



THE COMMANDO WELFARE TRUST



AUSTRALIAN COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

20TH May 2020

To Members and Friends of the Australian Commando Community.

As you may have read, the Inspector General of the Australian Defence Force (IGADF) Inquiry is in its final stages and is now commencing to issue notices to Potentially Affected Persons. These are people who could be directly affected by charges laid as a result of the inquiry or as witnesses to alleged breaches of the Laws of Armed Conflict by members of the ADF in Afghanistan, between 2005 and 2016.

The Commando family reaches right across Australia and it is now more important than ever that we work together to look after the wellbeing of our own.

We understand that where potential outcomes align with the Commonwealth's interests, persons appearing in a court in cases brought as a result of the IGADF Inquiry, will initially receive Legal Support at Commonwealth Expense (LACE). That is some positive news.

However just receiving a notice regarding these proceedings will no doubt be extremely traumatic for any of our family and we ask you now to be vigilant in identifying anyone not travelling well. We are fortunate to have some very competent members in our ranks who can assist with all manner of welfare issues. If you have any concerns about a serving or former member, please contact a state-based Australian Commando Association Committee member or the Commando Welfare Trust Executive Officer. That way the relevant support can be determined and then supplied as quickly as possible.

You are going to be asked questions by people who know of your service so here are some facts that may be relevant in answering any of these queries:

- Everyone has the initial right to a presumption of innocence.
- Currently, only 25% of all Commando & Support members served in Afghanistan; and
- Overall 5,745 Veterans of Special Operations Command Australia served over 20 rotations and conducted more than 3,000 missions.

Much is being done to both support the members who may be affected in any way by the outcomes of this inquiry. The Command is also ensuring that all units emerge from this difficult time as prepared and agile to meet the challenges that Government and the people of Australia expect SOCOMD to deal with - something that has been demonstrated time and time again for decades.

The wider Commando family now more than ever, should reach out and support our people to ensure the wellbeing of our brothers in arms.

BRIG Mark Smethurst DSC AM (Retd)
Chairman
Commando Welfare Trust

MAJGEN Greg Melick AO SC RFD (Retd)
National President
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