



## MEDIA RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, 22 September 2020**

### **Movember and The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride announce grants program supporting Veterans and First Responders**

Leading men's health charity Movember, in partnership with The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride (DGR) has today announced multi-country grants funding for mental health programs to improve support for Veterans and First Responders.

An initial investment of \$6.34M<sup>1</sup> is being earmarked over the next two years to support Veteran and First Responder initiatives in Australia and Canada as well as First Responder initiatives in the UK, New Zealand, Ireland and the US. This includes a funding allocation of \$1 million for programs in Australia.

The announcement follows an independent multi-country review commissioned by Movember and conducted by Dr Donald McCreary in 2019, which revealed a lack of publicly available evidence of the overall effectiveness and co-ordination of existing programs to support the needs of this group.

"Firefighters, paramedics, police and military veterans are on the front line of our community each day, and they are also disproportionately affected by suicide and mental health issues, given they are likely to be exposed to various workplace stressors throughout their careers, including regular traumatic events," Movember Global Director of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Brendan Maher said.

"We're proud to be providing support to these groups of men in the community, along with their families through our grants funding program, and to build evidence around approaches and programs that truly make a difference. We're also grateful for the collaboration offered by our program partner, The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride."

"Many riders that participate in the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride have either served in the military or work in front line emergency response. We appreciate the risks they've taken, the sacrifices they've made and the impact that has had on their own mental health and wellbeing. It makes me really proud that the funds we've raised for Movember will help deliver support and services for this unique group of individuals," said Mark Hawwa, Founder, The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride.

The review, spanning Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and the UK involved assessing scientific research available on early intervention and prevention programs in the general workforce and amongst veteran and first responder organisations.

Dr McCreary also interviewed subject matter experts in each country to better understand how these programs are being used, as well as conducting a comprehensive desktop review of digital and social media platforms to find and assess program information.

"The community has certainly looked to address the concerns around mental ill health and suicide amongst military veterans and first responders, however the review found there was little published evidence to indicate how effective existing mental health programs for this group are. Where programs do improve the mental health of participants, the effects are relatively minor and diminish over time.

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<sup>1</sup> CAD \$5.7M; EUR €3.92M; NZD \$6.85M; GBP£3.38M or USD \$4.35M

“There is also little central co-ordination or knowledge sharing across existing programs,” Dr McCreary said.

A minimum of eight programs will be funded across all countries, with the purpose of the grants to identify current programs showing promise in improving the mental health of men in these groups and to build the evidence for effective interventions.

The funding forms part of Movember’s mental health cause area, and is in line with its approach of supporting scalable, evidence-based programs that focus on early intervention and prevention, to ultimately prevent suicide and improve mental health and wellbeing amongst this community.

Applications for grants are open until 23 November 2020. For more information about the grants program, eligibility and process, visit [movember.com/vfrgrants](https://movember.com/vfrgrants)

For a copy of the Veteran and First Responder Mental Ill Health and Suicide Prevention report published by Dr Donald McCreary, visit [movember.com/vfrgrants](https://movember.com/vfrgrants)

**ENDS**

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

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**About Movember:** Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health on a global scale, focusing on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer. The charity raises funds to deliver innovative, breakthrough research and support programmes that enable men to live happier, healthier and longer lives. Committed to disrupting the status quo, millions have joined the movement, helping fund over 1,250 projects around the world.

In addition to tackling key health issues faced by men, Movember is working to encourage men to stay healthy in all areas of their life, with a focus on men staying socially connected and becoming more open to discussing their health and significant moments in their lives. The charity's vision is to have an everlasting impact on the face of men's health. To donate or learn more, please visit [movember.com](https://movember.com).

**About the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride:** Over 120,000 riders in over 650 cities worldwide dress dapper and sit astride their classic and vintage styled motorcycles each year to raise funds and awareness for men's health, specifically prostate cancer and men's mental health. The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride (DGR) was founded in Sydney, Australia by Mark Hawwa. It was inspired by a photo of Mad Men's Don Draper standing beside a classic bike and wearing his finest suit. Initially, the themed ride was formed to combat the often-negative stereotype of men in motorcycling while connecting niche motorcycle communities together. Since that first ride in 2012, The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride has united a passionate and caring global community that shares a love of classic and vintage motorcycles and a connection to a worthy cause.

Further information about The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride can be found [here](#).