

2021–22 Federal Budget

Mental health and suicide prevention initiatives for Veterans

Veterans and their families face unique experiences during a military career, and in transitioning to civilian life.

Military life can involve significant challenges, not least the exposure to life and death situations. For many veterans, military service and operational deployment can also lead to a strong sense of identity and belonging.

While some initiatives for the defence family are referenced in the mental health budget package, there are specific and separate measures included in the Department of Veterans Affairs budget related to mental health services and programs for veterans.

Prior to the Budget, the government announced its commitment to a Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide. It is expected to examine the systemic issues and any common themes and past deaths by suicide of Australian Defence Force members and veterans and the experience of members and veterans who may continue to be at risk of suicide.

We encourage you to read the full mental health and suicide prevention budget available on our website to appreciate the following information in context.

Key budget initiatives for Veterans:

- **\$12 million** to maintain support to the former National Suicide Prevention Trial sites to continue delivery of local suicide prevention initiatives across Australia. Commencing in 2016, the Trial funded Public Health Networks to develop and implement a local, systems-based approach to suicide prevention for at-risk populations in 12 regions across Australia with high rates of suicide. This included ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families in Townsville.

Almost three in four Transitioned ADF members are estimated to have met criteria for a mental disorder at some stage in their lifetime that is either, prior to, during or after their military career. 2.0% of Transitioned ADF reported having attempted suicide¹



Key Budget initiatives for everyone:

- **\$487.2 million** to deliver critical community-based multidisciplinary, coordinated care for adults experiencing mental ill-health, including Head to Health adult mental health treatment centres to improve access to community-based mental health services. This includes: the initial establishment of 8 new centres, 24 new satellite centres, and ongoing funding for 8 existing centres, as well as the establishment of a dedicated phone service to support intake, assessment and referral. The Government will also work in partnership with state and territory governments to continue to expand the network of community-based adult mental health services.
- **\$158.6 million** for universal suicide aftercare services to all Australians discharged from hospital and pilot broader referral pathways to anyone who has attempted suicide or experienced suicidal distress that may not have presented to a hospital. \$278.6 million headspace youth treatment centres to continue to safeguard the wellbeing of young Australians aged 12–25 by strengthening, enhancing, and expanding the headspace network including: expanding the national headspace network by establishing 10 new headspace centres and upgrading 5 satellite services, bringing the total number of headspace services across Australia to 164, and working jointly with states and territories to boost clinical capacity at existing headspace services.
- **\$111.2 million** to create a world-class digital mental health service system. This includes:
 - \$11.6 million to commence the transformation of the existing Head to Health gateway into a comprehensive national mental health platform. This will provide Australians with greater choice and access to high quality, free and low cost digital mental health services and treatment.
- **\$100.9 million** towards supporting Australian children aged 0-12 years by increasing access to multidisciplinary mental health and wellbeing care for them and their families, strengthening support for parents and improving early intervention. This includes:
 - **\$54.2 million** towards working with states and territories to create a network of up to 15 new Head to Health Kids mental health and wellbeing centres for children aged 0-12 years. These centres will provide multidisciplinary support for infants, children and their parents, and improve early intervention outcomes for children's mental health,
- **\$42.3 million** to enable access to parent education and support programs to build parenting strategies, and teach parents and carers how to identify and respond to problem behaviours



- **\$0.5 million** to develop national guidelines to support states and territories to include social and emotional wellbeing indicators in early childhood health checks, so any emotional difficulties can be identified early and in a nationally consistent way.

Key Budget initiatives that will support Veterans that sit within separate budget packages:

- **\$22.4 million** to continue Wellbeing & Support Program to provide mental health & wellbeing support to veterans, including establishment of Joint Transition Authority to assist with transition to civilian life.
- **\$16.9 million** to extend the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment program to ensure veterans can access treatment for 20 of the most common service-related conditions whilst their claim is being processed.

National FREE 24/7 Crisis Services

[Lifeline](#) | 13 11 14

[Suicide Call Back Service](#) | 1300 659 467

[Kids Helpline](#) | 1800 55 1800

[Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#) | 1800 512 348

[Beyond Blue](#) | 1300 22 4636

1. <https://www.dva.gov.au/documents-and-publications/mental-health-prevalence-report>



Australian Government

National Mental Health Commission