

Welcome to Thursday Island

Welcome Message

We hope that you enjoy your posting to Thursday Island (TI) and encourage you to take the opportunity to access many of the beautiful places surrounding the Island and to experience the rich cultural diversity of the Torres Strait region.

The information in this welcome pack has been prepared by DCO with the assistance of personnel who have served on Thursday Island. Its purpose is to provide Defence members and their families with important information about Thursday Island, or TI as it is commonly known. This posting will be without doubt an interesting, unique and at times challenging experience. As such contact your local DCO office prior to your posting as a suitability interview is required.

ADF members serving in TI state that Thursday Island is well placed for residents to visit the surrounding Islands, the outer Islands and Cape York (although this is fairly expensive). It provides an excellent climate for work, sports and recreational activities, has adequate local services and allows easy access to services provided in Cairns or other southern regional centres. The people are generally friendly, relaxed and communicative. As stated previously, it will be at times a challenging experience (perhaps more so for the spouses and children who do not have as many opportunities as members to get off the island). However, what you will get out of this particular posting will relate directly to what you are prepared to put in. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet people from all walks of life in a unique environment.

DCO Cairns has professional staff available for further information and assistance and we can be contacted on telephone 07 40539300. Office hours are from 0830 to 1700 Monday to Friday. After hours emergency contact can be made through NWCC on 1800 801 026.

DCO staff visit Thursday Island once a year to meet with personnel and families and also make regular telephone contact with members and families living on TI when required.

If we can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to call and we will ring straight back.

Karen Fitzpatrick
Area Manager
DCO Cairns
3 Jensen Street
Manoora
07 40 539300

Defence Support Services

Defence Community Organisation (DCO)

On behalf of Command, DCO delivers a broad range of targeted programs and services to support Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and their families to balance the demands of military service with personal and family commitments.

Your local DCO team is staffed by Social Workers, Military Support Officers, Regional Education Liaison Officers, Family Liaison Officers and administrative staff who are available to assist you and your family through the provision of:

- support in time of crisis
- information on Defence matters in general
- advice on community, recreational and interest groups
- deployment support
- mobility support
- professional counselling for personal, relationship and family problems
- various courses, information sessions and support groups
- specialist education advice and assistance
- special needs recognition and review
- employment assistance
- child care assistance.

Upon your arrival, please contact our staff if you would like further information not covered in this publication, or if you would like to be linked to local Defence and community activities and support groups.

Where To Find Us

3 Jensen St, Manoora

Tel: (07) 4053 9300

Fax: (07) 4032 1340

Email: dco.cairns@defence.gov.au

DCO Website

The DCO website (Internet: www.defence.gov.au/dco) provides Defence families with ready access to information on a broad range of ADF member and family topics.

After Hours Emergency Support

The DCO office is open from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday. All requests for emergency DCO assistance outside these hours and on public holidays should be directed to the National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) on Tel: 1800 801 026.

NWCC will not transfer callers directly to DCO but, where necessary, will pass a request for assistance to a DCO Duty Officer who will return the call. DCO assistance out of hours is available in emergency situations only. Any non-emergency cases are referred for follow-up assistance during normal business hours.

Defence

Thursday Island hosts an Australian Defence Facility (ADFTI). The ADFTI is the operational and administrative headquarters for the Navy and Army located on TI.

Location of ADFTI

The ADFTI is located at the eastern end of Hargrave St, below Millman Hill.

Tel: (07) 4042 0311

Overview of Australian Defence Facility Thursday Island

Charlie Company 51st Battalion FNQR and the Resident Naval Officer Thursday Island (RNOTI) form the ADFTI.

The new facility was officially opened on the 21st May 2000 by Commander Norcom, Commodore Mark Bonser, CSC.

The Navy has three members residing on TI whilst the Army has nine permanent staff members and approximately 100 reserves.

According to Defence Force members TI is a wonderful place to live for its friendly, laid back lifestyle.

Education

Regional Education Liaison Officer

The Regional Education Liaison Officer (REDLO) can provide you with information and advice about the education system in your posting locality, and the Education Assistance Scheme available through the Department of Defence.

The DCO booklet, *Education – Queensland*, is available from the REDLO and contains information about preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education in Queensland. It also covers services available for children with special needs, information on changing schools and details of the Education Assistance Scheme.

REDLO North Queensland

Tel: (07) 4753 6532

Email: redlo.nthqld@defence.gov.au

Further details on schools and the education system can be accessed at the following:

Education Queensland

Tel: (07) 4046 5222

Internet: www.education.qld.gov.au

Diocesan Education Services

Tel: (07) 4050 9700

Internet: www.ceo.cairns.catholic.edu.au

Independent Schools Queensland

Tel: (07) 3228 1515

Internet: www.aisq.qld.edu.au

Schools

Thursday Island Primary

Address: C/O- District Office, 31 Hargrave Street, Thursday Island 4875

Tel: 07 4069 2279

www.tagaisc.eq.edu.au

Thursday Island High School

Address: C/O- District Office, 31 Hargrave Street, Thursday Island 4875

Tel: 07 4069 2240

www.tagaisc.eq.edu.au

Our Lady of Sacred Heart School (Thursday Island)

Address: Normandy St, Thursday Island 4875

Tel: 07 4069 2203

www.olsh.qld.edu.au/

Torres Strait TAFE Campus

Address: Aplin Road, Thursday Island

Tel: 07 4212 1500

http://www.tnqit.tafe.qld.gov.au/about_us/campus.html#thursday

Employment

The Partner Education and Employment Program (PEEP)

Take a PEEP at your future

If you are a recognised partner of an ADF member, DCO's Partner Education and Employment Program, or PEEP, may be able to help you manage your career development.

PEEP provides an education and employment allowance of \$12,000 for a ten-year period to assist recognised ADF partners to better position themselves for employment through a range of initiatives when posted with the ADF member.

The program has been developed in response to feedback received from the Defence Family Survey and an evaluation of the former Services Workforce Access Program for Partners (SWAPP) SELECT. Effective from 1 July 2010, PEEP replaces SWAPP SELECT.

Support available to partners includes assistance with: superannuation set-up; professional employment assistance; child care, education and training; personalised resume preparation; and professional re-registration expense payments.

The funding is capped at \$6,000 per posting for the agreed initiatives. Existing funding caps have been removed, apart from child care which remains capped at \$250 per child per posting. The requirement for training to be completed within 12 months has been eliminated to allow partners to undertake tertiary education to develop longer term career options.

Tertiary studies assistance under PEEP

Partners are encouraged to undertake tertiary studies through Open Universities Australia (OUA). This allows partners to continue their education wherever they maybe posted whether in Australia or

overseas. OUA offers the following benefits to Defence partners:

- access to an online enrolment facility and unique client code
- access to a priority corporate support team through a dedicated email contact point
- a dedicated 1300 phone number supported by a team to assist partners in making the right choice about higher education and government loan options
- a flexible and international higher education study offer for clients no matter what their location
- financial support to each student who enrolls using the code for the purchase of textbooks for the first five units
- extended online tutorial support.

Local employment Opportunities

Spouses who are trained as teacher or have nursing qualifications should have few problems obtaining employment on TI. There are also opportunities to gain employment in businesses which require no formal qualifications or previous experience. Most spouses who want to work have found employment in various positions on Thursday Island, if not in their preferred occupation.

Looking for a job? Try Jobsearch

When seeking employment, ADF partners are encouraged to use Jobsearch – Australia's largest free online jobs website.

Internet: www.jobsearch.com.au

Want a peep at PEEP?

For more information on PEEP initiatives, including eligibility criteria and application form, please visit the DCO website.

Internet: www.defence.gov.au/dco/PEEP

Children's Services

Defence Child Care Program

The purpose of the Defence Child Care Program is to aid mobility by facilitating priority of access to child care for Defence families where the local community is unable to meet the demand for child care places. Accordingly, the program is focused on ensuring mobile Defence families can access some form of child care on arrival in the gaining locality. This is achieved through a variety of centre and non-centre-based child care. Defence does not directly subsidise the cost of any form of child care for Defence families, nor is child care an entitlement.

Defence Child Care Centres

There are currently 21 Defence/corporate child care centres across Australia that participate in the National Childcare Accreditation Council Quality Improvement Program. These centres are managed by B4Kids and are required to meet the State/Territory Child Care Regulations for licensing and the requirements for the Child Care Benefit (CCB). The centres provide priority of access to Defence families in accordance with Defence's Priority of Access (POA) guidelines.

A full list of the centres and the Defence POA guidelines are available on the DCO website. Unfortunately, there are no Centres available on Thursday Island.

National Enrolment Call Centre

B4Kids operates a national booking/contact number (Tel: 1300 265 600), for families to access placements in Defence/corporate child care centres. Further information on B4Kids centres can be found at Internet: www.b4kids.com.au.

Contact B4Kids to:

- book child care in the preferred location in advance of relocating to that area
- receive information on other centres in the general line of travel between work and home, if child care is not available in the family's preferred centre
- receive information regarding employment in Defence/corporate child care centres.

Handy Contacts

Defence Community Organisation

Internet: www.defence.gov.au/dco/childcare.htm

B4Kids Pty Ltd

Tel: 1300 265 600

Internet: www.b4kids.com.au

Child Care Access Hotline

Tel: 1800 670 305

Provides up-to-date information about child care options and locations.

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

Internet: www.fahcsia.gov.au

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC)

Internet: www.ncac.gov.au

Family Day Care Australia

Tel: (02) 4320 1100 or 1800 621 218

Internet: www.familydaycare.com.au

Children's Services

Thursday Island Child Care Centre

The Thursday Island Child Care Centre was built in March 1998 and is located on Victoria Parade, Thursday Island. Since beginning operation it has proved to be an invaluable service to the community.

The TI Child Care Centre provide various programs for children aged from 3 months to 12 years, including an all day service for children 3 mths - 5 years old.

After school care is available for primary school students from 3.00pm with the centre offering a free pick up and drop off service to all local schools and kindergartens.

The centre is sponsored by the Torres Shire Council and employs 15 qualified or endorsed full time staff.

Opening hours are from 7.45am to 5.40pm Monday to Friday.

Address : 86 Victoria Parade, Thursday Island, QLD 4875

Tel: 07 4069 2317

Mura Kaimel Playgroup

Mura Kaimel Playgroup is open to all children 0-5 years (inclusive) and their parents, grandparents and caregivers.

The playgroup is accessible Tuesday to Friday between 10am and 12 noon and is located at the Sacred Heart School Hall on Douglas Street, near Anzac Park, Thursday Island.

Tel: 0458 564 714

Family Day Care

Family day care is an alternative to centre-based care. Registered family day care providers adhere to Family Services Childcare Regulations when providing care for children from birth to 13 years in a comfortable home environment.

Contact your nearest family day care office for information on available child care (see below), or if you wish to become a provider. Remember that the DCO spouse employment/child care initiative can reimburse initial set-up costs if you choose to become a day care provider. Contact your local DCO office for further information.

Family Day Care Australia

Tel: (02) 4320 1100 or 1800 621 218

Internet: www.familydaycare.com.au

Special Needs

When Defence families with special needs are posted, they may have difficulties accessing the services they require. These problems tend to relate to obtaining (or keeping) appropriate specialised equipment, waiting lists for accessing respite or therapy services in the new locality, and having appropriate accommodation which caters for the additional requirements of the family member with special needs.

In order to address some of these difficulties, Defence has a comprehensive program of assistance and support measures that can be accessed by ADF families who are formally recognised as having a dependant with special needs. The Dependants with Special Needs program includes:

- a process whereby families have their status as a member with a special needs dependant formally recognised and reviewed by Defence
- a process whereby families have the assistance required by the special needs dependant reviewed prior to relocating
- a special needs pre-posting visit
- assistance to access specialised equipment in the new locality
- assistance to access therapy services in the new locality
- assistance to access respite services in the new locality
- assistance with identifying appropriate housing and transit accommodation.

Contact your local DCO office for more information.

Children with Special Needs

The decision of where to enrol a student, and with what level of support, will depend on a number of factors, including the student's educational needs, the expressed desires of parents and caregivers, the capacity of the education system to provide the level of support services required generally and at a particular location, and the availability of appropriate support services at alternative locations.

It is important that parents of children with special needs contact the REDLO to facilitate the appropriate placement as soon as notification of posting is given, so that the support required is

available for the student from the time of arrival at the new school.

Relocations and Housing

Defence Relocations and Housing Manager

Defence Relocations and Housing Managers (DRHMs) are employed to assist ADF members and their families by liaising with Defence Housing Australia (DHA), Toll Transitions and the Defence Community Organisation in each region, to make their relocation easier for them and their families. If you have an enquiry regarding your housing maintenance/allocation or relocation services, do not hesitate to contact your local Defence Relocations and Housing Manager, listed below.

Merv Dicton:
Tel: 07 4411 7922
Mobile: 0408 457 468
Fax: 07 4411 7967

Kelly West:
Tel: 07 4411 7831
Mobile: 0409 587 028
Fax: 07 4411 7967

Defence Housing Australia (DHA)

DHA was established in 1988 with the aim of improving the quality and selection of housing for Defence members and their families. DHA manages approximately 17,300 residences around Australia and provides a range of services to help ease the pressure on Defence families – we will support you and your family throughout your tenancy, from moving in, to living in, and then moving out of your home.

If you need support throughout your tenancy, then our staff can assist you. You can phone our information line **139 DHA (139 342)** for advice or visit our website (**www.dha.gov.au**).

DHA also has Housing Management Centres and local offices located near major Defence establishments to provide effective support for you and your family wherever you need it.

www.dha.gov.au

139 DHA (139 342)

Toll Transitions

Toll Transitions provide Defence members and their families with a total relocation service.

Your Toll Transitions case manager will assist you with your relocation requirements including travel, temporary accommodation, removal, storage and payment of your relocation allowances and

entitlements.

You will receive a "Your Defence Relocation Guide", from Toll Transitions giving you detailed information to assist you with your relocation. You are also able to download this guide from the Toll Transitions website.

You can complete your Pre-AFR, AFR and inventory online at the Toll Transitions website www.tolltransitions.com.au/defence and "Your Defence Relocation Guide" explains the simple steps required to do this. You are able to maintain multiple inventory details online, giving you a current record of your goods and their whereabouts at any point in time. You can use these saved inventories should you move again.

After your move, in the unfortunate event of loss or damage, you can submit your notice of Loss or Damage online direct to Toll Transitions' Warranty Management Centre (WMC).

For 24-hour relocation enquiries and assistance, contact Toll Transitions on Tel: **1800 819 167**.

Health

ADF Family Health Trial

Defence Families in Cairns Can Benefit from the ADF Family Health Trial

Since May 2009, dependants of ADF members posted to Cairns, including outposts at Mt Isa, Thursday Island and Weipa, have been eligible to benefit from the ADF Family Health Trial. It's the Australian Government's way of saying 'thank you' for the commitment and sacrifices you make every day. The trial provides a payment for basic medical services and non-cosmetic dental services.

Eligibility

To be eligible to register for trial participation, you must be a recognised dependant of a permanent ADF member or a recognised dependant of a reservist on continuous full-time service. You must also reside in a trial location and be recognised for ADF housing purposes.

Medical Cover

Medical services included in the ADF Family Health Trial are eligible medical treatments provided in a general practice setting.

To find out how to access the benefits in your region and to view eligible medical treatments please visit the ADF Family Health website or contact the ADF Family Health team.

Dental Cover

Each registered dependant also receives a \$320 benefit per calendar year for non-cosmetic dental services. The dental benefit may be accessed anywhere in Australia. Where dental providers use HICAPS, dependants can use the ADF Family Health Card to claim the benefit electronically. In circumstances where electronic processing of claims is not available, a manual claim must be submitted. The dental claim form is available on the ADF Family Health website (see below).

Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)

Services accessed as part of this trial may attract FBT and it is recommended that financial advice be sought before registration. (Links to additional information about FBT can be found on the ADF Family Health website.)

How To Register

ADF members can locate the registration form (AD858-1) via web forms. The form is also available on the ADF Family Health website. The conditions of use and a checklist are attached to the registration

form to assist you with the registration process.

For additional information please contact the ADF Family Health team on Tel: (02) 6266 3547 or visit our website.

Intranet: <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/vcdf/sites/ADFDepHealth>

Internet: http://www.defence.gov.au/health/Dependant_Healthcare/i-healthcare.htm

Other Health Information

The following discussion is a reminder that much of the area of the Torres Strait is still in its natural state and that dangers exist and should be considered.

Swimming and Water

Although the waters around TI are cool and inviting, very few people swim in them. The reasons are the unfortunate proliferation of broken glass and the presence of sharks and crocodiles. There are also dangerous and very swift currents that dominate the waters around the islands. Stingers, or box jellyfish, are not common in the area although stings are occasionally reported and care should be taken. If stung, do not rub the stung area – flood with vinegar instead. Use resuscitation where necessary, and call for medical assistance.

Many people do swim off other islands or from their dinghies. Snorkelling, diving, water skiing and fishing are popular activities. You are reminded that these activities are not without some risk and appropriate care should be taken.

Snakes

Snakes inhabit Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands and water snakes are also natural inhabitants of the reefs around the islands.

Malaria, Dengue Fever & Hepatitis B

TI is a marginal malarial area and although many mosquitoes do exist on the island the likelihood of contracting malaria or dengue fever is very small. The risk, however, increases the closer one gets to Papua New Guinea. Insect repellent and fly screens are usually sufficient protection.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Hepatitis B are prevalent among the Islanders and it is suggested that families be immunised against Hepatitis B before arrival on TI.

Heat Rash

Many children suffer from heat rash in our tropical climate, especially infants still in nappies. Medications are available from the pharmacy (or, in severe cases, the doctor) to ease the symptoms. It is important to dress children in light, loose-fitting clothing and keep them cool (via sprinklers, splash pool, fans and air-conditioned shopping centres).

Skin Cancer

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Currently, two out of every three Australians develop some form of skin cancer during their lifetime, and each year about 1,000 people die from it. Ultraviolet radiation levels in Queensland remain in the high to extreme category all year round; therefore, we have to be wise after sunrise – every day. The good news is that being sun smart is easy! All you have to do is develop the habit of protecting yourself before you go outside:

- limit your exposure
- remember that ultraviolet (UV) radiation is strongest between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm

- make use of shade
- wear clothing that covers as much of the skin as possible
- wear a hat with a broad brim of at least 8 cm, which protects your face, neck and ears
- wear good-quality wraparound sunglasses – those which comply with the Australian Standard AS1067 are best
- use SPF30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen.

Contacts

■ Thursday Island Hospital

163 Douglas Street, Thursday Island 4875

Tel: (07) 4069 1109

Facility Services:

Hospital	Operating Suite; Emergency Service; General Medicine; Maternity; High Dependency Unit; Paediatrics
Clinics Available (Visiting Specialist Services)	Includes General Physician; Ophthalmology; Chest; Gynaecology/Obstetrics; General Surgeon; Psychiatrist; Paediatrician; Endocrinology; ENT; Orthopaedics; Optometry; Dermatology
Allied Health Services	Podiatry; Pharmacy; Radiography; Physiotherapy; Dietetics; Occupational Therapy; Social Worker; Speech Therapist
Ancillary Services	Pathology; Stores; HACC; PARAC

■ Ambulance

Tel: (07) 4069 1501 (or 000 in an emergency)

Residents of Queensland are automatically covered for ambulance, as an ambulance levy is included in electricity bills.

■ Thursday Island Primary Health Care Centre

74 Douglas Street, Thursday Island 4875

Tel: (07) 4069 0400

This is where all families go for routine illnesses (colds, flu, immunisations etc).

Defence Community Groups

Defence Special Needs Support Group

The Defence Special Needs Support Group (DSNSG) is a national volunteer organisation established to provide support, information and assistance to Defence families who care for someone with a disability or special need. Membership is free. Services provided include local support groups, respite

programs, posting plans, specialised support for adults with special needs, Computers 4 Kids, access to grants, a national newsletter, social skill programs for children and much more. For more information contact the National Office.

National Coordinator

Margaret Fisk

Tel: 1800 037 674

Email: national.coordinator@dsnsg.org.au

Internet: www.dsnsg.org.au

Defence Families of Australia

Defence Families of Australia (DFA) has been representing the views of Defence families for more than 20 years. It is a voluntary group of energetic and dedicated Defence spouses appointed by the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel. We are in the unique position of having access to the Minister, Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), senior Defence members and key organisations that directly impact on the lives of Defence families.

DFA's aim is to improve the quality of life for Defence families by providing a recognised forum for their views, and by reporting, making recommendations and influencing policy that directly affects families. The DFA Executive attracts volunteers from all services and ranks to ensure that we represent families adequately and understand the issues at all levels. We are all living the unique lifestyle that comes from being married to a Defence member. DFA also recognises that families today are very diverse and face different challenges as they move through their phases of life.

Geographically, DFA volunteers are located all around Australia, representing families at a local, regional and national level. Our National Delegates are situated in each state and we try to have a Senior Representative on each base also. We rely on good communication between each other and the families in each region to ensure that, when issues are raised, they are taken to the appropriate stakeholder at a local level or, if necessary, raised at a national level.

Issues and committees that DFA is currently involved in include:

- child care expansion program
- Family Support Funding Advisory Committee
- Defence Housing Australia Advisory Committee
- new housing classification policy
- superannuation review
- deployment, relocations and housing support
- education assistance review
- support to community groups and houses

DFA's National Conference is held annually and provides an opportunity for face-to-face time where we discuss and develop feedback from all regions. We liaise with Defence stakeholders and work with areas that support ADF families. Together, as a team, solutions, additions, improvements and initiatives are created for ADF families.

Support!

DFA seeks the opinion of families about essential services and entitlements. By joining our DFA family network, you are supporting our aims to represent your needs and improve service conditions for all ADF families. Please take a few minutes to enter your details on our website. Internet: www.dfa.org.au

You will receive quarterly DFA news bulletins updating you on DFA activities and contribute to being a 'voice for Defence families'.

How can you be involved in DFA?

If you are interested in learning more about DFA, or becoming a volunteer in your area, please contact your local National Delegate or check out our website.

Up-to-date family/spouse information is also available on our website.

Internet: www.dfa.org.au

For Help and Advice

Tel: 1800 100 509

Locality Information

Geography and Climate

Thursday Island, also known as TI or Waiben, is the administrative and commercial centre of the Torres Strait Islands. Lying 39 kilometres north of Cape York Peninsula, Thursday Island has an area of about 3.5 square kilometres and an estimated population of 3,500. The highest point on Thursday Island, standing at 104 metres above sea level, is Milman Hill, a World War II defence facility.

Unlike the more southerly regions of Australia, the Torres Strait is tropical and does not have four distinct seasons. The year is roughly divided into the summer (wet season) and winter (dry and windy season).

The wet season is usually between December and April with November notable as the build up to 'the wet'. Heavy clouds threaten and humidity increases. The average rainfall is 1717mm per annum and falls mostly during the wet months. The temperature at this time averages between a minimum of 24 degrees and a maximum of 30 degrees. Humidity can be high and uncomfortable at times but the sea breezes offer frequent respite.

During the dry season the prevailing winds are south easterly and blow constantly, however the temperature is quite comfortable averaging 24 degrees. The lush green appearance of the wet season is lost to a dry, brown hue.

Island Culture & History

In order to live and work in the Torres Strait region it is important to have an understanding of the cultural background of the area and the Islanders. An understanding of Islander culture or indeed any culture takes time and insight. This outline is intended only to open the door on the history and culture. This outline is intended only to open the door on the history and culture that are a backdrop to your posting here in the Torres Strait.

The island was selected as the administrative site for representatives of the Queensland Government in 1875, over the already established site of "Somerset" on the East Coast of the Cape York Peninsula. On the 19th of July, Lt Henry Majoribanks Chester was appointed Police Magistrate and the little community slowly began to flourish.

Well over one hundred years have passed and much has changed. Facilities on the island and the administrative structures of the island have developed since "Chester's" day. About 3500 people live on Thursday Island now, at the ratio of one non-indigenous person to every six indigenous people.

English is the language spoken on TI however it is not the first language for the Torres Strait Islanders. The first language accepted these days is 'Broken' or Creole spoken by most islanders. Many of the older islanders though still speak their island group languages of Meriam (Eastern Group), Kala Lagaw Ya (Central), Kala Kagaw Ya (Western or Top Western).

The traditional name for Thursday Island is "Waiben" and is thought to mean "dry place", owing to the lack of a consistent supply of fresh water on the island.

Feasts and various ceremonies are a feature of Islander culture, and although Christianity is now widely practiced, traditional indigenous activities, beliefs and customs are still very much part of most Islanders' lifestyle. These include "The Coming of the Light" festival/re-enactment, celebrating the arrival of the London Missionary Society and Christianity in the Torres Strait, and the "Tombstone Opening" or the unveiling of the grave head stone, usually 12 months following the funeral.

The Thursday Island cemetery is steeped in history and tradition and is a fitting memorial to the Islanders and others who have been buried there over the years. It is well worth a visit.

Every second year in June there is the island Cultural Festival. For a week the Islanders and people from all over the South Pacific and Torres Strait celebrate their respective cultural traditions with singing, dancing, craft displays and feasting. This is the highlight of the cultural calendar.

You are welcome to participate in the island culture once you get to know the locals but you need to respect their culture and traditions. The Islanders are only too happy to teach you about their customs if you show an interest.

The island lifestyle is very laid back. You will soon learn what is meant by the expression 'T.I. Time'. Don't expect the same standards of punctuality or organisation that you would at home!

Clothing

The lifestyle on TI is very simple and relaxed so your clothing should be light and casual. It is advisable to keep your expensive clothes and footwear in storage during the posting as it will rarely be worn and this will ward off mould.

You will need clothing that is as cool as possible (bearing in mind sun safety).

Mould

Mould and rust are a problem on TI so you are advised not to take valuable non-essential items with you. For example metal tools can be destroyed by rust quickly and clothing/leather goods can be damaged by mould in the wet season.

Flora and Fauna

The area has abundant native and introduced flora and fauna. The 'Wongai Tree' (a native to the region) provides shade and a small fruit. It is said that if you eat the fruit of the Wongai Tree you will always return to TI. Coconut Palms, mango trees and some flowering plants have been introduced to TI. Small birds, larger seabirds, frogs, snakes, small lizards, fruit bats and geckos are often seen about the island. An abundance of sea grass attracts dugongs and sea turtles to the Torres Strait.

Squid and a huge variety of fish can be caught from the jetty or boats.

Domestic dogs and cats abound on the island.

Sporting & Leisure Activities

The Torres Shire Sports Complex is a multi-purpose stadium which doubles as a basketball and volleyball court. It is regularly used by residents and community organisations alike, with sport carnivals scheduled throughout the year.

Built in 1984, it has long been established as a fun place for children and adults to spend their time. Situated on the grounds are the Swimming Pool and the newly erected Gymnasium. The stadium and pool is available for hire, however make sure you book early!

For pool times and pool or stadium bookings phone: (07) 4069 1336

For Complex times phone: (07) 4069 1192

Shopping and Entertainment

Most of the entertainment on Thursday Island is privately organised in homes however the schools, churches and other organisations hold fetes and festivals throughout the year.

There is no cinema on TI so ensure that you take your DVD player (there is a video store on the island).

As the cost of food can be expensive and limited in variety, it is a good idea to stock up on non-perishables prior to moving (the goods can be moved in your uplift eg. toilet paper, shampoo, washing powder & tin foods). Most families also re-stock when they return to the larger cities on leave or business. You can also order food (including frozen foods and meat) from the large chain stores in Cairns and have them freighted to you (freight costs apply), via one of the local carriers..

To ensure the freshness of fruit, vegetables and milk it is advisable to purchase perishable items just after the barge comes in.

The following businesses are commonly used by Thursday Island Defence Families for ordering food:

Westcourt Plaza - (07) 4051 8766

Coles Mareeba – (07) 4092 2566 www.coles.com.au

Woolworths Cairns Country Orders – (07) 4051 2015 www.woolworths.com.au

Portsmouth Bulk Meats, Cnr Cook & Aumuller Sts, Cairns – (07) 4035 2233

Lenard's (Chicken)

- Cairns Central – (07) 4041 0699
- Earlville – (07) 4033 7042
- Manunda – (07) 4053 9880
- Smithfield - (07) 4038 1581
- Westcourt - (07) 4051 3151

www.myer.com.au

www.target.com.au

www.kmart.com.au

The main shopping area is in Douglas Street. The stores include:

- A supermarket, IBIS (so named after the bird)
- A mini-department store and clothes shop
- Post office and National Bank
- A hairdresser
- Newsagency
- Pharmacy

Restaurants:

Barracks Bistro

Jardine Lodge, Cnr Normanby & Douglas Streets, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 1555

Ilan Life Café

79 Douglas St, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4090 3555

Malu Paru Restaurant

Grand Hotel Motel, 6 Victoria Pde, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 1557

Bobby's Snack Bar

86 Douglas St, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 1186

Island Rooster

37 Douglas St, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 2288

Gab Titui Café

Cnr Victoria Pde & Blackall St, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 2990

Somerset Restaurant

Jardine Lodge, Cnr Normanby & Douglas Streets, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 1555

Torres Hotel

118 Douglas St, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 1141

The Federal Hotel

54 Victoria Pde, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 1569

T.I Bowls Club

Victoria Pde, Thursday Island

Tel: (07) 4069 2339

General Services

Banking

The only bank on Thursday Island is the National Australia Bank that has an ATM. There is also an ATM at the Grand Hotel. If you bank with ADCU or Defcredit you can request a deposit book which allows you to deposit cheques or cash through the NAB. The post office is an agent for the Commonwealth Bank and the pharmacy is an agent for the QLD Teachers' Credit Union. Remember that phone and internet banking is always an option.

Post Office

Australia Post is situated at the eastern end of Douglas Street. There is no door to door mail delivery on the island so military members and their families share the postal address for Charlie Company and the Navy. You are also able to apply for a personal PO Box at the post office.

Army Address:

PO Box 384, Thursday Island, QLD 4875

Navy Address:

PO Box 337, Thursday Island, QLD 4875

Telephone

The phone system is local around the TI group of islands but STD everywhere else. It is advisable that you discuss the best plan to suit your phone and internet requirements with Telstra or your preferred carrier.

Newspapers

The local newspaper is the 'Torres News'. This is published weekly and is a must for keeping up with local and community information. You can also visit their website <http://www.torresnews.com.au/>.

The Cairns Post, Courier Mail and Australian are amongst newspapers available at the local newsagency however current issue is generally not available until the following day.

Religious Facilities

There are six churches on Thursday Island. These are:

Quetta Memorial Church (Anglican)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Uniting Church

Seventh Day Adventist Church

Assembly of God Church

Full Gospel Church

Electoral

The division of Leichardt covers an area of approximately 150 236 sq km from the Torres Strait Islands in the north to Edmonton in the south. The main towns include Cairns, Coen, Cooktown, Edmonton, Kuranda, Mossman, Port Douglas, Thursday Island and Weipa.

To put your name on the electoral roll for local, state and federal elections, contact the Australian Electoral Commission <http://www.aec.gov.au/enrol/change-address.htm>

Essential Services

Local Council

The Shire of Torres is the northernmost Queensland local authority, and it comprises all of the State lying north of latitude 11 degrees south. This includes the northernmost part of Cape York Peninsula, together with the islands of Torres Strait. The Shire's administrative centre is located on Thursday Island, which provides the primary service centre for the region.

Torres Shire is the only Australian local government which abuts an international border (Australia and Papua New Guinea) and is in close proximity to the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya. This alone places the people of the Shire in a unique part of the country.

Address: 88 Douglas St, Thursday Island, QLD 4875

Tel: (07) 4069 1336

E-mail: info@torres.qld.gov.au

Electricity

Power is supplied by Ergon Energy.

Customer service

Tel: 13 10 46

Emergency and faults

Tel: 13 22 96 (24 hours)

To have power connected to your home, call Ergon. They offer same-day connection but require at least 24 hours notice for final readings and disconnection. A connection fee is charged to your first bill and is reimbursed when you vacate the home.

Telephone

Telephone connection can be arranged over the telephone.

Telstra Customer Service

Tel: 13 22 00

Transport

It is recommended that families bring a vehicle to Thursday Island however if you are considering buying a new vehicle we advise against it. Exposure to salty air causes rust in vehicles and this is a problem on TI. If you currently have a good car it may be worth considering leaving it with a family member and buying an older car for the posting. Owning a pushbike on Thursday Island is an alternate option and it's better for the environment!

If upon moving to TI, you are only using your private vehicle around the township, you may be eligible for the "Restricted Area Concessional Registration Application". This concession significantly reduces your registration fees, however if you wish to drive off TI you may apply for a permit which would last for 2 weeks and costs \$20. The application form is available the Department of Transport.

Before leaving TI with your vehicle you must have it checked by AQIS as TI is in the AQIS Special Quarantine Protection Zone.

Defence Driving Licence Scheme

With the exception of Victoria and Northern Territory, Commonwealth state and territory authorities have agreed to the implementation of a Defence Driving Licence Scheme (DDLS) for ADF personnel and eligible members of their families. Under the DDLS, the driving licences of both personnel and their families are recognised throughout Australia, and thus there is no requirement to change a driving licence solely because of a transfer interstate. However, on expiry, licences need to be renewed in the current state or territory of residence.

If your licence needs renewing you can do this at the TI Police Station.

Defence Force personnel are not required to register their motor vehicles immediately upon entry to Queensland, and are allowed to retain interstate registration until the registration expires. However, once the interstate registration expires, vehicles are to be re-registered in Queensland.

Note: It is advised that you check your third-party eligibility with your current compulsory third-party insurer if you wish to retain your interstate registration.

Air Transport

Qantaslink Airlines operates flights to and from Horn Island. There is no airstrip on TI. Flying time from Cairns is approximately 2 hours.

There are two companies that provide a bus/ferry/bus service between the terminal on Horn Island and your accommodation on TI.

These are:

McDonalds Charter Boats: Tel (07) 4034 2907

Rebel Marine: Tel (07) 4069 1586

Public Transport

There is limited public transport on TI. There are two taxi services. These are:

Silver Leaf Taxi Service: Tel (07) 4069 2655

B & S Pearson Taxis: Tel (07) 4090 3600

Pet Care

Proper care for your pets in the tropics is essential. Ensure that your pet has enough drinking water each day and that the water is changed to prevent the spread of dengue fever. Your pet can develop 'hot spots' in the hotter months, and veterinary care is recommended for treating the condition.

Veterinary surgeons recommend that you vaccinate your dog each year and provide heartworm prevention medicine. For cats, vaccinate for feline enteritis and cat flu.

All dogs over 3 months of age are required to be registered annually. Only two dogs can be kept on any property without Council approval, otherwise an annual permit fee applies to additional dogs. It is unlawful to keep an unspayed female or male dog unless the owner has paid an annual permit fee. If a dog is found to be roaming in public places without being on a lead or under effective control, it may be impounded and charges will apply before release.

To register your dog, please go to the council offices. The Torres Shire Council does not require cats to be registered. Torres Shire provides regular veterinary visits to Thursday Island. Contact Council Office for details of the next visit.

Local Emergency Information

Tropical Cyclones

Cyclones are a very real threat in north Queensland. Forward planning will help to ensure your own safety and that of your family, loved ones, pets and assets. Cairns Regional Council (Internet: www.cairns.qld.gov.au/cairns/council/services/cyclone) provides a cyclone booklet that can be viewed or downloaded. The local community organisation (State Emergency Service – SES) has cyclone disaster plans in place.

■ **Understanding Cyclone Advice**

The Cyclone Warning Centre in Brisbane uses radar, satellites, weather stations and sophisticated computer modelling to monitor cyclone activity. Depending on when a cyclone could potentially reach the coast, a Tropical Cyclone Watch or Tropical Cyclone Warning is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology. According to the bureau, the best source of information is the radio and on the internet at Internet: www.bom.gov.au.

You cannot stop a cyclone, and you cannot wait until it hits to learn what to do. It is vital that you make sure your whole family is prepared.

Points to remember:

- cyclones do not always give hours of warning
- do not trust your own weather observations
- follow official warnings
- beware of the 'eye' – you may feel reassured, but soon the wind will be back in full force, from the opposite direction
- stay protected
- do not go outdoors

■ **Random Paths**

Cyclones can change course, mark time, or even loop-the-loop. Keep listening to your radio after the cyclone has passed, as it may double back. Keep listening to your radio after the Cyclone Warning has been issued.

■ **Cyclone Storm Surge and Storm Tide**

Storm surge is caused by a combination of low pressure and cyclone winds piling seawater up against a sloping coastal shelf to produce a storm tide (above predicted tide). The rising water floods inland over low-lying areas, normally above tidal influences. Fortunately, storm surge and tides do not happen very often, but you must always be ready. When they do occur, they can be more life-threatening than strong winds.

■ **Emergency/Evacuation Kits**

It is best to prepare a waterproof emergency kit before a cyclone is present, as there is often panic-buying and batteries, radios, torches etc. soon become scarce.

The kit should contain:

- portable radio with spare batteries
- tins of food and a can opener
- water and water containers
- torches and spare batteries
- candles, fuel or gas lamp
- matches
- spare clothes and sturdy, protective footwear
- self-contained cooking gear
- first aid kit
- essential medication.

Power will usually go out during a cyclone and may be disconnected for some days. Ensure you make suitable plans for this, especially having a phone in the house that does not require electricity. Water supply may also be interrupted.

Defence Members' Responsibilities

In order to minimise the impact of a cyclone, Defence families are expected to prepare themselves well in advance of the cyclone season. Defence families need to prepare by undertaking some simple procedures that are well-documented in brochures available from the council and emergency services.

Before the cyclone season:

- ensure an emergency kit is prepared and in good working order
- clear property of loose items that could cause damage by being blown around in a high wind
- in case of storm tide warning, know your nearest safe high-area.

Upon a cyclone warning:

- listen to your radio and TV for further warnings
- board up or tape windows
- store loose articles inside the house
- lock up pets
- fill water containers, including the bathtub
- fuel car and place under cover
- get some cash out of the bank.

On warning of a local evacuation:

- switch off electricity, gas etc.
- collect emergency evacuation kit

- follow instructions.

When the cyclone comes:

- stay inside
- shelter in the strongest part of the house
- protect yourself with a mattress, blankets etc.
- anchor yourself to strong fixtures (such as water pipes) or get under a strong table
- beware of the calm 'eye' of the storm – remain indoors until advised that the cyclone has passed.

After the cyclone:

- do not go outside until advised officially, or you are positive the cyclone has passed
- listen to your radio
- if you have to evacuate, do not go home until advised.

Important Numbers

Defence Services

■ **DCO Cairns Reception**

Tel: (07) 4053 9300

■ **REDLO North Queensland**

Tel: (07) 4753 6532

■ **DHA Reception**

Tel: (07) 4040 2400

■ **24-hour DHA Maintenance Line**

Tel: 1300 366 615

■ **Chaplains**

Navy

Tel: (07) 4042 0245

Army

Tel: 0408 756 364

Other Services

■ **Defence Health**

Tel: 1800 335 425

■ **Credit Union**

Tel: (07) 4035 8345

■ **All-hours Support Line**

Tel: 1800 628 036

■ **National Welfare Coordination
Centre (NWCC)**

Tel: 1800 801 026

■ **Defence Equity Advice**

Tel: 1800 644 247

Handy Phone Numbers

■ **Ambulance enquiries**

Tel: (07) 4069 1501

■ **Torres Shire Council**

Tel: (07) 4069 1336

■ **Dog Registration**

Tel: (07) 4069 1336

■ **Electoral Enrolment**

Tel: 1800 801 665

■ **Ergon Energy**

Tel: 13 22 96

■ **Hospital**

Tel: (07) 4069 1109

■ **Medicare**

Tel: 13 20 11

■ **Police**

Tel: (07) 4069 1520

■ **Coastguard**

Tel: (07) 4069 2000

Map

http://maps.google.com.au/maps?hl=en&q=thursday+island+maps&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Thursday+Island+Queensland&gl=au&ei=dVIATZ2uIMSqrAe1kPSQDw&oi=geocode_result&ved=0CBQQ8gEwAA&z=14