

# Defence card scheme to boost discounts for veterans

RETIRED army, navy and air force personnel will be given lapel pins and veterans' cards as part of a new government package to greater recognise their services.

The unique pins, to be launched today, coincide with new legislation put before federal parliament this week to ensure greater respect for veterans and their families.

They will be offered up to 10 per cent off their groceries, airfares, petrol and electricity bills with Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant introduced by Veterans Affairs Minister Darren Chester.

## ROB HARRIS

About 500,000 veterans — many of whom have fought in combat in Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor — will be placed on a registry and receive the new Veterans' Card, which will entitle them to a discount of between 5 to 10 per cent at major stores.

"The covenant, card and lapel pin will allow the community — whether they are employers, businesses, community groups, veteran or sporting organisations — the opportunity to recognise the service and sacrifice of the men

and women who have served our nation," Mr Chester told the *Herald Sun*.

The move comes after News Corp Australia launched the #ThanksForServing campaign — supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the RSL, Legacy, TV and sports stars and some of our leading defence heroes such as Victoria Cross holders Daniel Keighran and Keith Payne.

The campaign urges Australians to acknowledge the service to the country of all military veterans, past and present.

Mr Chester said it was a



The new lapel pin and veterans' card.

project he had been working on with ex-service organisations since becoming the minister almost 12 months ago.



"I have consulted extensively with the ex-service community on the development of this Bill, including discussions

with our Five Eyes counterparts in the United Kingdom who have put in place similar measures," he said.