



# Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

VA070

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## OPINIONS OF TERRITORY VETERANS SOUGHT BY MINISTER

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, will be in Darwin next Thursday seeking the views of local veterans on the best way to give them a more effective voice at the highest levels of government.

Minister Griffin said eight meetings are being held nation-wide to discuss the structure and role of the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Ex-Service Matters—a key election commitment.

“More than 400 veterans have come to share their views with me at my consultations so far, and I expect plenty of interest in Darwin given its strong Defence background,” Mr Griffin said.

More than 100 individuals and organisations from all around Australia responded to a discussion paper on the Advisory Council released earlier this year.

“This impressive response has demonstrated very strong support for the Advisory Council and its role, but has also raised issues that need further discussion.

“During the parliamentary recess I am travelling to meet veterans in every state and territory to discuss these issues in person. I'm looking forward to hearing the views of the Territory's active veteran and ex-service communities.

“There are a number of options on the table, including membership, appointment of the chair, how matters are referred to the Council, how it should operate and how it relates to my Department.

“The Government is also reviewing all consultation mechanisms between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the broader defence and ex-service communities. This will also be discussed at Thursday's meeting.

“I want to ensure the Council meets the needs of veterans and ex-service personnel before it's established later this year. These consultation meetings with veterans and the veteran community are essential to achieve that goal.

“I expect there will be a range of opinions and robust discussion, but I know that we share the goal of looking out for the best interests of all those who have served Australia in uniform.

“I encourage all Territorians interested in the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council to attend the meeting and contribute to the discussion.

“Following these consultation meetings I intend to appoint the Advisory Council by the end of August.”

The meeting is on Thursday 24 July 2008 from 9.00am to 11.00am at Mantra Pandanas, 43 Knuckey St, Darwin. The Minister will also be attending the 50<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Treatment Monitoring Committee later that day.

Further details of Advisory Council consultative meetings and copies of submissions are available at [minister.dva.gov.au/PMAC/index.htm](http://minister.dva.gov.au/PMAC/index.htm).

**Meeting RSVPs: 08 8935 1424**

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