

26 April 2025

Michael von Berg MC OAM
Chair
ADSO Ltd
By email: secretary@adso.org.au

Dear Mr von Berg,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Coalition's views on the important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

Under Labor, Australia's economy is weak, inflation and interest rates have stayed too high for too long, housing is unaffordable, and our country is less safe.

Under Labor, Australians are paying on average 13% more for food, 18% more for rent, and over 30% more for power and gas and young Australians have seen their dream of home ownership slip away.

The Coalition will get Australia back on track by delivering:

1. **Strong economy with low inflation.** We will rein in wasteful spending and reduce tax, red-tape and union control over small businesses.
2. **Cheaper energy.** We will ensure a balanced mix, including more renewables, more gas, and (in seven locations) replace retired coal plants with zero-emissions nuclear energy.
3. **Affordable homes.** We will fund critical infrastructure required for housing, assist first home buyers, restrict foreign investors, and rebalance Labor's record migration intake.
4. **Safer communities.** We will get tough on violent crime by non-citizens, boost our defence and border security, and improve online safety for children.
5. **Quality healthcare.** We will fund more GPs to address current shortages and increase bulk billing and the number of Medicare-subsidised mental health sessions.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members. Further information about the Coalition's election policies can be found at www.liberal.org.au/our-plan.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

The Coalition's Response to Alliance of Defence Service Organisations 2025 Federal Election Questionnaire

The men and women of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) serve our nation with honour and bravery.

A Dutton Coalition Government will provide additional support for veterans and their families as well as commemorating those who put their lives on the line to serve our nation to protect our values and way of life.

We will guarantee frontline delivery roles across the public service, including at the Department of Veterans' Affairs. We will ensure that veterans and their families receive the quality essential services that they rely on.

Veterans should be recognised for their incredible sacrifices, with their specific health and employment challenges prioritised and addressed.

We have a responsibility to care for the physical and mental wounds of our ADF personnel and veterans. The Coalition Government established the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide in July 2021. It is clear from the findings of the Royal Commission that we must do better by those who defend us and their families. The Coalition is committed to addressing the unacceptably high rates of suicide among the ADF and veteran communities in Australia.

The Coalition supports the agreed response to the Royal Commission and recently supported the legislation to establish the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission, which was Recommendation 122 of the Royal Commission.

When in government the Coalition introduced and expanded free, lifetime mental health care to all ex-service personnel for any mental health condition - regardless of whether it was related to their service. This recognised the importance of early intervention and removed barriers to accessing mental health care. In addition, we provided a White Card upon discharge to allow them access to this important support. The Coalition also expanded the 24/7 Open Arms - Veterans and Families Counselling services.

To support veterans health and wellbeing, our plan includes:

- \$32.25 million to expand the network of Veterans' and Families' Hubs with five new Hubs in Bendigo, Gympie, Bathurst, Mackay, Rosebud and three Hub expansions in Port Macquarie, Wagga Wagga and Dubbo.
- \$11.5 million to support Invictus Australia's ongoing work and to prepare a bid for Australia to host the Invictus Games in 2031.
- \$4 million to continue the Veterans' Chaplaincy Program in Perth, Brisbane and Townsville.

- \$5 million to the Families of Veterans Guild to increase social work services for veterans and war widows to support their wellbeing.
- Delivering \$5.6 million in funding to extend the Defence Kids Program run by the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation for one year.

To support older veterans, a Dutton Coalition Government will provide the right policy settings for those who choose to work more, by increasing the amount of income a veteran service pensioner can earn without reducing pension payments.

Currently, veterans receiving pensions can earn \$300 of income each fortnight without impacting pension payments. Under a Dutton Coalition Government veterans will be able to earn up to \$600 a fortnight and still receive the maximum pension payment. Veteran pensioners will continue to accrue unused pension work bonus amounts up to a maximum of \$7,800, which can exempt future earnings from the pension income test.

A Coalition Government will ensure the service and sacrifice of Australians is appropriately commemorated.

A Dutton Coalition Government will provide \$22 million for the 80th Anniversary of the End of World War II Grants Program. The one-off grants will commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australians who served their nation. Grants of up to \$100,000 will be awarded through a competitive application process for community projects and activities that commemorate World War II.

To read more about our plan for Veterans, visit: www.liberal.org.au/policy/supporting-our-veterans