



Australian Government
Department of Defence

**Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade Inquiry into the
Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Legislation
Amendment (Defence Force) Bill 2016**

**Department of Defence
Written Submission**

February 2017

1. On 9 February 2017, the Senate referred the provisions of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Legislation (Defence Force) Bill 2016* to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 20 March 2017. This document is Defence's written submission for the inquiry.
2. Defence supports any initiative that improves the care and support provided to current or former members of the Australian Defence Force who have been adversely impacted by their service, particularly where the initiative reduces the complexity involved in accessing that care and support.
3. Defence views the current legislative arrangements for the rehabilitation and compensation of current or former members of the Australian Defence Force for service related injuries as complex. Coverage is provided under three separate acts and the administration of these acts is split between two ministerial portfolios which adds complexity and complicates efforts to reform the way in which care and support is accessed and delivered.
4. Creating a standalone version of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* for Australian Defence Force members, and the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* is seen as a positive step in reducing this complexity as it will:
 - a. ensure that responsibility for the three Acts that provide rehabilitation and compensation coverage for service-related injuries or illnesses rests solely with the Minister for Veterans' Affairs; and
 - b. allow the Minister to pursue future amendments aimed at bringing the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act* into closer alignment with the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*, reducing complexity in the legislation itself and in the way the Acts are administered.