



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

The Hon Warren Snowdon MP
Minister for Defence Science and
Personnel

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SUPPORT FOR ADF MEMBERS GOES NATIONAL

A pilot program supporting ADF members leaving the forces will be rolled out across Australia the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, and the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, Warren Snowdon, said today.

Mr Griffin said the *Stepping Out* program had received a 95 per cent approval rating from the ADF members and their partners who participated in the Townsville based trial, and was worthy of expansion Australia wide.

"Life in the services is unique. It is important that when our service people move to civilian life that they, and their partners, are equipped with the support and skills to make that transition as simple as possible. *Stepping Out* has been shown to do that," he said.

The *Stepping Out* Program was developed in consultation with the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health and equips Australian Defence Force personnel with the skills to make the transition from military to civilian life.

Mr Snowdon said that *Stepping Out* program was an important part of the Government's mental health 'lifecycle'; integrating mental health care across recruitment, service and transition or discharge and rehabilitation.

"The Government is committed to supporting ADF members through all the stages of their careers, including their transition to civilian life. I encourage all ADF members planning to leave the services to participate in the program," he said.

The program is a two day voluntary program delivered by the VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service and is available free to ADF personnel in the process of leaving the military or who have left in the past 12 months.

The *Stepping Out* Program is being delivered in Adelaide, Brisbane and Townsville and is due to start in Darwin in mid-September. The rollout will be completed by the end of 2008.

VVCS staff are professionally qualified psychologists and social workers experienced in working with veterans, peacekeepers and their families.

For more information on VVCS and The *Stepping Out* Program visit www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs

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The VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **1800 011 046**.

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