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## Media Release

17 December 2018

### Joint communique - Global Collaboration to Advance Military and Veteran Mental Health Research

A collaboration of military and veteran mental health experts from 5-Eyes nations has been formed with the aim of advancing mental health research and treatment for serving military, veterans, and their families.

Led by Phoenix Australia, Australia's national centre for excellence in posttraumatic mental health and the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR), the 5-Eyes Mental Health Research and Innovation Collaboration (5-Eyes MRIC) brings together leaders in research and innovation from the following organisations:

- Australia: Phoenix Australia – Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health
- Canada: Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research
- USA: National Center for PTSD; Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS), Uniformed Services University; Walter Reed Army Institute of Research
- UK: Combat Stress; King's College
- NZ: Defence Chief of Mental Health.

The inaugural meeting of the collaboration, held in October in Sydney, was run in parallel with the International Veterans' Ministers 5-Eyes Conference, and made a presentation to the ministers on military and veteran suicide prevention. The ministers, in a media release, encouraged the expert collaboration to continue their important work and "report back with practical outcomes to be progressed by Veterans' Affairs agencies".

Professor David Forbes, Director of Phoenix Australia, said, "This is the first time that an expert collaboration will focus on mental health priorities across both the military and veteran sectors. The 5-Eyes nations have highlighted the need for a policy and problem-solving perspective that takes a lifelong approach – from military service to veteran life, and this group will deliver exactly that". The topics of focus of the inaugural two-day meeting included suicide prevention, strengthening engagement in care, and improving treatment outcomes.

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As Professor David Pedlar, Scientific Director from CIMVHR explained, “Too many current and ex-serving military personnel suffer mental health effects from their service which can have a profound and long-lasting impact, not only on themselves, but also their families. We urgently need to work to increase knowledge and improve outcomes”.

The 5-Eyes MRIC will work closely with, but independently of, the five nation government organisations and militaries to bring a 5-Eyes level lens to advance military and veteran mental health priorities.

Problem-solving at the 5-Eyes nation level is a long established and proven tradition in the military and veteran sector. The five nations’ relationship involves mutual trust, shared military values, conduct of joint military operations, and exchange of information between militaries and government veterans’ affairs departments.

The 5-Eyes MRIC will meet once annually and communicate periodically with the 5-Eyes ministers and government organisations to assure a focus on policy-relevant priorities and actionable outcomes.

### **About Phoenix Australia**

Phoenix Australia is a national centre of excellence in posttraumatic mental health and an international leader in veteran and military mental health, with an affiliation with the University of Melbourne. We are at the forefront of research, policy and training, working with individuals, organisations and the community to understand, prevent and recover from the potential adverse effects of trauma.

### **About CIMVHR**

The Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) is an innovative organization that engages existing academic research resources and facilitates the development of new research, research capacity and effective knowledge translation. With a network of academic researchers from across Canada, it serves as a focal point for 43 Canadian universities who have agreed to work together in addressing the health research requirements of the Canadian military, Veterans and their families.

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