australia. Each in their own right has strong ties to both their in-service ADF constituencies and to the veterans with whom they once served and counted as colleagues. Collectively, they now number over 90,000 members.

Recently a number of member organisations have been approached by the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) to support a call for a Royal Commission into the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). The call has been based on claims of gross mismanagement, time delays, removal of treatment paths and adversarial practices by DVA which it is claimed is now causing increased numbers of homeless veterans, increased suicides and family breakdowns. Royal Commissions are not instigated lightly and inevitably have wide and unintended consequences.

Bearing this in mind, the call has been declined for a number of reasons:

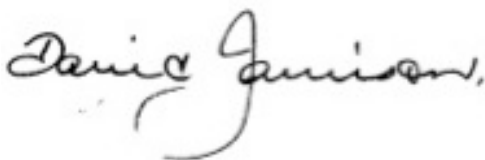
1. Firstly, requests to APPVA and its Royal Commission Working Group for specific details substantiating the allegations have been rejected supposedly on advice from their legal representatives and on grounds of confidentiality requiring commitment of an ESO before disclosure of any details.
2. Secondly, APPVA has failed to raise its concerns that would warrant such a serious step through its participation in the well established DVA/ESO consultative process, specifically [The ESO Round Table \(ESORT\)](#) and [The Younger Veterans - Contemporary Needs Forum \(YVF\)](#).
3. Thirdly, the APPVA has shown no evidence that it has analysed the issues in depth, articulated an objective, developed a structured strategy and analysed the implications of embarking on this pathway to itself and other associations joining the venture but more importantly to the veteran community at large.

Finally allegations that ADSO and its member organisations do not represent the veterans of more recent conflicts could not be further from the truth. ADSO member organisations have strong ties to current members of the ADF and more recent veterans and they are as much a focus as those of previous conflicts.

Indeed, much of the ADSO membership comprises serving ADF members as well as discharged veterans of the more recent deployments and many of the recent ADSO initiatives have been directed at their needs.

ADSO fully acknowledges that there are issues in the way support is provided to serving and former ADF members and is working to address them through the well-established consultative process. ADSO believes the call for a Royal Commission would hinder rather than help improve this support.

Yours sincerely,



David Jamison
National Spokesman
Alliance of Defence Service Organisations

¹ **ADSO comprises:**

The Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA), Naval Association of Australia (NAA), RAAF Association (RAAFA), Royal Australian Regiment Corporation (RARC), Australian Special Air Service Association (ASASA), Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA), the Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Service Men and Women, the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia, Partners of Veterans Association of Australia, Royal Australian Armoured Corps Corporation (RAAC), the National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association Australia (NMBVAA), the Defence Reserves Association (DRS), the Australian Gulf War Veterans Association, Military Police Association Australia (MPAA) and Australian Army Apprentices Association.