

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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National Commission for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention must be made up of former soldiers, not high ranking officers

KENNEDY MP, Bob Katter says the newly created Commission for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention must be formed with appointments of former serving soldiers, rather than high ranking military officers and Canberra public servants.

Mr Katter said the function of the Department of Veterans Affairs had been detrimental to the lives of thousands of retired military people because it was run by a bunch of Canberra-based public servants who probably hadn't fired a rifle in their entire lives let alone a rifle in combat.

"If you want government of the people, by the people, for the people, then the first thing you should be doing is setting up a Commission that reflects government of the people, by the people and for the people," he said during a speech in the House of Representatives.

"We're losing more people because of their treatment after the war than we lost actually in the wars.

"A government department of civil suits administering this is just totally wrong. In every case that I have had, the bloke is going along. He runs into a few problems. He's not at ease. He goes along and sees the DVA and then he falls right off the edge."

Mr Katter's electorate includes the northern beaches of Townsville, a fortress city, and the southern suburbs of Cairns, a naval city.

"I have a disproportionate number of military retirees in the Kennedy electorate and there are a few people who say they have had a good experience with the DVA," he said.

"There's not a single person having any power up in North Queensland where all the soldiers are. There are about 2,000 naval personnel and related families in Cairns.

BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy

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That's quite apart from the 6,000 or 7,000 in Townsville in the Army, yet there is not a single representative that they have on a commission that controls the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“One looks back on the many mistakes that have occurred with Government policy relating to our veterans, but here is one that we can address right now.”

-ENDS-

A copy of Mr Katter's speech is available for download here:-

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R0xjlX6lfTxAtVa_a8gJBDlm7d_uRH2o/view?usp=sharing

For more information or a comment from Bob Katter,
please contact the media phone: 0418 840 243

