



## **Stuart Robert MP**

**Federal Member for Fadden**

**Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel**

### **\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\***

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#### **DEFENCE MINISTER SHOULD REVERSE OPPOSITION TO SONGSTER SOLDIERS**

Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel, Stuart Robert, has today called on the Defence Minister, Stephen Smith, to explain why he has allowed his Department to scuttle plans for three Australian Defence Force (ADF) members to create an album that would honour their fellow soldiers and raise money for Legacy.

Mr Robert said the Australian program was based on a highly successful UK venture, where a group of current servicemen, known as "The Soldiers", created an album which paid tribute to serving soldiers and raised money for military charities.

'The UK's "The Soldiers" produced a highly successful album that sold over 800,000 copies in the UK and in the process managed to raise \$1.5m for UK military charities,' Mr Robert said.

'They have also completed a sold out tour and are now in the process of producing their second album.'

Mr Robert said with the Afghanistan fighting season fast approaching, the reality was that Australia can expect further casualties and we should be doing everything possible to help support those who have lost their loved ones.

'Organisations like Legacy are vitally important as they help support the families of those troops who have made the ultimate sacrifice,' Mr Robert said.

'With Anzac Day just around the corner, I urge the Minister to immediately reconsider his objection to this project and in so doing ensure that Legacy gets a leg up so that it can support those Defence families most in need.'

'A decision needs to be made by 12 April 2011 if "The Diggers" are to perform at the Anzac Day AFL match between Collingwood and Essendon, which would be a great start to a great project.'

Mr Robert said Minister Smith's opposition was short sighted and that Warner Music Australia, the company backing the project, needed to trademark "The Diggers" because it needed to protect its commercial rights.

'This trademark will not reflect or infringe on other rights, it is simply a necessary commercial mechanism designed to protect the company supporting this great project,' Mr Robert said.

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