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PRIME MINISTER

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**MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS; MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL;
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE CENTENARY OF ANZAC**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

Saturday, 27 October 2018

RECOGNISING AND RESPECTING OUR VETERANS

Veterans and their families are at the centre of a fresh package of initiatives from our Government to recognise their vital role and service to Australia.

We understand the home front is just as important as the front line.

Our Government will develop an Australian Veterans' Covenant that will be enacted in legislation so the nation can recognise the unique nature of military service and support veterans and their families.

Like the United Kingdom Armed Forces Covenant, the Australian Veterans' Covenant is for the Australian community to recognise the service and sacrifice of the men and women who commit to defend the nation, and pledge their commitment to support veterans and their families.

As part of this Veterans' Covenant, a new Australian Veterans' Card and an Australian Veterans' Lapel Pin will make it easier for all Australians to recognise and respect the unique contribution that veterans have made to Australia and for our veterans to reconnect with others who have served.

As we have seen throughout the Invictus Games and in the lead up to the Centenary of Armistice, Australians want to acknowledge and show respect for our veterans who have given so much in their service.

Businesses, government and community organisations can also play their part in recognising and respecting those who have served. The card and the pin can help these organisations identify veterans when they aren't wearing their uniform or medals, so they can offer discounts and extra support.

The new Card and Lapel Pin will for the first time enable everyone across the nation to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service and support the more than 300,000 veterans in

Australia and their families. The Prime Minister will be writing to businesses and communities to urge them to recognise the service of our veterans.

In addition to the record \$11.2 billion annual support our government delivers for veterans and their families, we will invest \$11.1 million in these measures to deliver a national approach to recognise veterans and will further consult defence and veterans communities in coming weeks.

We will also deliver \$6.7 million to develop the SoldierOn Fussell House accommodation facility to be co-located at the Concord Repatriation Hospital in Sydney that the NSW Berejiklian Government is investing more than \$340 million to rebuild. This includes the National Centre for Veterans Health – an Australian first, state of the art centre for specialised health care for veterans.

Named for Lieutenant Michael Fussell who was serving with the Special Operations Task Group in Afghanistan when he was killed in action by an Improvised Explosive Device detonation, the facility will house up to 40 veterans and their families at a time and will especially benefit those from regional and rural areas when veterans are getting treatment.

Our Government will also invest \$7.6 million for the Kookaburra Kids Defence Program to boost their targeted support to children of ex-serving defence force members who are experiencing mental health issues due to their service.

The Kookaburra Kids Defence Program was first supported by our government with a \$2.1 million injection in a pilot program in NSW, the ACT, Queensland and the NT for 569 children, and this extra investment will see the program expand into Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia for 1,750 children.

As a country we can always do more to recognise and back in our veterans. Our government is committed to setting Australia up to support the veterans of today and tomorrow.

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