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GREATER PUBLIC AWARENESS OF VETERANS' PARTNERS

Veterans' Affairs Minister, Tom Kenyon says there needs to be greater public awareness of the important and often unheralded support role played by the families of veterans.

Speaking at the Partners of Veterans Association national conference in Adelaide, Mr Kenyon said the Association had an important and invaluable role to play in educating the community about the unique needs of veterans and their families.

“The conference provides an ideal opportunity for the Association’s National Executive to discuss with State representatives from across Australia ways of identifying the specific assistance required to support those needs.

“When a veteran returns home a ‘different person’ to the one who left, or gradually changes over the ensuing years, it’s often the partner who has to care for, not just the veteran, but the entire family.

“This is an enormous responsibility and the challenges faced by partners and the families of veterans are generally not fully understood by the wider community,” Mr Kenyon said.

“The family is often held together in good times, and the not-so-good times by the partner of a veteran.

“The irony, of course, is that in almost all cases, the partner of a veteran is not the one who volunteers for military service, and that magnifies the dimension of their contribution and sacrifice, both to their family and the nation.

“The life of a partner of a veteran is not always an easy one and that’s why the Association plays such an important support and care role.

“The Association has continued to grow and to raise its national profile to become a well respected and valued member of the ex-service community.

“The State Government has offered support by including an Association representative on the Veterans’ Advisory Council since its inception in December 2008.

“Their inclusion on the Council is recognition of the important and growing role the Association is playing in raising awareness of the special needs of the veterans’ community and beyond,” Mr Kenyon said.