



30 January 2026

DVSC Access to Information Inquiry

I am writing to let you know that I have commenced an inquiry into how information held by the Department of Defence (Defence) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is accessed by serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force (the ADF) and their families. The inquiry is now open for public consultation.

The objective of the inquiry is to assess the implementation of the Australian Government's response to recommendations 9 through 13 of the [Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide](#), released in August 2022, and the effectiveness of these reforms.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (RCDVS) actively engaged with concerns regarding access to information and the sense of confusion and lack of transparency regarding how Defence and DVA information was shared, stored and released. These concerns were not limited to the difficulties encountered by serving and ex-serving members seeking access to their own information – but also families of deceased members who were seeking to access information about that member from Defence and/or DVA.

The RCDVS made recommendations to Defence and DVA in their Interim Report about:

- administrative release guidelines (recommendation 9)
- embedding trauma informed approaches and implementing improvements to information-seeking processes (recommendations 10 and 11)
- consent to disclose process (recommendation 12), and
- education materials about access to information (recommendation 13).

The Australian Government agreed to all five recommendations in its [response](#) in September 2022 and [advised](#) that all five recommendations had been implemented as at 30 June 2023.

Given your engagement with the Defence and Veteran Service Commission (DVSC) and your experience within the Defence and veteran community, I invite you or your organisation to participate in this inquiry. Consultation is currently open on our [website](#). Interested stakeholders can participate by either completing an online form or uploading a written submission. Consultation will close on 24 March 2026.

The experience of serving and ex-serving ADF members, their families, and other individuals and organisations who work closely with them, will be crucial in ensuring the inquiry reflects the experience of reforms.

Further information about this inquiry is available on the [DVSC website](#). I invite you to share this link with other people or organisations who may wish to inform this inquiry.

I appreciate your previous engagement with us and look forward to your continued contribution to drive systemic improvements within the Defence and veteran ecosystem as envisaged by the Royal Commission.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Penny McKay".

Penny McKay
Acting Commissioner