

Joint media release — International Ministerial (5-Eyes) Conference on Veterans' Issues

The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Minister for Defence Personnel

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC

The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP

Minister for Defence People and Veterans, United Kingdom

The Hon Ron Mark MP

Minister for Veterans, New Zealand

Ms Bernadine Mackenzie

Head of Veterans' Affairs, Government of New Zealand

General Walter Natynczyk

Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, Government of Canada

Ms Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd

Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, United States of America

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Coinciding with the opening of the Invictus Games, the Australian Government Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Darren Chester, welcomed delegations from Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States to the International Ministerial Conference on Veterans' Issues at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney on 20 and 21 October 2018.

Minister Chester, The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP Minister for Defence People and Veterans, The Hon Ron Mark MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, New Zealand and Ms Bernadine Mackenzie, Head of Veterans' Affairs, Government of New Zealand, General Walter Natynczyk, Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, Government of Canada and Ms Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd, Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, United States of America and all delegates from these nations came together under a shared commitment to discuss veterans' mental health and transition from military to civilian life.

Our men and women serve side by side on our battlefields and 5-Eyes Ministers and delegates are united in ensuring our nations understand and honour the service and the sacrifice our veterans and their families make in defending our values our freedoms. All nations recognise the importance of ensuring the positive work being done to support veterans and their families is communicated to, and understood by, our respective communities.

As follow-up to the Ministers' 5-Eyes meeting in London 2017, we welcome the 2018 report on suicide prevention from the 5-Eyes Research Collaboration, convened by Phoenix Australia and the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research. This report confirms the progress in our shared understanding of suicide prevention. It demonstrates the similarities that we are facing in responding to this significant public health issue for serving members, veterans and their families. We look forward to the coming collaboration on enhancing mental health service engagement and improving

treatment outcomes. This reaffirms our joint commitment to improving mental health and well-being. The 5-Eyes Research Collaboration includes world-renowned expertise from the leading centres in military and veteran mental health covering Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

Five Eyes delegates encouraged the Centres of Excellence to continue their international collaboration and report back with practical outcomes to be progressed by Veterans' Affairs agencies.

Delegates heard from Canada about their well-being strategy that addresses Post Transition, Education and Employment, while the United Kingdom discussed their strategic relationship to challenge and shape departmental processes. All nations provided detailed presentations in the area of programs that support transitioning veterans with mental health problems.

The Invictus Games also provided a relevant platform to discuss issues with national and international partners. A Veterans' Families forum, convened by the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, was held on 18 October with the theme of transition through the phases of defence service and how families can provide support and be supported during and post-service. A Veterans' Employment forum looked at how the public and private sectors are assisting veterans into education and employment and what programs and innovations are occurring.

Ministers and delegates signed a joint Statement of Intent that acknowledges the benefits of working together and stated their intention to explore cooperative actions to collaborate on strategies in areas of common interest that recognise, support and care for the defence and veteran communities and their families.

Date

21 October 2018

Tags

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