



ADSO UPDATE 1 /2017

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH - IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

A look back to 2016 reveals what we have always experienced: that military veterans have difficulty in persuading Governments that our issues are real, are principled and are legislated non-discretionary commitments to the nation that have been broken by successive Governments.

We will no longer accept being ignored.

Our issues relate to two broken promises:

1. the care for the wellbeing of the veterans and their families, and
2. the protection and restitution of their legal conditions of service

We ask for nothing more.

Successive Governments/Parliaments have failed in this regard by being unwilling to apply their moral obligation as stated by PM Billy Hughes in 1917:

"We say to them you go and fight and when you come back we will care for your welfare ... We have entered into a bargain with the soldier and we must kept it."

Since the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO) was formed in 2010 as a united representative voice to the Government, Parliament and all political parties, we have had some marked success notably the rightful indexation of DFRDB Superannuation for member over 55 years, restoration of some ADF service conditions and ADF pay and allowances. Thanks to you for being a part of that success **However, the major issues remain unresolved.**



The Government is HEARING but not LISTENING.

The Minister discounts our advice in favour of that from his Departmental and other advisors. We seriously question the advice he is receiving which we contend in many cases is not balanced, or is incomplete or just wrong.

For a Government claiming to be evidence based it is failing its Australian Defence Community (ADC).

It doesn't help us to have a Minister who has multiple portfolios additional to his primary one of Veterans Affairs: Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC; Minister for Defence Personnel and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security.

Is he in overload?

We hear Governments' defence to our objectives as :

1. *"We cannot afford it"*
2. *"We have higher priorities of greater national interest".*

In our opinion their ears are deaf and eyes are blind to our rebuttals and questions: Their obligation to veterans is not a discretionary one and WHAT are the greater national priorities?

"The Government's greatest priority is the defence of Australia"

(which PM hasn't said that?) which requires both the provision of a defence force of people, willing to make the supreme sacrifice, with service conditions, armaments and facilities and trained to achieve its purpose, and the recognition that its **duty of care** extends to them and their families both in-service and after-service life.

So what did we find in the 2016 Election Year, a time when political parties and their candidates are generally super sensitive to voters' concerns?



before the Election.

After the 2013 election ADSO engaged assertively with all the political parties and Parliamentarians with our policy/objectives statement seeking their support. In April 2016 we reiterated our [Policy Objectives Statement](#) and sought their written policies. **Thirteen days** before the Election, the ALP publicly released its Policies. The Coalition Government delayed its release until the **eighth day**

Question. What would you deduce from their delays?

Answer. We are being ignored as an election issue.

Interestingly, there is a belief within the major parties that opines:

Labor – *“The military are Coalition supporters so why waste our resources to try and win their vote”;*

Coalition – *“We have the military vote so we don’t have to use our resources to keep them”*

Those beliefs are myths and to our best estimate ADC voting pattern reflects the same as the current voting population 35 Coalition/35 Labor/30 others.

Veteran Policy Status – Comparison Table

ADSO’s response to the Major Parties’ tardiness in declaring their Policies was to produce a Comparison Table and distribute it widely through social media.

VETERAN POLICY STATUS: 29 JUNE - ELECTION DAY - 3

	ADSO Objective	Comment	LNP	ALP	Greens	Jacqui Lambie Network (JLN)	Veterans Party (ADVP)	Australian Liberty Alliance (ALA)	Katter's Australian Party (KAP)	Nick Xenophon Team (NXT)
1	DVA Culture & Processes	Inquiry/Review/Revised Practices								
2	Veterans Disability Payments	Totally Permanently Incapacitated/ Special Rate / Disability - Economic Loss & Parity								
3	Military Super	Defence Force Retirement & Death Benefits Scheme / Military Super Benefits Scheme: indexation, MBL, Portability, Life Tables & other								
4	Military Covenant	National recognition of mutual obligation for Parliament / ADF / Veterans enshrined in legislation								
5	Homeless Veterans	Care, Accommodation & Support								
6	Life Cycle Health	Including: Mental Health/Suicide Prevention/Automatic Health Card								
7	Mefloquine & Tafenoquine Toxicity	Recognition / Treatment / Open Inquiry								

	About 70% or more of ADSO objective/s adopted in announced veteran policy or written commitment given to implement or review.
	About 50 - 70% of ADSO objective/s adopted in announced veteran policy or written commitment given to implement or review.
	Less than 50% adopted and/or NO Veteran Policy announced - AS OF TODAY'S DATE

It proved effective as evidenced by the major Parties sensitivity to the visual comparison and the election results in some marginal seats with a large military (ADF and veterans) community such as the Queensland seats of Herbert (Townsville) and Longman (Caboolture) where both the Liberal sitting members Ewan Jones and Wyatt Roy respectively were defeated by Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party (PHONP) preferences.

Our Comparison Table will now be updated to include Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party and remain a standard visible feature on our electronic and other networks for all to see. It is a powerful tool that visually tracks the Parties performance towards our objectives.

Post Election Performance

Interestingly, one of our primary objectives, a public investigation into the DVA's operations processes and policies, had drawn both social and national media attention particularly related to veterans' suicide and homelessness. Calls for a Royal Commission (RC) from one ESO's RC Working Group and from Senator Jacqui Lambie motions for a Senate enquiry into DVA and later a Senate enquiry into veterans' suicide, ensured the Government took internal actions to transition DVA to a client centric culture with updated IT systems to improve its operational efficiency and performance.

Within DVA there has been a hive of activity with studies commissioned into both Veterans' Homelessness and Veterans' Suicide, and importantly the review of DVA's processes. DVA's transformation agenda with the ADC involvement is a positive move.

We look forward to positive results.

The Quinoline Issue



Some time ago the Quinoline Veterans and Families Association (QVFA) put a thoughtful and detailed proposal for a "Quinoline Veterans Outreach Program". This was in response to growing concerns for the health of serving and former ADF members who had been administered quinoline based anti-malarial drugs from the late 1990's onwards.

The Minister's response to the QVFA Outreach Proposal was disappointing. Not only did it not acknowledge that the current DVA-led 'Outreach Program' for our quinolone-affected veterans fell well short of what is required to assist these veterans given the complex nature of their medical issues, but it also suggested that the discussions within the Defence Links Committee was able to provide adequate advice to the Minister, despite this committee seeking no external advice on this subject.

Currently the Government does not recognise quinolone anti-malarials as impacting military mental health in Australia or elsewhere. This lack of recognition does not seem to be borne out in the lives of too many veterans who are suffering what could be described as acquired brain injuries which they attribute to the ingestion of this drug.

Overall, with the QVFA, ADSO is disappointed by the Minister's dismissal of its proposal, which leaves quinolone-affected veterans, many of whom are in very serious states of mental ill-health, suicidal and / or currently in in-patient care in secure psychiatric units, unclear as to what additional support can be offered to them other than the unsatisfactory advice and treatments they have already received.

A Light in the Tunnel? The most recent decision of the Government is a positive move and a major breakthrough whereby The Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) intends to carry out an investigation to find out whether Statements of Principles (SOP) may be determined in respect of chemically-acquired brain injury caused by mefloquine, tafenoquine or primaquine. The Authority will be holding its first meeting on 6 June 2017 and invites submissions by 19 May 2017. In this case we believe that the perseverance of the QVFA with ADSO and other support has encouraged the Government to act

Veterans' Suicide



[The Senate Enquiry into Suicide by Veterans and ex-service Personnel](#), initiated by Sen. Jacqui Lambie, is well supported with 341 submissions received. [All submissions are worth reading](#) with many critical of DVA. The Report is to be released

on 30 March 2017.

2017 and Beyond



ADSO too will transition its advocacy for our objectives to a more assertive direct action strategy involving The Senate and its Parties as well as continued engagement with the Party leaders and appropriate Ministers and Shadow Ministers.

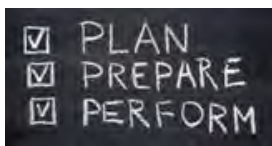
As a major positive step in this direction **all** the ESOs, including the RSL, are working towards closer collaboration for:

1. A united voice in our advocacy representations to Government/Parliament;
2. Greater co-ordinated existing support benefits; and
3. Identification and implementation of additional support benefits that will help our community.

A Working Group is being formed and expects to have its recommendations considered mid year.

We assert our request for personal engagement with appropriate Ministers and Shadow Ministers and their staff in presenting our objectives and the rationale for them. We will not have them rejected or ignored without the opportunity to have meaningful discussions with them at the appropriate levels.

Our Future Success Needs Your Help



We will promote our issues to all the MPs/Senators through our Advocates in Canberra and our Action Groups in all electorates by offering ourselves on call to brief them on the facts of veterans' matters.

Social media is very effective in promoting our issues. You can add to our success by sharing our activities with your family and friends by all means.

Join the Action Group Team

If you have not yet joined us, then please [subscribe](#) to receive our free Updates and [volunteer](#) to join your local electorate Action Group Team or become an Advisor.

Our Action Groups is where “the rubber hits the road.” They are the key to our potential success to influencing Party policies and community opinion.

Concurrent with our lobby teams in Canberra we engage with the Local Federal MP and community in a constructive and personal way to educating them all on our matters and offering ourselves as on call advisors.

As an Advisor you can assist us with your experience and expertise in a particular field such as marketing/public relations, media, investigative journalism, superannuation, legal, health, information services and technology, accounting, financial planning, sales, etc

Stay Informed

Keep up to date with our activities at [ADSO facebook](#) and [ADSO website](#).
Importantly keep us informed with your opinions and suggestions.

Donate



We are self-funded and rely on donations to run our Campaign. If you can, please make a donation: no matter how small it will make a big impact on our ability to get our message into the community and to Government. We are all unpaid volunteers and motivated solely by the need to protect and care for our Defence community. Thank You for your donation.

THANK YOU AUSTRALIA FOR YOUR SUPPORT
ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

From The Fair Go Team our thanks to all our Action Team warriors and supporters.

Campaign Directors: Ted Chitham , Alf Jaugietis
Campaign National Spokesperson: David Jamison
Stay current with the Campaign at adso.org.au

ADSO is the public voice for its "Fair Go!" Campaign. Its purpose is to make known to all Australians the major issues that adversely affect our Australian Defence Community's wellbeing.