

ACU uniquely placed to help deliver recommendations of Royal Commission

ACU has welcomed the release of the final report from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

After three years of investigation and almost 6,000 submissions, the Royal Commission delivered 122 recommendations focused on veteran health and wellbeing, including the transition to civilian life.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis has commended the Commission for its efforts and its findings.

"The work of the Commissioners has been exemplary, and we now have some very clear and actionable guidelines for improving the wellbeing of our veterans and their family members."

Professor Skrbis also noted that ACU's efforts to support the veteran community were acknowledged in the report.

"For the past five years, ACU has been working to support veterans and their families. We have an outstanding suite of services and programs to support veterans and family members who wish to attend university. It is pleasing to see that our efforts are making a difference."

ACU's Student Veteran Services is dedicated to easing the transition from military life into university. It runs a series of programs specifically designed to help veterans and families succeed in their studies. This includes the Veteran Transition Program, a bridging course that introduces veterans to academic skills needed to thrive at university.

ACU has also launched twin apps to help veterans make the move into higher education. The first of their kind in Australia, *Five2Study* and *Service2Campus* support veterans and their families as they undertake their academic journey.

Andrew Condon CSC is a 27-year veteran of the Australian Army and ACU's Industry Professor for Veterans and their Families. He also welcomed the delivery of the Commission's Final Report noting that the veteran service sector needs greater oversight and co-ordination.

"The current veteran support system is more an accident of history than a carefully crafted design," Mr Condon said.

This has been confirmed by ACU's [Australian Veteran Services Mapping Project](#) which was prepared for and tabled by the Commission.

"This report shows that the veteran services landscape is far too difficult for the veteran community to navigate - meaning that some people may not be able to find the help that they need."

Mr Condon also noted the Commission's strong emphasis on the need for further veteran and family research to inform better practice in the future.

"Research will be vital in providing a stronger evidence base to gain a deeper understanding about the needs of current and ex-serving veterans and their families. It is critical that we work with the Government to translate that research into practice."

ACU is working hard to make that happen. This includes working with the Government to produce a range of resources for their newly launched Veteran Employment Commitment to help employers recruit and retain veteran employees. The university is also about to embark on new research to identify and categorise suicide prevention and postvention services in Australia.

"The Government is committed to improving its current practices for the benefit of our veteran community, and ACU is uniquely placed to help deliver on the recommendations made by the Royal Commission," said Professor Skrbis.

"This is part of our [strategic vision for the next decade](#), which is focused on enabling flourishing lives, fostering thriving communities and forging an ethical future."