

# Shining a Light: Stories of Trauma & Tragedy, Hope & Healing

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's special book honouring the lived experience of serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members and their families, is now available.

On 20 June 2024, Royal Commissioners, Nick Kaldas APM (Chair), The Hon James Douglas KC and Dr Peggy Brown AO presented the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's lived experience book to the Governor-General, His Excellency, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd). The book, *Shining a Light: Stories of Trauma & Tragedy, Hope & Healing*, was then tabled in Parliament on the same day.

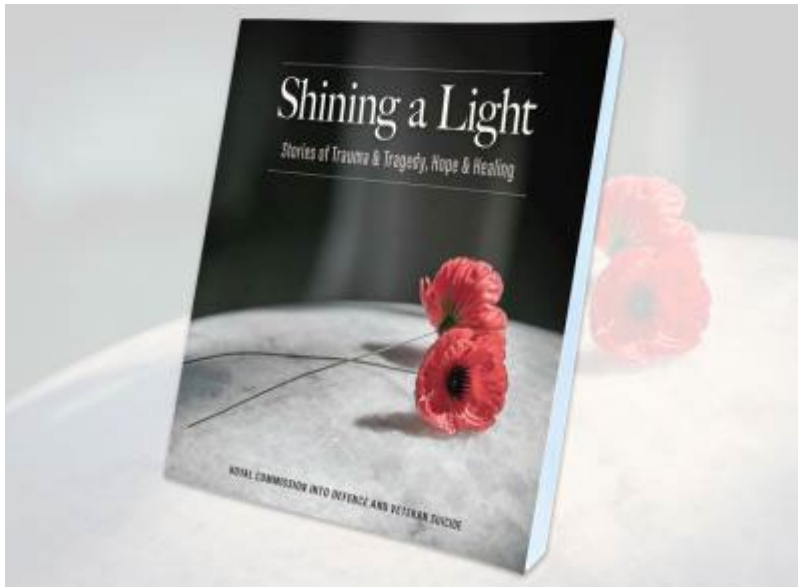
The trauma-informed book, authored by journalist Patrick Lindsay AM, showcases the lived experience of suicide and suicidal behaviour of serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members, and their families. These experiences, which have been at the heart of the Royal Commission during its inquiries, were bravely and generously shared through submissions and evidence.

Collectively, they highlight complex cultural and systemic issues which are failing past and present service personnel and their families, while also recognising and paying tribute to people's resilience, recovery and growth.

Together with our final report, we hope the book will lead to greater understanding of the sacrifices made by those who defend our country – and their loved ones – and help to drive real and lasting change. The book includes reading advice and icons throughout the stories to help readers manage any possible negative impacts of reading the book's content, and features chapters about:

- Recruitment and early training
- Life in uniform
- Leadership and its impact
- Mental health battles
- Suicide and suicidality
- Families and loved ones
- From service to civilian life
- Ex-service organisations
- Dealing with DVA
- Growth from trauma

- The book also includes case studies of a small selection of inspiring community organisations supporting veterans in different ways across Australia.



[Download book](#) Hard copies and an accessible version will be available soon.

*'Shining A Light: Stories of Trauma & Tragedy, Hope & Healing'* may be difficult for some to read. Remember you're not alone. There may be many people feeling the same as you, or who have had similar experiences. Please take your time with the book and note that chapters do not need to be read in order.

While there is distressing content about people's lived experience of trauma, suicide and suicidality, there are also stories of resilience and hope for change. The book has been written in a trauma-informed way, and with helpful advice for readers, including icons throughout the stories to help you manage any possible negative impacts of reading the book's content.

The Royal Commission contacted everyone whose story is featured in the book to confirm their consent to include and permission to publish their submission. All excerpts included in the book have been de-identified to protect people who have made submissions, and not been altered except for minor spelling and grammatical corrections. The Royal Commission also consulted a broad range of Defence and veteran stakeholders during development of the book.