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HONOURING THE SERVICE OF ALL OF AUSTRALIA'S VETERANS

A Shorten Labor Government will recognise the role of all Australian veterans, investing \$118 million to honour their service and support their families.

This funding is an investment in local pride and national identity.

It's about honouring Australia's oldest promise, that at the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

Labor's investment will mean that all veterans – no matter the conflict they served in – receive the same funeral benefits as their peers. For some, this will

mean an additional \$10,000 in support for their families at one of the toughest times of their lives.

Labor will also give local communities the chance to update their memorials to recognise all veterans – including those who fought in the Vietnam and Korean wars, and those who fought in more recent conflicts.

This is about ensuring all our veterans are rightly honoured.

Labor's package includes:

Respecting our veterans with more support:

Labor will address inequity in the treatment of our veterans in payment for funeral expenses – ensuring the families of our veterans are better supported.

We will assist more than 84,000 veterans by increasing the amount they receive for funeral expenses by more than \$10,000 – an overall investment of \$90.4 million.

Currently, those veterans who access support through the Veterans' Entitlement Act (VEA) are entitled to a maximum of \$2,000 to assist in funeral costs, often leaving families with the burden of out of pockets costs.

A Shorten Labor Government will increase this amount to \$12,053.62 for these VEA veterans, who are mostly our Second World War, Korea and Vietnam era veterans – this is the same level that veterans' access under the modern Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA).

Upgrading community memorials to recognise all veterans:

Labor's commitment to recognising all our servicemen and women will be cemented through the establishment of a \$20 million Their Enduring Legacy grants program.

Labor will ensure memorials throughout Australia are upgraded to reflect all Australians who have fought in wars.

Memorials play an important role in recognising our servicemen and women.

Many local memorials acknowledge the sacrifices made by our First and Second World War veterans. Labor will ensure that local memorials will be upgraded, and also better commemorate those men and

women who served in Korea, Vietnam and more recent conflicts, who are often not recognised at these memorials. Labor's fund will address this.

Investing in the Kokoda Trail:

A Shorten Labor Government will honour our Second World War soldiers who trekked the Kokoda Trail through a Joint Master Plan to acknowledge the importance of Kokoda in Australia's military history.

Labor's Joint Master Plan will bring together various departments in Australia and Papua New Guinea to develop a plan that recognises the environmental, cultural and wartime significance of the Kokoda Trail.

Our Joint Master Plan will complement the Kokoda Initiative, which was first signed in 2008 and is scheduled to conclude in June 2020.

This \$2 million investment from Labor is a nod to those who fought through in the jungle on the Kokoda Trail, recognising the environmental, cultural and wartime significance of the site, conserving it into the future.

More support for veteran carers:

A Shorten Labor Government will support the carers of our veterans to ensure they can continue to give our veterans high quality support and care.

Carers are the first line of support to our veterans and are often partners or family members.

Labor will provide funding for carer retreats to assist those who struggle with social isolation and provide greater emotional support to those who are looking after our veterans.

Retreats enable partners and carers to have a break from their responsibilities, spend time with others in similar circumstances and receive greater support.

This \$1 million a year commitment from Labor provides greater support for our veterans through their families and carers.

Expanded therapy support:

Labor will expand mental health support to our veterans, with greater access to complementary treatment programs.

A Shorten Labor Government will expand veterans' access to mental health treatment through the development of an art therapy program.

Labor understands it is not a case of one size fits all when it comes to treating mental health.

This is a \$2 million investment from Labor to expand mental health treatment for our veterans.

Labor will save the Department of Veterans' Affairs:

A Shorten Labor Government will not dismantle the Department of Veterans' Affairs. We call on Scott Morrison to guarantee the same.

Labor has a clear position: we will not dismantle DVA.

Abolition of the department was a recommendation of the draft Productivity Commission report, which the Liberals commissioned.

In stark contrast, Scott Morrison and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs have not given the same guarantee, leaving more than 280,000 veterans and clients of DVA in limbo.

Labor will boost research into veterans' mental health:

A Shorten Labor Government will boost research into veterans' mental health, to provide greater understanding of the mental, physical and social health of current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force.

If we can better understand the wellbeing of our current and ex-serving members, we can better understand how support them.

Labor will provide \$4.47 million to Phoenix Australia to continue valuable research on veterans' mental health.

This suite of policies from Labor is on top of our \$121 million comprehensive Veterans' Employment Policy, \$1 million to a Veterans' Recovery Centre in the Ipswich and Somerset Region, \$4.9 million for the Scott Palmer Service and Veterans' Support Hub in the Northern Territory, \$4.1 million towards Oasis Townsville, the Western Front Fellowship and a \$2 million Family Engagement and Support Strategy.

One of the most important and urgent ways we can give weight and meaning to

Lest We Forget is to ensure our veterans and their families receive the support and respect they deserve.

Labor is proud to deliver this significant investment to better support our veterans and their families.

SATURDAY, 20 APRIL 2019

Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.

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