

DEFENCE LIVES MATTER: Honour the Fallen

www.defencelivesmatter.com



The Hon. Matt Keogh MP
Minister of Veteran Affairs
Email: Matt.Keogh.MP@aph.gov.au

22 May 2026

RE: Warrant Officer Class Two Lachlan Muddle, Killed-In-Service

Sir,

I am writing with a heavy heart following the tragic death of Warrant Officer Class Two Lachlan Muddle in a training accident. To Lachlan's family and friends, and to the wider Special Air Service Regiment community, I extend my deepest condolences. Lachlan's passing is a profound loss, felt not only by those who served alongside Lachlan, but by all Australians who understand what service and sacrifice truly mean.

In moments like this, words can never be enough. But how we respond, what we choose to do, and what we choose not to delay, matters.

This tragedy underscores an urgent and longstanding issue: the continued delay in implementing the **2022 Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal recommendations** to establish and award a Memorial Killed-In-Service Clasp. The Tribunal's recommendation was clear in its intent: to ensure those who die in service are formally, consistently and visibly honoured in a way that reflects the reality of their sacrifice, and the enduring grief carried by their loved ones.

Access the report here:

https://www.defencelivesmatter.com/files/ugd/c5f951_e6570b49c9ba461bbbd5230ef8b2ca28.pdf

When a life is lost in service, families deserve more than condolences. They deserve certainty, recognition, and the nation's clear acknowledgement that their loved one's death is not an administrative footnote, but a solemn sacrifice that must be honoured without hesitation, within their loved one's personal honours and awards.

Every year of delay deepens the hurt. With the tragic reality of training deaths continuing to rise, each further postponement only compounds this longstanding national oversight: failing to formally recognise ultimate sacrifice in a consistent, timely and respectful way through the member's medal set. This is precisely why I have continued to advocate through my Defence Lives Matter: Killed-in-Service campaign. The campaign exists because too many families have been left waiting, waiting for recognition, waiting for fairness, and waiting for a system that reflects the values we publicly claim to hold: respect, duty, service and remembrance.

DEFENCE LIVES MATTER: Honour the Fallen

www.defencelivesmatter.com

The Memorial Killed-In-Service Clasp is not “just” an adornment. It is a promise made visible:

- that service-related death is recognised consistently, not selectively
- that families are not forced to fight for acknowledgement while grieving
- that Defence members can trust their nation will honour them and their families if the unthinkable happens
- that remembrance includes training, preparation and duty, not only combat



I respectfully urge you to support immediate action to progress and implement the Tribunal’s 2022 recommendations without further delay, specifically and most urgently the Memorial Killed In Service Clasp. If we can agree that those who serve are worthy of our respect, then we must ensure those who die in service are honoured in a timely, meaningful and enduring way.

Vale, Lachlan. May Lachlan rest in peace, and may we honour Lachlan’s life with more than words, with action.

Lest we forget.

Yours sincerely,

WO1 (Ret’d) Kerry Danes, CSM
PO Box 391
Capalaba Qld 4157
www.defencelivesmatter.com

In the attached report we detail our proposal for what we believe to be a principled scheme for providing that recognition for service-related death and serious wounding, injury or disease. We believe it would provide a tangible and readily recognisable expression of national gratitude for the sacrifice of ADF members killed or suffering a serious wound, injury or disease in or as a result of their service and, quite separately, that of their families, and would do so in a way that allows existing defence honours and awards to better “tell the story” of that service.

While this scheme may be unprecedented in some respects, we believe it to be justifiable and achievable. We thus commend it to you and, through you, to the Government.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Skehill
Chair

David Ashley AM
Member

Rear Admiral James Goldrick AO CSC RAN (Retd)
Member/Consultant

Josephine Lumb
Member

Jane Schwager AO
Member/Consultant