



The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE

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WOMEN AND FAMILIES UNITED BY DEFENCE SERVICE COUNCIL MEMBERS ANNOUNCED

THE membership of the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service has been announced today ahead of its first meeting on 2 August.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said he was delighted that Army veteran and current Chief Executive of BAE Systems Australia, Ms Gabby Costigan, had agreed to chair the new Council.

“The needs of women and families affected by defence service are not always understood or visible, and their voices are not always heard,” Mr Chester said.

“That’s why I announced the creation of the Council for Women and Families United by Defence Service, so that women and families could have a direct voice to my office.

“It’s important that we recognise—and seek to better understand—the service and sacrifice of women who have either served in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) themselves or been impacted by the service of a loved one.”

Ms Costigan was honoured to be a part of the Council.

“I am proud to serve as Chair for the Council and provide my support to delivering better outcomes for veterans and their families,” Ms Costigan said.

“I look forward to working with such a talented and experienced group of individuals to help provide a stronger voice for an often unheard part of the community.”

The following people have been appointed to the Council to provide advice to the Government, drive coherent policy outcomes and advocate on behalf of women and families united by defence service:

Chair	Ms Gabby Costigan MBE
Deputy Chair	Ms Janine Kirk AM
Member	Mr Douglas (Doug) Baird OAM
Member	Mrs Rhondda Vanzella OAM

Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling, provides support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Free and confidential help is available 24/7. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit www.OpenArms.gov.au

Member	Mr Michael Bainbridge
Member	Ms Gwen Cherne
Member	Dr Rachel Martin
Member	Ms Anne Pahl
Member	Ms Rachel Ranton
Member	The Venerable Robert Sutherland CSC
Member	Mrs Renee Wilson
Member	Ms Meredith Lane
Member	Flight Lieutenant Amanda Scott
Member	Ms Elizabeth Ward
Ex-Officio	Ms Liz Cosson AM, CSC
Ex-Officio	Major General Natasha Fox AM CSC
Ex-Officio	Ms Kate Pope PSM

“The Council is made up of a diverse range of people including parents, partners and widows of ADF personnel, chaplains, skilled professionals, veterans and ADF members,” Mr Chester said.

“Each member has lived experience of the challenges faced by veterans and veterans’ families.

“I thank each member for agreeing to sit on the Council and I look forward working with them to further improve the services and support provided to women and families united by defence service.”

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