



**Australian Government**  
**The Repatriation Commission**

## **Statement on Advocacy from the Repatriation Commission**

Every year, up to 6,000 Defence personnel transition from the military to civilian life. Most make a successful transition, but some will require additional support. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) provides a range of health care, support services, and financial assistance to those who need it. This support reflects a promise made by our nation over 100 years ago, that we will take care of those who have served in the defence of our nation.

Every day we speak to veterans and their family members whose lives have been impacted by service, and who have sought assistance from DVA. Many of these people receive invaluable assistance from Ex-service organisation (ESO) advocates, who guide our community through the claims process with professionalism and care.

While we will continue to put pressure on the Government and the Department to simplify the system, making it easier for veterans and families to submit their own claim, we also acknowledge the role of the veteran advocate is central to Australia's veteran support system. Apart from supporting veterans and their families throughout the claims process, ESO advocates also provide valuable connections to broader supports and services in the wider veteran community, regardless of the outcome of the claim.

We are proud of the majority of advocates who operate with integrity and thank them for their support for veterans and their families.

We are however disturbed to see a rise in commercial advocates engaging in behaviour that is not motivated by veteran wellbeing, but rather by commercial gain. Advocates who charge unreasonable commission-based fees which even extend to the statutory entitlements intended for children, or adopting misleading marketing tactics, are not acting in the best interests of veterans or their families, and it should, and will, be called out. We encourage veterans and their families to report any suspected unethical behaviour from advocates to [fraud.tipoff@dva.gov.au](mailto:fraud.tipoff@dva.gov.au) so that together we can safeguard the system for those who rely on it.

We remind our community that paying for advocacy services does not guarantee faster processing times, better claim outcomes, or higher compensation payments. All claims follow the same path in accordance with the relevant legislation, regardless of whether they are lodged by a paid advocate, a free advocate, or by the claimant themselves. If you choose to pay for an advocate, please be cautious of anyone promising a large payout or faster service in exchange for a commission-based fee.

You do not need to give away part of the support that you or your family are entitled to, as a result of your service to our country. We will continue to use all the avenues available to us



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to ensure that you have the ability and the choice to interact with DVA however best suits you, and your individual circumstances and needs.

Soon we will also have a national professional association for veterans' advocates. the Institute of Veterans' Advocacy will provide leadership and support to the sector and set competency and training standards for all advocates. The Institute will also be responsible for the accreditation and registration for advocates, which will require them to operate under a code of conduct.

In the meantime, access to free advocacy services by trained, professional advocates is available through ESOs. Visit the [Advocacy Register](#) to find an advocate near you.

We look forward to continuing to work with DVA, our veteran advocates and the ESO community to safeguard the integrity of the veteran advocacy system, to ensure Veterans and their families receive quality assistance from people who have their best interests at heart.

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke.

**Kahlil Fegan DSC, AM**  
Repatriation Commissioner

A handwritten signature in dark ink, featuring a large, flowing 'A' followed by several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

**Annabelle Wilson**  
Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner

16 October 2025