

Media Release

Support for Younger Veterans and their Families on Radar

Melbourne Legacy is leading the catalyst for change to improve services to younger veterans and their families facing hardship in Victoria.

Recently, Melbourne Legacy led the Victorian Ex-Services Organisations' (ESOs) Mapping Project which provided an overview to Federal and Victorian Governments of the needs of veterans, particularly for those who have served post-1991, and their families, and the services currently available to them.

"This research involved engaging ESOs, outlining existing services, actively seeking opinions from younger veterans and their families and shining a light on what is needed, plus centralising much of the statistical data," Mr Justin Elwin, Melbourne Legacy CEO said.

"The report verified that traditional support services, which are primarily for pre-1991 veterans and war widows, are working effectively. It also supported the view that the needs of younger veterans and their families, which are very different, are not being met. Many of these veterans and families in distress were unaware and confused about support services. They often have complex issues that are unique to their individual circumstances. Domestic violence, drug and alcohol dependency, homelessness, unemployment, mental health and financial stress, are just some of the triggers that generate cries for help."

The report identified five key recommendations including:

1. Further analysis of veteran geographic locations for deeper understanding of client-directed needs
2. Develop detailed client journey map to identify touch points and risk
3. Victorian ESO agreement to self-regulate and each to provide a clear value proposition
4. Initiate overarching communication and engagement strategy
5. Plan for veterans' insights in 2020 Census.

"As a result of the ESO Mapping Project, we know far more about Victorian veterans than ever before, and it provides direction about what needs to be done to shape veteran services for the future," Mr Elwin said. "The ESO sector recognises improvements need to be made and becoming more client-centric and working collaboratively will help ESOs to achieve the best outcomes. The recommendations will be discussed at future ESO and government stakeholder forums."

The Commonwealth Government Supporting Younger Veterans Grants' Program funded the Victorian ESOs Mapping Project and funding has also been provided for Melbourne Legacy to implement the first recommendation to conduct a detailed mapping and needs analysis of Victorian veterans and their families during 2018.

"With 95 years of expertise and experience caring for families of those who have served their country, we are pleased to continue the valuable ground-breaking work which began last year," Mr Elwin said. "Having current and factual information is critical to tailor support services 'in place' for veterans and their families."

To view a one page summary and the complete Victorian ESOs Mapping Project report go to www.legacy.com.au/Melbourne

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