



## State Minister's Message Issue 66 (9 June, 2010)

A regular update from the Office of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, The Hon. Jack Snelling M.P.

### Two Diggers Killed in Action in Afghanistan

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, the Hon Jack Snelling notes with regret the loss of **Spr Jacob Moerland** (21) and **Spr Sapper Darren Smith** (26) who, along with their bomb detection dog, Herbie were killed in action in Afghanistan earlier this week. Spr Smith is a former South Australian. It's believed that both men were killed on patrol when they investigated a roadside bomb. Investigations into the blast are continuing.

Mrs Sandra Moerland, Jacob's mother, and his sisters Bethany and Laura, want every Australian to know how proud Jacob was to serve his country. They said that "Jacob died doing the job he loved, and he went to Afghanistan not because he had to, but because he thought it was valuable to help the people of Afghanistan." Jacob was engaged to fiancée Kezia Muccahy.

Mrs Angela Smith said he husband, Darren was a loving and remarkable husband and father to their son, Mason. She said Darren "... was the sort of man who always put others first and did his best for them, whether it was his mates in the army or at home with his family and friends."

Minister Snelling said this type of tragedy underscored the dangers voluntarily faced by servicemen and women on active service. "They serve at our request and in our name and there is no way we can adequately express our admiration and respect for what they do day after day".

"In essence they offer their lives for us and it's tragic when, at times, lives are taken.

"These men volunteered to serve knowing the risks they faced and the possibility that they may not return. We are profoundly sorry for their families who will carry the sad legacy of this tragic incident to their graves. It is little solace, but they should be proud that these men died upholding the finest traditions of our nation and the Australian Defence Force.

"I note what drove these men to serve and it is this remarkable spirit of altruism and sacrifice that makes our Australian soldiers special.

"As a father myself. I'm saddened at the loss for Jacob's mother Mrs Sandra Moerland, his sisters Bethany and Laura, his fiancée Kezia Muccahy and all his family and friends will carry with them for the rest of their lives. I am also saddened at the loss Mrs Angela Smith, and especially her young son Mason, will inevitably experience," the Minister said.

For more information about any of the items mentioned, please contact Veterans SA on 8207 1723.