



Flinders  
University

Institute for Mental Health &  
*wellbeing*

# Open Door Initiative

Understanding and supporting service  
personnel and their families



## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM FAMILIES OF VETERANS**

---

**HISTORICAL & CONTEMPORARY DIMENSIONS OF VETERAN SUICIDE: 1914-2023**

## DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY



We want to understand the circumstances, from the point of view of families, leading to Veteran experiences of thinking about, attempting and taking their life. We are approaching this over time from 1914 until the present day. We are taking a life course approach. This means asking you as a family member about your loved one's life from birth, through early childhood, to enlistment, service, transition and life after service. We take this approach to understand the many life experiences that lead a person to consider taking their life.

This includes researching how service affects veterans and their families; along with the ways the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the Department of Defence (DoD), and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) assists serving members, veterans, and their families (or not).

### Chief Investigator

#### Professor Ben Wadham

College of Education,  
Psychology and Social Work,  
Flinders University

Mobile: 0447 947 880

### Chief Investigator

#### Dr Margaret Hutchison

School of Humanities  
and Social Sciences  
UNSW Canberra

Mobile: 0404 245 213

### Co-Investigator

#### Professor Udoy Saikia

School of Humanities  
and Social Sciences,  
Flinders University

Tel: 08 8201 2639

### Co-Investigator

#### Professor Sharon Lawn

College of Medicine  
and Public Health,  
Flinders University

Mobile: 0459 098 772

### Co-Investigator

#### Dr Karen Bird

College of Education,  
Psychology and Social Work,  
Flinders University

Mobile: 0419 526 743

### Community Liaison Officer

#### Mr Barry Riddiford

College of Education,  
Psychology and Social Work,  
Flinders University

Mobile: 0467 894 181

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY



The purpose of this study is to:

1. Generate new knowledge on the changing ways the Australian military, Department Veterans' Affairs, the Veteran sector, Families, and Community have understood Veterans, and Veteran wellbeing, trauma, and suicide since 1914.
2. Describe how military/civil society processes, including government and military policy have historically affected Veteran wellbeing and suicide outcomes.
3. Provide an historical record of family and Veteran accounts of suicide including thoughts, planning and attempts to identify risk factors that generate the conditions for suicide.
4. Record and contextualise family and Veteran accounts of Veteran suicide including thoughts, planning and attempts to understand underlying risk factors for suicide.
5. Describe the social domains where Australian Veterans are achieving or not achieving wellbeing and translate research to policy and service provision addressing Veteran wellbeing and suicide prevention.

## VIDEO ACCOUNTS

With your consent, the interview will be audio and/or videotaped. Video recordings will focus solely on you and your immediate surroundings only. If you do not want to be videoed, that is okay – you can still participate in the project.

The purpose of the videos is to produce testimonials of bereaved families and veterans who have attempted to take their lives. The aim of this is to educate the wider community as well as provide support and understanding to other veterans who are facing life challenges. There are a group of families who have expressed the desire to have video testimonials of their stories. Some families and veterans who have attempted suicide feel that the issue is invisible and unrecognised. This will only be possible with participants who are happy to be identified. Videos will be recorded when the research interview is happening. Usual withdrawal protocols will be observed and will be produced with your explicit consent and feedback to establish a platform for describing the experience of suicide for families and veterans.

## BENEFITS OF THE STUDY



This research will link historical and contemporary experiences of veterans and their families. It will provide veterans and their families with an opportunity to have their experiences documented. Linking historical and contemporary veterans and their family's experiences will help inform an evidence-base of how service and transition, and systems and cultures can influence veteran wellbeing and trauma.

This research will also inform future redress initiatives and responses to veteran health and wellbeing.

## PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT



Participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate, this will include:

- A one-on-one interview (other family member(s) or friends may be with you for the interview, if you want them to be present).
- With your consent, the interview will be audio and/or video-taped. If you do not want to be videoed, that is okay – you can still participate in the project.
- You will be asked a series of questions about your experiences of veteran welfare and veteran sector support.
- The interview will take between 1-3 hours. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. We can stop at any time.

Your DVA entitlements cannot be affected by participating in this study.

## POTENTIAL RISKS



Some questions may cause discomfort. The discussion may also become emotionally challenging. The research team are very experienced in these interviews. We will ask you about how the interview is going as we proceed to check that you are feeling OK. If you experience feelings of distress, please let the research team know immediately.

You can also contact the following services for support:

- Lifeline – 13 11 14, [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636, [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
- Open Arms: Veteran Counselling Service - 1800 011 046, <https://www.openarms.gov.au/>
- Find a NACCHO Member near you: [www.naccho.org.au](http://www.naccho.org.au)

## WITHDRAWAL RIGHTS



You may, without any penalty, decline to take part in this research study at any time, without providing an explanation.

You also do not have to answer any questions you do not want to.

Any information collected up to the point of your withdrawal will be securely destroyed by the research team.

## CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

Privacy and confidentiality are assured. Research findings may be presented at conferences, written up for publication or used for other research purposes as described in this Information Sheet. At no time will you be named, or your individual information be identifiable without your explicit consent.

## DATA STORAGE

Information collected will be securely stored on a password protected computer and/or Flinders University server. Any identifiable information will be de-identified unless indicated otherwise.

After we complete the project, all information will be securely kept for ten years, when all raw data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

## HOW WILL I RECEIVE FEEDBACK?

On project completion, a short summary of the outcomes will be provided to all participants.

If you have agreed to be videoed, the video will be shown to you in production for your feedback.

## ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

This project has been approved by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee. Project Identification: 5999.

## QUERIES & CONCERNS

If you have any queries or concerns any member of the research team will be happy to assist. Your queries and concerns will be addressed in the strictest confidence.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office can be contacted via telephone: 08 8201 2543; or email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au).

*This information sheet is yours to keep.*

*If you accept our invitation to be involved,  
please sign the enclosed Consent Form.*

# CONSENT FORM - FAMILIES OF VETERANS

## HISTORICAL & CONTEMPORARY DIMENSIONS OF VETERAN SUICIDE: 1914-2023

This project has been approved by the Flinders  
University Human Research Ethics Committee

(Project ID: 5999)

### CONSENT STATEMENT

- I have read and understood the information about the research, and I understand I am being asked to provide informed consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I can contact the research team if I have further questions about this research study.
- I am not aware of any condition that would prevent my participation, and I agree to participate in this project.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study.
- I understand that I can contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office if I have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study.
- I understand that the information collected may be published and with my explicit consent my identity may be revealed.

I further consent to:

- Participating in an interview
- Having my information audio recorded
- Having my information video recorded
- Having my photo taken
- Being contacted in the future to obtain my explicit consent for my video recording to be produced into a publicly available testimonial with my feedback
- Being contacted in the future to ascertain my interest in participating in similar projects
- My de-identified data and information being used in this project and other related projects for an extended period (no more than 10 years after publication of the data)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: [ben.wadham@flinders.edu.au](mailto:ben.wadham@flinders.edu.au)