



Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

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YOUNG VETERANS SUPPORTED TO SHARE THEIR STORIES

A project mentoring young veterans to share their stories was launched by the Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello at North Bondi RSL Club today.

Service Stories is a joint initiative of the NSW Government, veteran organisations Soldier On and North Bondi RSL Sub Branch.

Mr Dominello said *Service Stories* was the first project by an Australian government to mentor veterans to speak publicly about their deployment, and the challenges and opportunities faced when returning from service.

“Young veterans and their families will be encouraged and empowered to speak out about their individual experiences on service or integrating back into society after their time on deployment. Their personal stories will help to educate our community to better understand and appreciate the needs of those who have served our country,” said Mr Dominello.

“*Service Stories* provides an avenue, which may not have otherwise existed, for young veterans to share their life experiences whilst serving, that benefits our younger generation and the individual veterans.”

Hugh Riminton, Channel 10 Reporter and a former CNN Foreign Correspondent, and Damien Thomlinson, Australian veteran of the Afghanistan War and motivational speaker, have been confirmed as mentors for *Service Stories*.

“The mentors will train veterans in the art of public speaking to help them effectively articulate their stories to students, young Australians, community groups and corporate NSW,” said Mr Dominello.

Service Stories mentor Damien Thomlinson said: “This is a wonderful initiative as it allows returned young veterans to have their story heard by the community they have served.”

“For some veterans, it can feel like no one understands their situation, which can be really isolating. *Service Stories* breaks this mould by providing a relevant mentor and a positive connection between the veteran and their community.”

John Bale, CEO of Soldier On, said he was delighted to part of such an important program.

“Seeing Australians come together to show their support of our veterans aides the emotional healing of those physically or psychologically wounded by war. Initiatives like *Service Stories* are vital in supporting the ongoing rehabilitation of those wounded in contemporary conflicts,” said Mr Bale.

Service Stories has already gained momentum securing partnerships with Sydney Legacy, Carnival Australia and the NSW Waratahs.

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