



## **Stuart Robert MP**

**Federal Member for Fadden**

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

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

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#### **COALITION WELCOMES RELEASE OF DEFENCE MENTAL HEALTH STUDY**

Today's release of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study and the launch of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a considerable step towards identifying the impact mental health disorders have on ADF personnel and Defence's broader operational capability.

Shadow Minister for Defence Science, Technology and Personnel, Stuart Robert, said this was one of the most important reviews the Department of Defence had conducted and thanked all those involved in the delivery of the study.

'The release of this study is certainly timely given one in five ADF personnel have experienced a mental health disorder in the previous 12 months,' Mr Robert said.

'The money spent on conducting this study will pay dividends in terms of not only reducing the impact on individual mental wellbeing, but also in terms of increasing operational capability.'

'I congratulate all Defence personnel and research teams who worked with Defence's Joint Health Command on this seminal study and would like to also thank those ADF personnel who agreed to give up their time to take part in the survey.'

'It is my hope that this study will help increase the awareness of mental health disorders within the ADF and reduce the stigma that so often surrounds such conditions.'

Defence's study set out to baseline prevalence rates of mental disorders within the ADF, refine the way in which mental disorders are detected and to explore occupational stressors. But Mr Robert said it also provided an important and enduring message for all ADF personnel.

'This study should be the death knell of the misconception within the ADF that anyone with a mental health disorder is in some way different and to be excluded,' Mr Robert said.

'In fact, the study shows the prevalence of mental health disorders amongst ADF personnel is similar to the prevalence of mental health disorders in the wider community.'

'I strongly encourage all personnel to look out for their mates and encourage them to seek assistance if they are suffering from a suspected mental health condition, just as they would if they were suffering from a physical health condition.'

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