

21.11.02

5 Senator K.L. Moore of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the Armed Forces Steering Group (OQ.228/2021)

Will the Minister provide the Assembly with an update to the work and achievements of the Armed Forces Steering Group?

Deputy G.C. Guida of St. Lawrence (The Minister for Home Affairs):

The Armed Forces Steering Group last met in 2017. The formal group has not met since that time, however, the government's commitment to the covenant has been preserved. I am witness to this because our interests started immediately under Constable Norman and the subject of the covenant was on our agenda every single week. It was greatly facilitated by the fact that our director general and our new prison governor were both, if not veterans, ex-servicemen. Work has been undertaken by my department over the last year to bring new momentum to the covenant across government and we will soon be holding an event to recommit to the important promise that was made to our veterans. I must add that, again, I was witness to physical cases where the government helped veterans, in this particular case Home Affairs, which financially helped 2 veterans that were referred to us by the British-led role with the British Legion and needed help with problems with travelling and COVID and we provided the financial help, as recommended by the covenant. Senior officials from all government departments met in August this year to discuss how we could better support veterans and these ideas will be pursued by a reformed steering group once the covenant has been re-signed.

4.5.1 Senator K.L. Moore:

I am grateful to the Minister for his honest appraisal of the work to date and I would ask the Minister, as we remember the fallen and we all wear our poppies with pride at this time of year, will he commit to reinstating the Armed Forces Steering Group so that there is a more consistent momentum behind the commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant that the previous Government had agreed?

Deputy G.C. Guida:

Absolutely. The steering group is an essential part of the covenant, so there is no way that we can conduct the covenant without it. It is definitely something that we will make sure exists after the covenant has been re-signed.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I wonder if I may ask that the défaut be raised on Senator Gorst, who has joined us remotely, if that is possible, Sir, and if it is I would like that to be done.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, there is no objection; the défaut is raised on Senator Gorst.