



## The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel

### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### SUPPORT FOR MILITARY FAMILIES IN COPING WITH TRAUMA

Families of serving, transitioning, or ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who are experiencing mental health concerns following trauma now have a new resource to help them.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said families play a critical role supporting current and former ADF members and it is vital they are supported themselves.

“The message from the Government is that help is available and these booklets add to the supports already in place for families through the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling,” Mr Chester said.

“The booklets are designed to assist not only the ADF member, but also their loved ones, in understanding the effects of trauma, and providing practical steps to enhance the wellbeing of their family members.

“The Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first and provides more than \$230 million a year towards veteran and their family’s mental health, as part of more than \$11 billion for veterans in this year’s budget.”

The booklets have been developed in partnership with Phoenix Australia, which has a long history in supporting the defence and veteran community through its research, advice and practical programs. These booklets will be an important resource for families whose members have experienced trauma.

Ms Anne-Laure Couineau, Director, Policy & Service Development from Phoenix Australia, said that help is available and it’s important that families know they don’t have to get through this on their own.

“Trauma can have profound impacts on the families of the affected person, including children. The booklets aim to inform, educate, and provide practical information not only to help a loved one, but also to support the wellbeing of the family members,” Ms Couineau said.

“Family members had a chance to road test the booklets to ensure that they are easy to read and contain the information most useful for them.”

*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](http://www.OpenArms.gov.au)*

For those in need of immediate mental health support and counselling, Open Arms — Veterans and Family Counselling Service can be contacted on 1800 011 046. DVA's online wellbeing portal, AT-Ease.dva.gov.au, also provides veterans and their families with information, resources and links to services for support with mental health and wellbeing.

The five booklets are free to download via the At Ease website - [www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/resources/coping-trauma-military-family](http://www.at-ease.dva.gov.au/resources/coping-trauma-military-family)

**Photo caption:** Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester, Department of Veterans' Affairs Secretary Liz Cosson AM CSC and Ms Gabby Costigan display the booklets.

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