From the military to the academy

La Trobe University will lead a major national project to increase access to and support of younger military student veterans in Australian higher education.

The project builds on findings from previous research led by La Trobe University’s Centre for Higher Education Equity and Diversity (CHEEDR) with the Australian Student Veterans’ Association which found that most student veterans were not identified within higher education institutions and many felt marginalised and unsupported.

Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, the Hon. Darren Chester MP, announced funding last Friday (1 March) through the Supporting Younger Veterans Grant Program for the project, entitled: From the military to the academy: supporting younger military veterans in Australian higher education.

The project will be led by CHEEDR, in partnership with the Australian Student Veterans’ Association; Australian Catholic University; Charles Darwin University and Western Sydney University.
CHEEDR Director, Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, said the project results from previous research findings which identified the need to improve processes for identifying student veterans in higher education; recognising their unique strengths and supporting their wellbeing and success at university.

“In our previous research, we found veterans to be largely invisible within Australian higher education,” Professor Harvey said.

“Most student veterans had not disclosed their military status to their institution, and many felt that university culture was not respectful or appreciative of their military service.

“Through this new project, we will set up procedures for identifying, supporting, and advocating for student veterans. We also aim to embed support for student veterans in mainstream university practices to ensure sustainability beyond the life of the grant.”

Student veteran officers will be recruited across partner universities to:

- increase recruitment and identification of veterans on campus
- provide tailored support and advice to student veterans
- increase peer support for student veterans
- and embed support for student veterans in mainstream university practices.

The team will also advocate changes to university application processes so that Australian Defence Force experience and prior learning can be consistently recognised.

Through consultation with student veterans, the project team will develop higher education guidelines for current and prospective student veterans and for academic and professional university staff.

These guidelines will contain practical and evidence-based information to help universities attract and support student veterans.

**Background**

Chief Investigators on the project are:

- Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, La Trobe University
- Lisa Andrewartha, La Trobe University
- Matthew Sharp, Australian Student Veterans Association
- Matthew Wyatt-Smith, Australian Student Veterans Association
- Professor Sandra Jones, Australian Catholic University
- Professor Sue Shore, Charles Darwin University
- Professor Michele Simons, Western Sydney University

**La Trobe’s previous research on military veterans in higher education**


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