

Our Mission - To provide Defence Families with real information about the real Defence environment

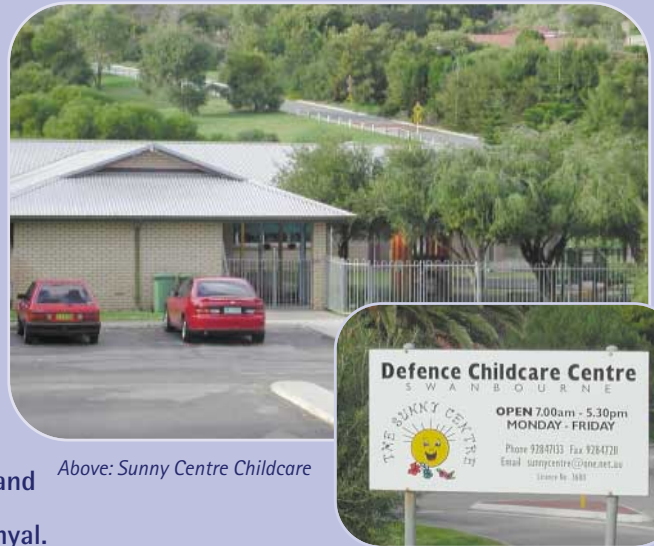
New Childcare and Family Support for Defence Personnel

Access to childcare will become easier for many Defence families with the introduction of a five-year, \$17.1 million Childcare initiative that targets areas of high need in the Defence community.

The need for additional vacation care, before and after-school care, occasional care, and family day-care places has been recognised with the aim of enhancing the current Defence Employer Sponsored Childcare Program.

The enhanced program will also provide:

- * an additional childcare centre in Darwin;
- * a replacement and relocated centre in Liverpool;
- * a new and larger centre in Williamstown;
- * funding for investigation into a new centre in Adelaide;
- * funding for investigation into a new centre at HMAS Stirling;
- * funding to investigate options for a centre in Sydney; and
- * funding to investigate options for a centre in Puckapunyal.



Above: Sunny Centre Childcare

These initiatives will cost \$13.2 million over the period 2001-02 to 2005-06, and complements action already initiated to provide new childcare centres in East Sale and Canberra at a further cost of \$3.9 million.

Work is due to commence on both the Canberra and Darwin Childcare Centres in July this year and both are scheduled to be finalised by December 2001. It is envisaged that both Centres will be operational by January 2002.

The new Russell Childcare Centre, in Canberra, is being established in the old Russell cafeteria (located behind R8). The Centre will be licensed to accommodate up to 80 children in the following age groups: 0-12mths, 12mths-2yrs, 2-3yrs, 3-4yrs and 4-5yrs.

The new Darwin Childcare Centre will be a leased facility and will complement the existing Defence Employer Sponsored Childcare Centre located at Palmerston, Kids Brigade Childcare Centre. The Centre will be licensed to accommodate up to 60 children in the following age groups: 0-12 mths, 12mths-2 yrs, 2-3 yrs and 3-5 yrs.

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New Childcare and Family Support for Defence Personnel

Additionally, in recognition of the overwhelming demand for childcare in Darwin, the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) has secured 20 regular hours childcare places and 10 irregular hours childcare places with the Darwin Family Day Care Organisation. This arrangement will provide access to childcare for Defence families who are located in or near the Darwin Central Business District, as well as access to irregular hours care for those employees who are required to undertake extended hours of duty, i.e. shiftworkers. This arrangement will be reviewed on a regular basis with a view to establishing whether an increase in the number of positions allocated is necessary.

As with all Defence Employer Sponsored Childcare Centres, a 'Priority of Access' listing will be applied to all new childcare centres at the time of enrolment, with ADF personnel receiving top priority in recognition of the mobility and retention issues affecting their employment.

DCO is presently updating the DCO Website regarding all the new child care initiatives, with specific links to sites containing additional information regarding the Russell and Darwin Childcare Centres as well as the 'Priority of Access' guidelines.


More Welfare Relief for Families Needing Support

In a second important initiative, a Family Support Fund has been established to help ADF families who need immediate welfare relief and support while members are on deployment, or absent from the family home for extended periods of time.

It will be made available in instances where access to existing Trust Funds is not appropriate.

The Defence Community Organisation will manage the Family Support Fund, and loans will be made at the discretion of the DCO based on clearly defined policy guidelines.

Other personnel and family initiatives are due to be announced over the next few months. These initiatives will build on existing steps and help to further encourage a work environment that is appealing, sustainable and supportive of families and lifestyle aspirations.

For more information about Childcare Centres or the Family Support Fund, please phone the Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) on (toll free) 

1800 020 031



Defence Special Needs Support Group Recognised

Volunteers for the Defence Special Needs Support Group have been recognised in a ceremony at Government House presided by the then Governor General, Sir William Deane AC KBE and Admiral Chris Barrie AO AC.

Sir William said that both he and Lady Deane were extraordinarily proud of the volunteers, especially those working with special children.

'It's really tremendous to be here and to be part of the conferring of recognition on those who give so much to make their lives possible,' he said.

The Defence Special Needs Support Group is a non-profit benevolent organisation established to provide support, information, assistance and advocacy for all ADF families who have a dependant (child, spouse or other dependant) with special needs.

The DSNSG is a group of volunteers, with members such as Lorraine Rowe, who has been active in DSNSG since 1994, serving as a local coordinator in Amberley, Perth, Pearce and Tamworth, as well as a National Coordinator; and Jeff King, a former Army Warrant Officer and coordinator for the Melbourne North-East area. Both Lorraine and Jeff have children with special needs.

For further information on the DSNSG contact **1800 037 674** or visit their website at: www.dsnsng.org.au/main.html



DSNSG Award Recipients with then Governor General, Sir William Deane ACE KBE, and Admiral Chris Barrie AO AC (Centre)

The Editor of *defence FAMILY MATTERS*, Diane Temperley, was in Perth recently, meeting with family groups at Marilla House Rockingham, and Karrakatta Sergeants Mess.

Diane meets informally with groups around the country several times a year to listen to your feedback and incorporate your ideas into your newsletter *defence FAMILY MATTERS*.

If your family group or Neighbourhood house would like a visit, please call Diane on 02 6265 5085 or email diane.temperley@cbr.defence.gov.au.

We really are serious about making *defence FAMILY MATTERS* a worthwhile publication that you enjoy receiving.

One of these visits also gives you the opportunity to pass on any other feedback about the Defence Personnel Executive, and Diane can then make sure that comments are passed on to the relevant areas.

If you see that Diane is visiting your area or region, please come along and take the opportunity to meet with her and enjoy a chat.

Your Feedback...



Left to right: Diane Temperley with Marilyn Kench, Editor of the Sandgroper, Secretary for Army families (WA) Inc. committee and a DSNSG representative.

Compassionate Travel

As acknowledged in the recent White Paper, the key to capability for the Australian Defence Force is its people. Service men and women who protect Australia's interests endure trying conditions and stresses that many people never experience, or even understand. In return, members of the ADF are provided with conditions of service that aim to make their lives, and, just as importantly, their families lives, a little easier.

One example is compassionate travel, that provides free return travel anywhere in Australia should a family member fall seriously ill or if a loved one passes away.

A brief list of circumstances where a Commanding Officer may be able to grant compassionate travel for a member, or their spouse, is as follows:

- Upon the death of a parent, spouse, child, guardian or dependant relative
- A parent, spouse, child, guardian or dependant relative has a life threatening medical condition
- A spouse or child becomes very seriously ill; and
- A parent, guardian or dependant relative becomes very seriously ill and no one else is available, or capable, of providing care

Where a service member cannot care for a seriously ill spouse due to operational reasons, a close relative, or any other suitable person may be considered for this assistance.

More details on Compassionate Travel can be found in the ADF Pay and Conditions Manual, Volume 1, Chapter 3, Part 6. But your best source of advice and information is your chain of command.

If you have a query regarding Compassionate Travel please raise it with your Commanding Officer.



DHA Manages all Aspects of Relocation

The beginning of the new financial year has ushered in a new era for DHA when the Authority took over all aspects of relocations for Defence personnel and their families.

As advised in previous editions of *defence FAMILY MATTERS*, DHA will now process all your removal entitlements and allowances, book your travel and temporary accommodation and coordinate your removal, as well as help you find a home in your new location.

DHA have been working to ensure the processes were in place for a smooth transition from Defence and hope the handover of functions will be as seamless as possible.

In fact, people being posted shouldn't notice any difference, other than contacting DHA rather than Defence if they have questions regarding their removal.

In the lead up to the 1 July handover a joint DHA and Defence team travelled the country to advise Service personnel and their partners on how the new service would operate.

We also established the National Service and Support Centre, which will provide Defence members and their partners with a central point of contact for relocations enquiries.

By the end-of-year posting cycle, our new electronic home searching facility HomeFind will be online. It will enable people to pre-select a home before they are posted and take advantage of the benefits of a door-to-door removal.

New Houses for Darwin and Canberra



Last year's end-of-year posting cycle highlighted problems with the quality or number of houses in some locations, particularly in Canberra and Darwin.

We have taken steps to overcome this shortage. Last month we signed a contract for the construction of 50 townhouses in the Canberra suburb of Stirling. The development is expected to be completed before Christmas.

Last month, Minister assisting the Minister for Defence, Bruce Scott turned the sod to mark the beginning of construction of the Carey Street site in Darwin. The development will include a mix of one, two and three bedroom apartments with on-site, underground parking and a recreational area. It is due for completion by the end of 2002.

Questions?

If you have any questions on DHA's services, contact your local Housing Management Centre or our Customer Service Officers on

1800 249 711

New Accommodation Plan Means Better Deal for Defence

A new, expanded commercial accommodation plan that will provide easier access to a wide range of services for the whole Defence community has been launched by the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Bruce Scott.

'It's a wonderful opportunity for our Defence Force personnel and our very special veterans of course, and the whole of the Defence Force community,' he said.

The new Defence Force Leave Plan (DFLP) and the Defence Force Accommodation Program (DFAP) are now available to all of Defence, including ADF members, Reservists, Defence civilians and contractors, Veterans' Affairs White and Gold Cards and retired ADF superannuants.

In addition, Mr Scott said the DFLP and the DFAP have now been upgraded and extended to include a broader range of properties.

'Under the programs, discount accommodation is available at all Bass Hotels and Resorts and Flag Choice Hotels properties within Australia and overseas,' he said.

The Minister said that cards and fees under the old schemes have been abolished and members now need only show suitable proof of identity to be eligible for discounted rates.

The DFLP has been available since 1973 and was operated by the Southern Pacific Hotels Corporation Group. With the acquisition of that group by Bass Hotels and Resorts, the DFLP has now been extended to include all Defence personnel.

Geoffrey Webb, Director of Global Sales, Bass Hotels and Resorts (which includes Continental Hotels, Crown Plaza Hotels, Holiday Inn and others), said not only were there were 59 hotels in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, but over 3,000 hotels globally that the Defence community can access under the scheme.

DFAP, in operation since 1997, has been extended

by Flag to also cover all Defence personnel. Thrifty Car Rental, in partnership with Flag Choice Hotels, will also provide discounted car rental as part of the scheme.

John Clunes of Flag Choice Hotels said the group has over 380 hotels on offer in Australia, and world-wide there are 4,500 hotels in the Choice network, all with rates schemes for Government or Defence personnel.

'So with a simple I.D. and a "Hi, this is who I am", you can get a secure bed for the night with a 100 percent satisfaction guarantee,' he said.

Mr Scott acknowledged the support of Bass and Flag to Defence over the years and expressed his thanks to them for offering expanded discounted accommodation to all members of the Defence community.

Both schemes are separate from any other corporate agreements that might be in place between Defence and other providers.

For further information see www.basshotels.com/basshotels and www.flagchoice.com.au

Contact: Tony McFarlane.

Phone: 02 6265 3853

Email: anthony.mcfarlane@defence.gov.au



Left to right: MAJGEN Willis, John Clunes, Geoffrey Webb, Dana Vale and Minister Bruce Scott.



Boost to Cadets

Dr Brendan Nelson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, recently outlined a range of Government initiatives to enhance the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Cadet program.

Speaking in front of over 300 cadets and their families at a parade at RAAF Base Richmond on Sunday 3 June, Dr Nelson said that the Federal Government was committed to the military cadet

movement and had released a far-reaching plan to revitalise and strengthen the ADF Cadets.

The ADF Cadets, the new name for the Australian Services Cadet Scheme, is made up of the Australian Navy Cadets (formerly the Naval Reserve Cadets), the Australian Army Cadets (Australian Army Corps) and the Australian Air Force Cadets (Air Training Corps).

Key aspects of the enhancement package are:

- \$6 million additional funding, bringing the total resource and support backing for Cadets to \$30 million

- strong alignment of the Navy, Army and Air Force Cadet programs with their sponsoring Services, with increased participation in military-like activities and contact with serving military personnel
- provision of computers and printers to cadet units, with online administrative systems

"...We should applaud the outstanding young Australians who are on parade here today and the other 25,000 who participate in cadet units the length and breadth of the nation...the immense pride you show in being Navy, Army and Air Force Cadets does still not match the pride we as parents, military and political leaders have in you..."

Dr Brendan Nelson MP



Dr Brendan Nelson with Navy, Army and Air Force Cadets

- review of firearms training, with the view to increasing participation for interested cadets
- accreditation, where possible, of cadet activities within the National Training Framework
- a review of the feasibility of Defence accepting responsibility for cadet unit accommodation; and
- a pilot project to enhance the participation of indigenous youth in ADF Cadets

Dr Nelson's speech, outlining the ADF Cadets enhancement program, may be viewed online at: www.defence.gov.au/cadets/hotissues/index.htm

Information about single service cadet programs may be viewed online at:

- Australian Navy Cadets: www.defence.gov.au/anc/
- Australian Army Cadets: www.defence.gov.au/army/cadets/
- Australian Air Force Cadets: www.airtc.defence.gov.au

For the Australian Defence Force Cadet program as a whole see www.defence.gov.au/cadets/

Contact: Wing Commander John Anderson
 Phone: 02 6265 3495
 Email: john.anderson@cbr.defence.gov.au



Home Purchase Assistance Scheme

The Home Purchase Assistance Scheme (HPAS) replaces the first purchase component of Home Purchase or Sale Expenses Allowance (HPSEA). It is payable to those members who have not previously been paid, or who have not established, an entitlement to HPSEA during their service.

HPAS is a grant of \$11,400 towards the purchase of a home in respect of which Defence assistance is sought for the first time. The gross payment of \$11,400 is taxed at source, and the net amount is payable through the pay account.

Unlike HPSEA, HPAS is not a cost reimbursement allowance. The gross amount of \$11,400 is payable regardless of actual costs incurred in connection with a purchase. This amount was set having regard to what was the average HPSEA first purchase reimbursement during 1999/00, plus the Fringe Benefit Tax which was payable by Defence.

Also unlike HPSEA, there is no time limit from the date of posting to a locality within which to effect a purchase. However, there must be a remaining tenure of service and posting of at least 12 months as at the date the contract for purchase is signed.

HPAS applies to all first home purchases which are contracted on or after 1 July 2000. HPSEA ceased to be payable in respect of first purchases contracted on or after that date.

HPSEA continues to be payable under normal conditions for sales and purchases made in connection with subsequent postings.

HPAS is not affected by, and is paid in addition to, any first home buyer assistance schemes available through the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments.

The HPAS has been very well received by ADF members and families. Since its introduction on 1 July 2000, almost 2,500 claims have been paid to the end of May 2001 and in excess of 2,600 claims

are expected to have been finalised in its first full year of operation. More details are available in a Power Point Presentation at:

www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpedet

Please note that being taxed as 'assessable income', HPAS payments and the amounts of tax instalments deducted will appear on Group Certificates (that is, the payment summary).

Being 'assessable income', HPAS payments are included in a number of income tests relating to government benefits and obligations such as:

- Child support payments
- Higher education contributions scheme (HECS) repayments
- Medicare levy surcharge
- Superannuation surcharge
- Termination payments surcharge
- Rebate for personal superannuation contributions.

HPAS payments will also be included in the income tests for the Family Tax Benefit and the Child Care Benefit and the parental income test for the Youth Allowance.

Before submitting an application for an HPAS payment, members are encouraged to check the implications of an HPAS payment on their personal affairs as outlined above.

Contact: Tony Goodman

Phone: 02 6265 4635

Email: tony.goodman@cbr.defence.gov.au



Community House Spotlight on Kissing Point Cottage



Kissing Point Cottage is a Defence Community House that was established at Dundas (Sydney) in 1996 for service members and their families. It provides a venue for ADF spouses and families to interact, and assist new families with settling into the area and meeting new friends.

The Family Support Funding Program provides the majority of the funding but we also need to rely on Corporate sponsorship and fundraising to help provide our services.

*Kissing Point Cottage—
playgroups, coffee
mornings and
afternoons, a place to
meet other families
and much much more.*

We have a regular schedule, which includes:

- Playgroup
- Occasional Care
- Coffee/Information Mornings
- Craft Mornings and Nights
- Committee Meetings

Childcare is provided at all events except for Playgroup and Tuesday

Night Craft, for a negligible cost.

Apart from the regular program, we also run courses such as Senior First Aid, Self Defence, Folk Art and Calligraphy (among many others). All courses offered are run by accredited instructors

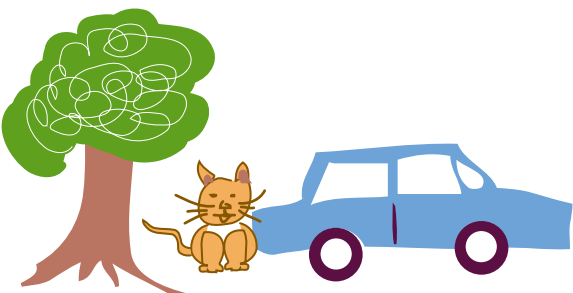
or craft teachers. These courses are very affordable as they are subsidised by the Cottage.

Kissing Point Cottage also provides internet access for spouses without their own computers, enabling them to keep in contact with deployed partners via email. Bookings are necessary as the hours the Cottage is open depends on the activities for the week.

We would love to hear from any families already in the area or transferring to Sydney and will forward a copy of our monthly newsletter giving more details and calendar of events to anyone interested.

Why not consider our location when looking for your new home in Sydney! Kissing Point Cottage has recently had a major upgrade and is looking fabulous. Anyone interested in having a look around at the Cottage, which includes a great playground for the children, can make an appointment at any time. Kissing Point Cottage is located at 282 Kissing Point Road in Dundas NSW.

Contact: Jane Relyea (co-ordinator)
Phone/Fax: (02) 9874 4052
Email: kissingpoint@excite.com



The International Year of the Volunteer – Celebrating Volunteers in the Defence Organisation

2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer (IYV) and Australia is taking the opportunity to thank the volunteers in our midst.

The list of volunteers is endless and includes volunteers such as Bush firefighters, surf lifesavers, sports coaches, meals-on-wheels deliverers, blood donors, committee members, door-knock money raisers, support group coordinators, and many more. Countless Australians over the years have volunteered their time and energy towards serving their community in some way and improving the lives of others. Think what Australia would be like without these quiet achievers.

Defence involvement in IYV aims to acknowledge the unsung volunteers, both Defence Personnel and their families, to recognise outstanding achievements that truly reflect the spirit of volunteering and to encourage these activities.

All members of Defence, and their families, are encouraged to contact the IYV Committee in Canberra with the names and stories of colleagues or family members who demonstrate the best qualities of a volunteer. The Committee would like to publicise some of these stories in various Defence publications. These stories will be related to volunteer 'themes':

Family and Community Support (Such as coordinators or committee of self-help groups either specifically related to Defence families or more broadly based in the community, etc.)

International Neighbours/Humanitarian (For example, those who are involved with the Save the Children Fund, Red Cross, Community Aid Abroad or ADF members who have been involved in humanitarian work above and beyond the call of duty on peacekeeping missions, etc.) Environment, Arts and Heritage (Guides in local heritage museums and art galleries, bush preservation groups, etc.)

Sport, Recreation and Youth (Coaches of sporting teams, scout leaders, youth workers, etc.)

Emergency Services (Bush fire brigade members, surf lifesavers, etc.)

Civic Participation, Pets and Animals (Wildlife rescue, Neighbourhood Watch, etc.)

Corporate (Fire Wardens and other voluntary position holders throughout Defence who take responsibility for the safety and welfare of their colleagues, etc.)

Commanders and managers are also encouraged to consider local events at which volunteer colleagues and family members could be thanked for their efforts, such as morning teas, a sausage sizzle, a demonstration afternoon by voluntary organisations and presentation ceremonies. Local Defence Community Organisation staff will assist with the organisation of events as will the local coordinators of the National Consultative Group of Service Families.

If you would like to nominate a volunteer for recognition, please contact Jenny Deal at Defence Community Organisation Headquarters.

Volunteers do not seek thanks, but when it is offered it is appreciated.

Contact: Jenny Deal
 Email : Jennifer.Deal@cbr.defence.gov.au
 Fax: 02 6266 4440
 Address: CP2-4-157
 Campbell Park
 Canberra, ACT 2600





Exercise Binh Ba By Lee Preedy

A Day out with B Squadron, 3rd 4th Cavalry Regiment

The Battle of Binh Ba was fought in June 1969 during the Vietnam War by elements of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment. On 24 June this year, Exercise Binh Ba, named in honour of the battle, was held at High Range, Townsville, with B Squadron organising for friends and family to experience for a day what they do in the field.

After a welcome from Major Rod Rayward, Officer Commanding and Warrant Officer Two Wayne Preedy, Squadron Sergeant Major, and a safety brief from Sergeant Ian Bunn, we climbed on board a team of Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) for Squadron Headquarters, High Range.

The entire unit should be proud with the preparation that went into this event. They were so professional and helpful, yet laid back, we could imagine we really had just stepped into a typical day out bush.

All those who came have a greater appreciation of just what it is that B Squadron does on the elusive 'bush trips'. Most thought we'd arrive to find a

civilised camping-site, not expecting High Range to be such a dusty, barren place. Indeed, we now know why they come home so dirty - after only four hours my hands were black!

The Squadron set up different stands to highlight what they do in the field. Greg Frankel had a triangular APC and tent set up at Squadron Headquarters. Dale Shearer's people conducted their 'personal hygiene'; Pete Melia carried out a 'replen' [replenishment] and gave us to the excitement of a live 'casevac' [causality evacuation]; The RAEME [Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers] guys lifted out a whole APC engine; 'Bubba' Smith's introduced his mortar and recon people; 'Dicky' Dyson' treated us to the gourmet thrill of salami, egg and cheese jaffle; and Brett Postlewaite's 'down time' display presented the very popular hammock.

A part of the day which made us truly feel part of the family was the Squadron photo at the High

Range, followed by a B Squadron family photo, with all of us included, which will provoke many happy memories for years to come.

The evening ended with a barbecue dinner, followed by 'fireworks' courtesy of the united firepower of the entire Squadron, an event that I believe has never been witnessed before by civilians. While walking along a Cyalume lit track back to the busses was memorable, we had so much fun and were so exhausted we wished we could have stayed for the night, camping under the stars in the shadow of the APCs.

The benefits that Exercise Binh Ba provided were enormous. The Squadron revealed their secret life, giving us a better appreciation what our friends and family do, and instilling a sense of pride in both us and the Squadron themselves as a result. Other benefits included word-of-mouth publicity, recruitment potential and other affirmative action to increase the profile of the military in general.

Families and friends wish to thank Major

Rod Rayward and Warrant Officer Two Wayne Preedy, and the rest of B Squadron for arranging such a great day for us. We truly do feel special and hope to be invited again to participate in such a wonderful event.

We trust that the rest of Defence share with us the pride of knowing that we have Units that contain outstanding soldiers with both the strength and professionalism to carry out their military duties, and the responsibility and altruism to look after their families.

We welcome stories about your community.

If you have a story to tell please email it to:

defencefamilymatters@cbr.defence.gov.au



Booklet Helps Families Make Health Decisions

ADF members and their families will have greater knowledge and control of their own health care following the launch of a major health initiative by the Head of Defence Personnel Executive, Major General Simon Willis.

The user-friendly booklet will be distributed to 95,000 Defence personnel including full time uniformed ADF members, active Reserves and Defence civilians.

The booklet is written in an easy to understand manner and provides the basics for self-management of common conditions including burns, skin infections, sinusitis, sunburn and vomiting.

The booklet answers the question *What should I do?* for a range of illnesses and symptoms, and provides guidance on the best course of action to take.

'Frequent moves for ADF families mean they often have to change their family doctor', said Major General Willis.

'This booklet will help them manage their relative health care isolation, becoming more informed about their health care before they reach their doctor.

These choices can include recognising when symptoms are more serious, knowing when it is important to consult the doctor and how quickly and whether simple remedies will be effective.

These actions are all part of self care and the *What should I do?* booklet describes in a common sense, readable manner the basics of self care.'



The *What should I do?* booklet was developed in the Netherlands where five million copies were distributed and evaluated and a further three million copies were distributed through the UK.

Surveys of the use and effectiveness of the booklet was developed in the Netherlands show benefits including good retention of the information by patients (95 percent), a reduction in unnecessary GP visits (21 percent) and a significant number of patients following the advice in the booklet (51 percent).

Before its release to ADF personnel and their families, the booklet was evaluated by Australian health experts to ensure that the terminology used is relevant for Australians, that the medications are common Australian medications, the emergency numbers all relate to Australian emergency services, and that the information is consistent with existing Australian guidelines and protocols.

Contact: Task Manager, Defence Publishing Service
Phone: (03) 9256 4642

Email: dpstasking@raaf.defence.gov.au



Mobility and Education



In the last edition of *defence FAMILY MATTERS*, the National Consultative Group of Service Families (NCGSF) asked for stories from Defence families whose children have been educationally affected by their mobile lifestyle, especially those families where the national school starting age has been a problem.

NCGSF would like to give a big thank you to those families who have already written to us, but we ask that other families continue to send stories in. The more evidence we have, the better our case for assistance.

As you know, Department of Education and Youth Affairs and DCO will shortly be launching a research project into the 'Effects of Student Mobility on Learning Outcomes'.

This is great news for Defence families as it means that we will finally be able to quantify the effects of mobility on learning. The research will also cover mobile families who are not in Defence so this will isolate mobility as a cause of concern.

Since the last issue we have met with our Patron, Mrs Julia Anderson, wife of Deputy Prime Minister's John Anderson, and representatives from the offices of Minister Bruce Scott and Minister David Kemp. Issues discussed included the lobbying of States to align the National School Starting Ages around the country.

We agreed that the NCGSF should meet with every State/Territory Education Minister between now and the release of the study outcomes next year. This personal lobbying will really help Education Ministers see how important this issue is for children moving between states. It will be very effective if done in close affiliation with the research project and DCO.

However, lobbying will be greatly enhanced if we can show the effect on real people and we need your help with this.

We need to collate anecdotal evidence, or stories, from as many families as possible. Please be assured that all details are strictly confidential and no names will be used.

Please email your story to judy.swann@cbr.defence.gov.au

Call **1800 100 509** if you would like more details.

If you would like to be involved with the work of the NCGSF or need more information or visit our website at

www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ncgsf

Or you can call the National Convenor, Judy Swann, 02 6266 2768.



NCGSF Vacancy

Due to posting, the position of NCGSF National Delegate in Sydney (SWE) will become vacant in December 2001.

This position must be filled by a spouse of a full-time serving member residing in the Southern, Western or Eastern suburbs of Sydney.

The Delegate's duties are varied and interesting, as the Delegate is the Minister's official Defence family representative in that region. If you are currently living in that region or are posting there at the end of the year, please call for more information.

Sherene Strahan

02 9825 4500

or Judy Swann

1800 100 509

Support to Families with Special Needs



In 1998, Defence released a new policy DI (G) 42-5 entitled Support to Families with Special Needs, which for the first time provided a procedure whereby Defence could formally recognise families with special or additional needs, and assist them on posting. This policy was reviewed extensively during 2000 by consulting with key stakeholder groups.

The key changes reflect the issues raised by clients, DCO staff and other stakeholder groups and will help to improve the processes.

The Manager, Education Policy and Special Needs will be visiting each area during July and August to discuss the changes and to promote the DI (G) 42-5. Your local area will be publicising the dates and times for these information sessions, so please come along, hear about the changes and meet other Defence families with similar concerns.

These changes are highlighted below.

Changes to the Policy

1. *The application for recognition as a family with special needs, or FWSN, will now be forwarded directly to the Director General DCO for approval and not through the member's unit.*

Families with special needs and others during the focus group meetings raised confidentiality as a reason why families were choosing not to be recognised. As a result the process has been changed to ensure confidentiality by limiting the steps in the application process.

2. *The word 'educational' has been inserted before psychologist.*

Concerns were raised that the assessment process for a gifted/talented dependant needed to be clearer. With the addition of the word 'educational' the criteria is more clearly defined.

3. *The letter of recognition as a FWSN will be forwarded to the member, the member's unit, posting authorities, Career Managers and PMKeyS.*

This change reflects the concern of members and their families that they did not receive a copy of the letter of recognition, and when they had a need for the letter were no longer in the same location.

Other stakeholder groups identified the need for Defence areas to be informed of a member with a family with special needs, such as the member's unit, posting authorities, Career Managers and PMKeyS.

4. *A review of the recognition process will occur at the time of posting or when an assistance measure is required, to verify the special need is still in existence. A social work report together with a specialist report of not more than two years old will be required.*

During the focus group meetings families highlighted that the needs of the special needs dependant may change and different measures of assistance be required. The introduction of the review will assist families to identify any changes and, through the assistance of DCO staff, move to the next location with a minimum of disruption.

5. *The words 'personal care' have been added to the respite therapy and equipment section.*

Where the spouse is the recognised dependant with special needs and the spouse needs assistance with daily care when the member is away, personal care can now be provided for them.

6. *Under the discretionary function within the DI (G) 42-5, respite can be provided in exceptional circumstances.*

When the Serving Member is absent on duty on either long overseas deployments or at sea, then respite can be applied for a special needs dependant to give the caring parent an opportunity for time out.

7. *The housing assistance measures have been changed to reflect the issues identified through out the consultative process. The requirement for housing assistance has changed in the following ways.*

Modifications that do not alter the structure of the house and do not affect the capability of the house in relation to future tenancies will be approved;

Modifications are to address those items of functionality that have been lost as a result of a posting; and

The purchase of air conditioners is the responsibility of the member but air conditioners will be installed and removed by Defence at the time of posting.

The issues associated with the allocation of appropriate housing to meet the special needs of families were widespread and covered a range of problems. The above changes incorporate the concerns of all groups and are designed to make the allocation process simpler.

Copies of the DI (G) 42-5 will be available from DCO offices and the DCO web site at

www.dco.dod.gov.au

DCO staff in your area will be able to provide assistance and any information on special needs applications.

Contact: Joan Gilbert

Phone: 02 6266 4427

Email: joan.gilbert@cbr.defence.gov.au



Super Confident

Commitment to superannuation is booming, with many now seeing it as an investment opportunity rather than a drain on pay.

So how much do you know about Military Superannuation Benefits Scheme (MSBS)? Below we highlight just one of the many benefits.

The Employer Benefit is calculated on a member's salary in the last three years of service, complemented by an excellent employer benefit accrual rate.

The employer benefit is a lump sum amount that depends on length of service and Final Average Salary (FAS).

FAS is a members average salary over the last three years (1095 days) of Defence Force service.

This means that unlike other schemes where superannuation is calculated on salary at any given point in time, MSBS Members have the benefit of calculation on their FAS.

For example, if an individual's commencement salary was \$25,000, and their salary in the last 3 years of service averaged \$56,000, their employer benefit would be calculated on their final average salary of \$56,000.

In addition, unlike most other superannuation schemes that have an employer contribution of 8%, Military Super provides an excellent employer benefit accrual rate (ranging from 18-28% depending on years of service).

The employer benefit, as indicated in the table below, is unlike any other scheme.

Military Super Employer Benefit Growth

Years of Service	% of FAS per year
Up to 7 years	18%
7 years, 1day to 20 years	23%
20 years 1 day +	28%

Read on next month, as we cover another highlight of Military Super.

Questions?

Contact: ComSuper **13 23 66**

www.comsuper.gov.au



COMSUPER
 super excellence

Community House Spotlight

Calling all Neighbourhood Community Houses ...

While we have been out meeting with family groups, many of you have asked for information on Neighbourhood Houses, where they are, and what they offer.

Towards the end of this year, we are going to publish a special edition of defence FAMILY MATTERS just on our wonderful Neighbourhood Houses, highlighting the valuable services that they provide to the Defence community.

What we will need to do this, is information on each and every Neighbourhood House around Australia.

If you are a Neighbourhood House coordinator or a committee member of one, could you please ensure that you email or write to us with all the necessary details and photos of your House. Have a look at the recent Neighbourhood House spotlight articles appearing in this issue of defence FAMILY MATTERS and the May edition, for the kind of information that we require.

Please pass this information on to your Neighbourhood House, to make sure that they don't miss out on being included in our special edition.

If you would like more information, please email Diane Temperley at defencefamilymatters@cbr.defence.gov.au or call on 02 6265 5085. The information would need to be with us by 2,1 September 2001. Look forward to hearing from you all.

Diane

