

2019

The Parliament of the  
Commonwealth of Australia

THE SENATE

*As passed by both Houses*

**Australian Veterans' Recognition  
(Putting Veterans and Their Families  
First) Bill 2019**

**No.     , 2019**

**A Bill for an Act to provide for the recognition of  
veterans, and for related purposes**



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1 **A Bill for an Act to provide for the recognition of**  
2 **veterans, and for related purposes**

3 The Parliament of Australia enacts:

4 **Part 1—Preliminary**  
5

6 **1 Short title**

7 This Act is the *Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans*  
8 *and Their Families First) Act 2019.*

Section 2

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1 **2 Commencement**

2 (1) Each provision of this Act specified in column 1 of the table  
3 commences, or is taken to have commenced, in accordance with  
4 column 2 of the table. Any other statement in column 2 has effect  
5 according to its terms.

6

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| <b>Commencement information</b> |   |                     |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Column 1</b>                 | <b>Column 2</b>                                   | <b>Column 3</b>     |
| <b>Provisions</b>               | <b>Commencement</b>                               | <b>Date/Details</b> |
| 1. The whole of this Act        | The day after this Act receives the Royal Assent. |                     |

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7 Note: This table relates only to the provisions of this Act as originally  
8 enacted. It will not be amended to deal with any later amendments of  
9 this Act.

10 (2) Any information in column 3 of the table is not part of this Act.  
11 Information may be inserted in this column, or information in it  
12 may be edited, in any published version of this Act.

13 **3 Object of this Act**

14 The object of this Act is to acknowledge the unique nature of  
15 military service and the sacrifice demanded of those who commit  
16 to defend our nation.

17 **4 Definitions**

18 In this Act:

19 ***Permanent Forces*** has the same meaning as in the *Defence Act*  
20 *1903*.

21 ***Reserves*** has the same meaning as in the *Defence Act 1903*.

22 ***veteran*** means a person who has served, or is serving, as a member  
23 of the Permanent Forces or as a member of the Reserves.

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## **Part 2—Recognition of veterans and their families**

### **5 General recognition**

- (1) The Commonwealth acknowledges the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice demanded of those who commit to defend our nation.
- (2) The Commonwealth acknowledges the demands placed on, and the sacrifices made by, the families of veterans.
- (3) The Commonwealth acknowledges that veterans may require support mechanisms to enjoy good health, to access employment and training opportunities, to access appropriate housing, to have access to justice, to enjoy social wellbeing or to participate in community engagement after the end of their military service.
- (4) The Commonwealth is committed to supporting veterans and providing the care and support they require.
- (5) The Commonwealth acknowledges that support for veterans should be provided in a way that respects their dignity as individuals, enhances their self-esteem, is sensitive to any physical or mental injury or disease they may have suffered and respects their military service.
- (6) The Commonwealth acknowledges that veterans should be supported to achieve greater economic wellbeing and sustainability and greater participation in civic affairs and should have opportunities to participate in employment and education.

### **6 Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant**

The Parliament, on behalf of the people of Australia, endorses the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant set out in Schedule 1.

Section 7

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1 **7 Beneficial interpretation of legislation**

2 (1) The Commonwealth is committed to decision-makers interpreting  
3 a provision of the following legislation in a way that benefits  
4 veterans, or their families, where that interpretation is consistent  
5 with the purpose of that provision:

- 6 (a) the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*;  
7 (b) the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (the  
8 ***MRC Act***);  
9 (c) the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation*  
10 *(Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*;  
11 (d) instruments under those Acts.

12 (2) The Commonwealth is committed to decision-makers deciding  
13 claims under that legislation:

- 14 (a) in a manner that is fair, just and consistent; and  
15 (b) except under the MRC Act—within a time that is  
16 proportionate to the complexity of the matter; and  
17 (c) in a manner that promotes public trust and confidence; and  
18 (d) on the basis of only requiring evidence sufficient to meet the  
19 relevant standard of proof for the claims.

20 (3) The Commonwealth is committed to the Military Rehabilitation  
21 and Compensation Commission deciding a claim under the MRC  
22 Act within 90 days beginning on:

- 23 (a) the day the Commission receives the claim; or  
24 (b) the day the Commission receives information, or a document,  
25 that the Commission requested in relation to the claim under  
26 section 330 of that Act;

27 whichever occurs later.

28 **8 Cooperation**

29 The Commonwealth is committed to working cooperatively with  
30 veterans, their families and ex-service organisations to address  
31 issues facing veterans.



1 **Part 3—Issue of pins, cards or other artefacts**  
2

3 **9 Issue of pins, cards or other artefacts**

4 (1) The Commonwealth may issue pins, cards or other artefacts to  
5 veterans in recognition of the military service of veterans.

6 (2) The Commonwealth may issue pins, cards or other artefacts to  
7 family members of veterans in recognition of:

8 (a) the military service of veterans; or

9 (b) the demands placed on, and the sacrifices made by, the  
10 families of veterans.

1 **Part 4—Other matters**  
2

3 **10 Part 2 does not create or give rise to rights or obligations**

4 (1) Part 2 does not, by its terms or operation, create or give rise to any  
5 rights (whether substantive or procedural), or obligations, that are  
6 legally enforceable in judicial or other proceedings.

7 (2) A failure to comply with Part 2 does not affect the validity of any  
8 decision, and is not a ground for the review or challenge of any  
9 decision.

10 (3) No action, suit or proceeding is to be instituted in reliance on the  
11 terms of Part 2 or the operation of that Part.

12 **11 Act not intended to exclude similar State or Territory laws**

13 This Act is not intended to apply to the exclusion of any law of a  
14 State or Territory that provides for the recognition of veterans or  
15 their families.

1 **Schedule 1—Australian Defence Veterans’**  
2 **Covenant**

3 Note: See section 6.  
4



**AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE VETERANS' COVENANT**

*We, the people of Australia, respect and give thanks  
to all who have served in our defence force and their families.*

*We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice  
demanded of all who commit to defend our nation.*

*We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served  
and promise to welcome, embrace, and support  
all military veterans as respected and valued members of our community.*

*For what they have done, this we will do.*

5  
6