

08/10/2025

Committee Secretariat
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: fadt.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretariat,

**Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee (the Committee)
Inquiry into Issues relating to advocacy services for veterans accessing compensation and income support**

I refer to the above inquiry, and the public hearing that took place on 26 September 2025.

I write to exercise my right of reply in response to statements made during the public hearing about me personally, as well as the Medilinks Group, by Mr James Weston, as a representative of RSL Victoria.

The Medilinks Group specialises in providing psychiatric services that meet the needs of current and former serving members of the Australian Defence Force. Through this response, I also wish to take the opportunity to provide further information about the important work the Medilinks Group undertakes to provide high quality services to veterans in Australia, with the aim of making a positive impact on the mental health outcomes for veterans, including reducing the number of defence and veteran suicides.

The Medilinks Group

Background

During the public hearing, Mr Weston referred to simply "Medilinks". By way of clarification, the Medilinks Group consists of:

- Medilinks Access Pty Ltd ABN 37 658 402 352, which provides psychiatric Independent Medical Examination (**IME**) services; and
- Medilinks Connect Pty Ltd ABN 27 675 326 959, which provides general psychiatric treatment

(together, the **Medilinks Group**).

I am the CEO of the Medilinks Group, with a background as a veteran of the Australian Defence Force, before transitioning into a career in healthcare.

Structure

The Medilinks Group is structured to ensure that conflicts of interest between practitioners that provide IME services and those that provide general psychiatric treatment are eliminated. Both companies operate separately and with robust governance frameworks in order to maintain transparency and independence.

The Medilinks Group, and businesses associated with our operations, operate multiple entities to address distinct but complementary areas of need for veterans in order to provide coordinated, timely, and evidence-based care and assistance, and is an example of innovation in healthcare for veterans. Vertical integration of this nature is not uncommon within the healthcare sector and provides benefits including:

- a higher level of coordination for the various care needs of patients;
- enhanced outcomes for patients;
- clearer governance of organisations;
- a reduced risk of conflicts of interests;
- the provision of holistic care for patients; and
- integrated service delivery.

The model utilised by the Medilinks Group aligns with the findings of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (**Royal Commission**), which emphasised the importance of stronger coordination across service domains, improved collaboration to streamline patient outcomes, and the development of integrated, person-centred care models. The Medilinks Group is of the view that innovation like ours is particularly important given the findings of the Royal Commission regarding the urgent need for coordinated, integrated, and accessible services for veterans.

Regulatory oversight

As the Committee will be aware, the Medilinks Group operates within a highly regulated industry and is subject to strict oversight from multiple regulatory and governing bodies, including:

- Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Medicare;
- BUPA;
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists;
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency;
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission; and
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

In addition, the Medilinks Group has recently commenced the accreditation process under the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards. The oversight that accompanies these regulatory frameworks ensures that the Medilinks Group is subject to multiple layers of governance, transparency, and accountability, so that our services meet a high standard of clinical safety and ethical practice.

If it would be of assistance to the Committee, I would be pleased to provide a copy of de-identified data that demonstrates the quality of services provided, and the satisfaction of the veterans we serve.

Referrals

The Medilinks Group routinely receives referrals from a wide variety of sources, with the greatest source of referrals being from sources which are independent from entities which are related to the Medilinks Group. Where veterans do receive referrals from a related entity, we ensure that veterans retain complete freedom to identify and choose the provider of their choice.

The Medilinks Group and our related entities maintain transparency through robust governance frameworks. This involves the clear disclosure and management of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests to ensure all clinical decisions remain patient-centred, and that care and treatment is not compromised by potential conflicts of interest.

Advocacy of the Medilinks Group

The public hearing heard a suggestion that there is an 'advocacy company' within the group of entities associated with the Medilinks Group. This is untrue. Rather, while there is no dedicated advocacy organisation within the group, there is a law firm, Veteran Legal, that provides legal services to veterans relating to military compensation.

Veteran Legal operates independently, and within the highly regulated legal environment. Veteran Legal upholds the highest standards of service and professional conduct, and I seek to ensure the Committee is made aware of the important work Veteran Legal does to support veterans in obtaining access to compensation.

Claims made by Mr Weston

I am disappointed Mr Weston, as an admitted legal practitioner appearing on behalf of RSL Victoria, chose to use the protections available under "parliamentary privilege" to provide evidence that, when tested, fails to hold up to scrutiny given the context to the Medilinks Group set out above. This is particularly the case given the comments made were speculative, misleading, and have unfairly damaged the reputation of myself, the Medilinks Group, and through subsequent media reporting, our Chief Medical Officer, Dr Peggy Brown AO.

The Committee should be aware that Mr Weston has previously sought to raise concerns with the Medilinks Group with RSL Victoria, however to the best of my knowledge, those concerns were allayed following my professional engagement with senior members of RSL Victoria. To have these issues

resurface through the course of the Inquiry is highly unsatisfactory, particularly given they were not the subject of written submissions, and rather appear to be distraction from core subject matter of the Inquiry.

Separately, I note that Mr Weston took the opportunity in the public hearing to make comments about his concerns regarding referral inducements from medicinal cannabis companies, while at a similar time within the hearing naming Veterans Benefits Australia (**VBA**), Medilinks and Salute For Service. I respectfully submit that this evidence had the ability to be misleading and should be clarified so that there is no suggestion that either of these organisations are associated with the medical cannabis issue raised.

With respect to the VBA, Mr Weston sought to link this social media platform (not company), to myself. This is factually incorrect, and I have no history of involvement in the operation of the platform – for the avoidance of doubt, the Medilinks Group is not one of the providers to which VBA connects veterans.

With respect to Salute For Service, I confirm that I am proudly associated with this excellent charity, in my role as a Non-Executive Director. In this capacity, I am aware of the separate response that Salute For Service has prepared for the Committee in response to Mr Weston's evidence, and I wholly support its efforts to call out inaccuracies and clear its name.

Conclusion

I trust the information contained within these submissions allays any concerns the Committee had with the operations of the Medilinks Group, as well as my own involvement within the industry, following the evidence of Mr Weston. I expect that the media that sensationalised untested extracts of the public hearing will not give these submissions the same headlines, however I am confident that the Committee will have regard to these submissions in reaching its findings and conclusions in the interests of fairness, accuracy, and the integrity of this important inquiry.

While I appreciate that the timeframe for submissions for this Inquiry has drawn to an end, I am more than willing to appear before the Committee, either in public or in-camera, to provide further evidence should it be considered useful to the Committee.

Finally, I was disappointed that the Chair of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Reference Committee – Senator Sarah Henderson – has circulated on social media a newspaper article published in The Australian which sensationalises the comments made by Mr Weston before those named had had an opportunity to exercise their right of reply.

Yours sincerely,

Brodie Moore

Chief Executive Officer

Medilinks Access Pty Ltd (ABN 37 658 402 352)

Medilinks Connect Pty Ltd (ABN 27 675 326 959)