

# defence FAMILY MATTERS

March/April 2002

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

## Defence /AFS Scholarship Winners Announced

Defence congratulates Natalie McCann from Merrimac in Queensland, Elise Munyard from East Gosford NSW, Kate Brown from Jerrabomberra in ACT/NSW and Jessica Dillon from Sale Victoria on receiving the Defence/AFS scholarships for 2002.

The students will depart this year for Italy, Japan and Switzerland on a fully paid scholarship provided by Defence in partnership with AFS Intercultural Programs.

Kate Brown was farewelled by the Defence Community Organisation ACT office on Monday, 11 February 2002. This presentation was attended by the principal of St Clare's School, DGDCO, family members and DCO staff.

The Director General of DCO, Judy Lachele, in her farewell speech highlighted the AFS motto, that the volunteer organisation works to build a "just and peaceful world through world-wide exchange programs, mostly focussed on high school age students." This motto, even though more than 50 years old, carries a poignant message for each of us today.

The students will live with a host family carefully selected by AFS, will go to school, develop a network of friends from around the world and, in the process, learn to grow.

The scholarships are available each year for the sons and daughters of Defence employees.

AFS has over 50 years of experience in the field of selecting and assisting young people to live in another culture. The availability of the scholarships embodies the commitment of Defence to promoting educational improvement, international understanding and the importance of its workforce.

### An Opportunity for Defence Children

If you would like to give your child the same opportunity in 2002, complete the scholarship coupon in this newsletter, or visit the education section of the Defence Community Organisation website at: [www.dco.dod.gov.au](http://www.dco.dod.gov.au) Expressions of interest need to be received by 26 April 2002.

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*"To have won this scholarship has been like a dream. I will always be appreciative of the opportunity provided by Defence to travel and study overseas."*



*The Brown Family (l-r) Jenny, Kate, Bruce, Rebecca, Amy and Kelly*

Newsletter

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## Guide to Member's ADF Pay and Conditions

Would you like a better understanding of ADF pay and conditions of service entitlements?

Have you had difficulty in finding the information you need?

Have you seen the term PACMAN written in articles in defenceFAMILYMATTERS and wondered into what language the editor had lapsed?

On 11 March this year, the Defence Personnel Executive (DPE) launched a Member's Guide to ADF Pay and Conditions. PACMAN is the Defence term for Pay and Conditions of Service Manual.

The guide is written in easy-to-understand English and has been developed specifically to provide ADF members and their partners with easily accessible information on pay and conditions.

The development of the guide has been a joint project between DPE and the single-service military personnel units. It will be distributed through recruit training units and unit commanders, for both new and existing members.

Partners will be able to obtain copies through the Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) on 1800 020 031. This is a toll-free, confidential service available to Service members and their families anywhere in Australia, from 9am to 4pm AEST, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, messages can be left on the answering service out-of-hours or sent via email to [find@bigpond.com](mailto:find@bigpond.com). These will be answered promptly on the next working day.

DPE will be actively seeking feedback that will provide direction on future content, structure and format of the guide, to meet ADF members' needs.



**1800 020 031**

for any Defence personnel questions



# Update on Home Purchase Assistance Scheme



The Home Purchase Assistance Scheme (HPAS) was introduced on 1 July 2000, to better distribute financial assistance to ADF members towards home purchase, previously available under the initial purchase element of Home Purchase or Sale Expenses Allowance (HPSEA). The scheme has proved very popular, with over 4,600 members receiving assistance so far.

Under HPAS, eligible members receive a cash grant towards the purchase of their own home (initially \$11,400 increased to \$12,440 from 1 July 2001), instead of variable assistance based on the reimbursement of home purchase expenses. This amount, coupled with the Federal Government grant of \$7,000 (up to \$10,000) under the First Home Owner Grant schemes, provides valuable assistance to ADF members to buy and live in their own homes.

To be eligible, members must:

- purchase a home in their posting locality, that is to be used as their residence;
- not previously have received reimbursement under HPSEA; and
- have a minimum of 12 months tenure in the posting locality.

## Information and Application

If you would like further information, or wish to apply for HPAS, you can access information by visiting the DPE website at: [www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpedet/](http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpedet/)

Once at this site, search through to Chapter 4, Part 8 of the Pay and Conditions Manual.

Application forms can be downloaded electronically from the Defence Web Forms site (Form AC970).

## Tax Issues

The payment of HPAS is regarded as 'assessable income' and is therefore taxable at the time of payment. Being 'assessable income', the HPAS payment can affect the level of certain benefits and liabilities such as:

- payments and rebates from the Department of Family and Community Services;
- liability for payments through the Child Support Agency;
- liability for Medicare levy;
- liability for Superannuation Surcharge; and
- liability for repayment of HECS.

If you think that any of these benefits or liabilities apply to your family situation, please check the implications of a HPAS payment with the relevant agency. This will make sure that there are no surprises after you receive a HPAS payment.

## Contacts

Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) 1800 020 031

or

Directorate of Entitlements staff:

Navy Ms Jenny Flynn 02 6265 3137  
[jenny.flynn@cbr.defence.gov.au](mailto:jenny.flynn@cbr.defence.gov.au)

Army Mrs Janet Barrie 02 6265 2363  
[janet.barrie@cbr.defence.gov.au](mailto:janet.barrie@cbr.defence.gov.au)

Air Force Mrs Renata Maluta 02 6265 2401  
[renata.maluta@cbr.defence.gov.au](mailto:renata.maluta@cbr.defence.gov.au)



## A Good Start

Here are a few ideas to help your children get off to a good start now that the new school year is underway

- Make contact with your child's teacher in the first few weeks of school for a brief chat.
- Try to get involved in the classroom whenever time permits. This gives you a chance to get to know the teacher and see your child interacting with the teacher and other children in the classroom environment.
- Keep an eye on your child's work right from the start. Many problems can be sorted out quickly and easily if they are picked up early.
- Establish a regular time and place for homework and study and ensure that TV, visitors or telephone calls, do not interrupt this time.
- If you discover your child is having difficulties caused by the move from one State or Territory to another, contact your local REDLO (Regional Education Liaison Officer) at DCO for information about the Education Assistance Scheme.

Joan Gilbert  
Manager, Education Policy and  
Special Needs  
Phone: 02 6266 4427  
Email: joan.gilbert@defence.gov.au

## We Need You

A wise person said, "To change something, you have to say something."

The National Consultative Group of Service Families is the official representative body for Defence families in Australia. We are often asked to provide opinion on behalf of Defence families when the ADF reviews policies that affect us.

We are Defence spouses and partners ourselves, but we need to have a very large pool of people to canvass for their opinions, to make sure we accurately represent the thousands of families.

The NCGSF would like partners, spouses and family members of full-time serving personnel to join our Family Network.

As a member of the NCGSF Family Network, you will receive a bi-monthly newsletter. This will update you on what policies are being reviewed by Defence and the impact they may have on Defence family life. You will know when new policies are being formulated and you can have direct input into these policies at the earliest stage.

Of course there may be times when you have no comments or suggestions at all. You simply may want to read the newsletter and keep up-to-date.

The NCGSF is also asked for very specific feedback on some aspects of Defence policy or on the operations of external agencies like DHA and Toll.

As a member of the NCGSF Family Network, we would ask for your comments when these requests come to us. Again you may have a comment or you may not. But at least we'll have canvassed the opinions of a large sample of Defence families!

We have provided a great deal of feedback on your behalf over the years. Some of the requests that we received in 2001 included:

- The effectiveness of DHA's new HomeFind.
- How user friendly are the new websites for Toll, DHA and DCO?
- What do spouses really want when it comes to assistance with employment?
- Does mobility affect our children's learning?
- How can DHA, Toll and DCO be more effective? And so on...

We would love to have your comments on the questions we'll field in 2002.

The NCGSF Family Network requires NO time, NO effort and NO sacrifices away from your own precious families and busy lives. We just need your thoughts, comments and experiences as partners of a member in the ADF.

It is vital that all geographical areas are represented due to the enormous differences that mobile families can face with housing, education, employment and so on.

Please call 1800 100 509 for details or visit our website at:

[www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ncgsf](http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ncgsf)

## Changes to the Family Support Funding Program

The Defence Family Support Funding Program (FSFP) guidelines have recently been amended to include a new initiative to enhance the operations of the program.

The changes, which came into effect in January 2002, see an improvement to the ongoing monitoring process of grant recipients with the local Defence Community Organisation (DCO) office now more closely involved.

The monitoring process is designed to be friendly, where DCO staff can provide valuable assistance to groups with advice on operational and management issues without the requirement of being a committee member. (DCO staff are not allowed to be full committee members, they can however be ex-officio members of a committee without voting rights.)

Monitoring will help ensure that groups are aware of FSFP grant requirements and will enable early identification of any issues that may arise. Another benefit of monitoring is that it will provide Defence with first-hand knowledge of the benefits of the funded projects.

From January 2002, DCO staff will be visiting grant recipients twice a year to carry out monitoring. Groups should use these occasions to provide valued feedback and suggestions on the improvement of the operations of the FSFP. Additionally, FSFP managerial staff are still required to regularly conduct random monitoring of grant expenditure and project progress.

FSFP grants provide funds for Defence families to undertake family support projects locally, that will assist families to overcome some of the impacts of mobility. The objectives of the program are to:

- Provide grants to groups of Defence families to enable them to work together on a project or program that helps Defence families in the area;
- Support self-help projects initiated by Defence families that will assist a significant number of Defence families in the area; and
- Assist not-for-profit groups with a project or service that specifically targets Defence families.

For the first time this year the FSFP application form is available as an online form on the DCO website at: [www.dco.dod.gov.au](http://www.dco.dod.gov.au)

The online form has been developed to be user-friendly and can be accessed easily from any computer with internet access.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact your local DCO office, download the FSFP grant guidelines from the DCO website or call FIND on 1800 020 031.



## Defence Health 1800 IM SICK

The Defence Health 1800 IM SICK (1800 467 425) telephone number, launched in December 2001, came about from the difficulties ADF members had in accessing appropriate health care, particularly if away from the units while on leave. Statewide 1800 numbers already existed in WA and NT and now this National Health Number allows access to appropriate health care by ADF personnel anywhere in Australia.

This initiative is the first program to utilise the national health telephone system to provide health support to ADF members. The 1800 IM SICK number is easy to remember for both ADF personnel and their families.

All calls on landlines will be directed to the closest nominated ADF health facility. At present only 70% of mobile telephones will do the same, the other 30% being directed to an ADF facility but not necessarily the closest nominated one. Each nominated health facility has a landline which is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with voice mail capability.

The ADF personnel who ring this number (where practical) before presenting to a health facility can be confident of reimbursement of health costs incurred. In addition, the follow-up treatment of members can be better organised.

The operations of this initiative will be reviewed in the first part of 2002. After this review, information products such as stickers, magnets, business cards and pamphlets with all the nominated telephone numbers, will be made available for distribution to all ADF personnel.

The 1800 IM SICK (1800 467 425) number is part of the delivery of high quality health care to ADF personnel. It is complementary to the 'What Should I Do' self-help booklet that was released in 2001.



## Just Arrived in a Remote Locality?



There are benefits that you may be entitled to if your family is posted to a remote, isolated or tropical locality. These benefits fall under the following headings:

- a. District Allowance
- b. Air-conditioning Allowance
- c. Additional leave
- d. Different leave travel entitlements for the member
- e. Remote Locality Leave Travel for member plus dependants
- f. Education Assistance for your children
- g. Bare Base Allowance, Woomera and Port Wakefield Allowances

All these benefits are detailed in the Pay and Conditions Manual which is available to you on the Defence website, Directorate of Determinations page.  
<http://defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/dpedet/>

From 11 March a plain language guide will be available, known as the Member's Guide to ADF Pay and Conditions of Service booklet.

Please ask your ADF family member to check that they are receiving the correct entitlements for your remote posting by contacting their relevant pay authority such as orderly room, ship's office, or corporate support office.



## Defence School Transition Aides

The Defence Community Organisation (DCO) is about to establish a number of Defence School Transition Aides (DSTA) positions across Australia.

These positions will be established in schools or clusters of schools that have a high percentage of children from ADF families.

The role of these positions will be to facilitate the best educational outcome for mobile ADF children through on-site, direct and flexible assistance to children, parents, teachers and other support services.

The DSTA role will work in conjunction with the Regional Education Liaison Officer (REDLO) located in each State or Territory. The REDLO role is to provide specialised educational support to ADF families across a large area, whereas the DSTA role will provide local support and work in a single school or a small group of schools.

Some of the duties of a DSTA are listed below but this list is not exhaustive:

- Developing strategies to help children to settle into the new school routine such as welcoming and farewelling rituals;
- providing opportunities for ADF families to meet other ADF families;
- being a support person to children who take longer to settle and adjust to new surroundings;
- providing support to families in crisis and families who have special needs;
- providing support to parents in a highly emotional situation;
- acting as a mentor support for families who may have one parent deployed or away for a long time;
- assisting families prepare for a move to a new location;

- developing informal support networks with ADF children and their families;
- acting as a conduit between the family and school staff to effect appropriate placement;
- assisting children to collect personal belongings, samples of work and academic reports for their next school in order to maintain continuity of their education; and
- generally enhancing the ADF image within the school.

### Benefits of DSTAs

- Ensuring a supportive educational environment for ADF mobile families;
- Quickly developing a sense of belonging for both children and parents;
- Providing a communication link between stakeholders;
- Appropriate welcoming and farewelling strategies involving the whole school;
- Assisting children collect personal belongings, report cards and samples of work prior to moving; and
- Acting as a neutral person/significant other available to children/parents.

The development of these positions will take some time but it is anticipated that all of the positions will be in operation for the second semester of 2002.

For further information about the development of the positions you can either contact the REDLO in your area or contact Joan Gilbert, Manager Education Policy and Special Needs (MEPSN) on:

**Phone: 02 6266 4427**

Email: [joan.gilbert@defence.gov.au](mailto:joan.gilbert@defence.gov.au)



# Education Assistance for Children Changing School

Due to the recent posting cycle, many of our children will now be facing changes of school and/or school systems. Education Assistance is available to assist families to deal with any child's educational problems that may arise in the year following the move.

In your new locality, assistance with extra tuition costs can be made available to primary and secondary school students as follows:

- Compulsory subject, previously studied, extra tuition of one hour per week to a maximum of 14 weeks;
- Compulsory subject, not previously studied, extra tuition of one hour per week for up to six months; and
- For children in Years 10-12, any subject that is not offered at the new school and is essential to the child's career aims, extra tuition for one hour per week for the full school year.

The extra tuition may be in any sensible form, as long as it is provided by a properly licensed or recognised education service provider. Tutoring, enrolment in distance learning, or enrolment in a local TAFE to continue a subject not offered in the new school are examples of assistance which may be provided.

Applications for extra tuition, and detailed advice on educational matters, are available from your local Regional Educational Liaison Officer (REDLO), and a certification of educational needs from the new school principal will be required to support any application. Detailed guidance on time limits of benefits, parental contributions, school certification and other qualifying conditions, which are complex and need to be properly understood, are provided in the Pay and Conditions Manual, Chapter 5.

Some regions are reporting that it can take a full school term to complete the certification, the application, and arrange the tuition. Parents with any academic concerns are encouraged to conduct

early discussions with the school and the REDLO to ensure their child receives prompt assistance.

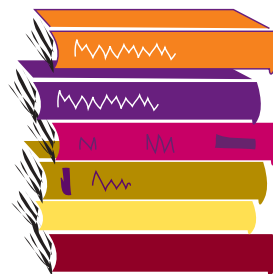
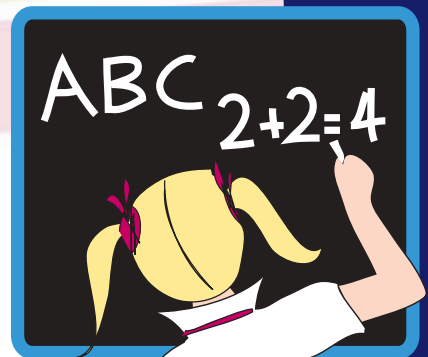
Other forms of Education Assistance are available for Year 10-12 and tertiary students who need to remain in the old locality for educational continuity. Eligible school students can receive subsidised academic fees and boarding expenses, though parental contributions apply, and tertiary students can receive assistance with accommodation costs.

Specialised educational assistance for children with special educational needs is also available, and assessment of those needs and assistance with therapy can be provided. Children with special needs may also receive other assistance under DIG42-5, which is a provision administered by the Defence Community Organisation.

If you have any queries regarding Education Assistance, please contact your local REDLO.

A copy of the Education Assistance form can be found on the DCO website at: [www.dco.dod.gov.au](http://www.dco.dod.gov.au)

Select the Education option from the menu on the left, then select information.



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## Scholarship

Scholarships are available for your child to live overseas for a year as an Exchange Student.

Defence, in association with AFS Intercultural Programs, is providing four full scholarships for employees' children to live and study overseas in 2003.

You are eligible to apply if you are:

- The child of a Navy, Army, Air Force or Department of Defence employee (children of Reserve members on full-time service are also eligible), and
- Attending Year 9,10,11 or 12 at secondary school in 2002

To find out more information and register your interest, visit the education section at the Defence Community

Organisation (DCO) website at:  
[www.dco.dod.gov.au](http://www.dco.dod.gov.au)

Alternatively, complete the expression of interest form below and send to:

Scholarship Administrator  
AFS Intercultural Programs,  
Australia

PO Box 5, Strawberry Hills  
NSW 2012

Phone: 1300 131 736

Fax: 02 9215 0088

Email: [aussendme@afs.org](mailto:aussendme@afs.org)

Visit our website:

[www.afs.org.au](http://www.afs.org.au)

Closing date for expressions of interest is 26 April 2002.

Each scholarship covers:

- International and domestic travel;
- Placement with a carefully selected host family who will provide full board;
- Placement in a school, including school fees;
- Medical insurance; and
- 24 hour global emergency support by AFS, a world leader in international student exchange.



## Defence Spouse Employment Assistance Program Review

The Defence Community Organisation has engaged a consultancy to conduct a review of the current Spouse Employment Assistance Program (SEAP) which will include an employment needs analysis.

The review and analysis commenced in February 2002 and aims to investigate the many issues involved in the provision of employment assistance to Australian Defence Force spouses and partners. It will assess all available options and suggest ways of effectively improving the services provided. The review is due to be completed by 30 April 2002.

The review team will consult with the key stakeholders in Defence, including Defence spouses and partners, the National Consultative Group of Service Families (NCGSF) and DCO staff.

The team will visit and conduct focus groups with members and partners in major Defence areas in all States and Territories during March and April 2002. Dates and locations for your local focus group will be advised by your local DCO office, and they will also be available on the 'Employment' page of the DCO website at: [www.dco.dod.gov.au](http://www.dco.dod.gov.au)

Written submissions are encouraged and should be addressed to:

SEAP Review Team

CP2-4-157

Department of Defence

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Further information on the review can be obtained from Allan McGuckin on:

Phone: 02 6266 4434

Fax: 02 6266 4440

Email: [allan.mcguckin@cbr.defence.gov.au](mailto:allan.mcguckin@cbr.defence.gov.au)



Yes, I would like more information about the Defence Scholarship program:

Surname:.....

Given names:.....

Home Address:.....

Postcode:.....

Home Phone :.....

Email:.....Date of Birth:.....

School:.....Year in School:.....

Name of Defence Parent:.....

Navy  Army  Air Force  Defence

Civilian?.....

Work Location

(Group/Division/Branch/Section):.....

Work Phone:.....

Cut out or copy and send to the address listed above.

## The Decision to Move the Family

Removals are usually regarded as disruptive to the family routine, to spouse employment, children's education, and social links with friends and family. If so the family may prefer to not take a removal, but decide on an unaccompanied posting. On occasions, removals may be advantageous, such as when moving to a better location, or when returning to a known and favoured locality. This article aims to help families make the decision.

Removals are not necessarily compulsory. You may leave the family where they are and may qualify for some additional benefits that are designed to prevent the family incurring the cost of running two homes. If this option is taken a member may proceed unaccompanied and, in certain circumstances, be regarded as separated for service reasons. A cautionary note; the information below is a short summary of complex rules. Detailed advice should be sought before a family commits to a course of action.

Remember that personnel posted to seagoing ships always have a choice of removal destination, being the home port of the ship or the member's personal home port.

An ADF family may also choose a removal to a destination of choice (known as an elected destination), in which case the ADF will pay only what it would have expended on the move, and free accommodation would not be available for the unaccompanied member.

Qualifying conditions to not take a removal, and be regarded as separated for service reasons, are:

- You are required to live-in as a condition of your new job;
- Your spouse is also a member of the ADF and cannot be posted with you;
- A suitable home is not available at the new locality;
- One of your children is undertaking secondary or tertiary education or an apprenticeship at the old locality;
- Your spouse wishes to continue employment at the old locality;

- A dependant cannot move because of illness or infirmity;
- The move would interfere with your spouse's secondary or tertiary education at the old locality; or
- A dependant cannot undertake the move because of a recognised special need.

Reference: PACMAN Chapter 14.  
 (see page 2 for explanation of PACMAN)

If these conditions are met then the member may proceed unaccompanied and receive the following benefits:

- Continued occupancy of a service residence or rent allowance at the old locality;
- Free accommodation, either living-in (including free meals) or rent allowance (at service discretion) at the new locality. If rent allowance is granted, a food allowance is paid to make up for the absence of free meals when living-in;
- Separation Allowance; and
- Reunion visits at two-month intervals. Reunion travel can be transferred to a dependant.

Note: seagoing personnel have very limited access to reunion visits outside refit periods.

See PACMAN Chapter 3 Part 5.

Sole parent access to members with dependant separated conditions depends on the degree of access. Generally a parent who provides a home for a dependant for a minimum of 90 nights per year will be recognised as a member with dependants. See PACMAN Chapter 14.

Home ownership can prevent access to ADF housing assistance.

The aim of most provisions is to keep an ADF family together. Where this is not necessarily the best option for the family then the ADF seeks to ensure that families do not have to bear the cost of running two homes.

Detailed advice is available from:

- Your local administration office;
- Defence Corporate Support offices;
- FIND organisation;
- Defence Housing Authority; and
- Defence Community Organisation.



# Spouse Employment Assistance Pilot in Queensland

A pilot recruitment and employment assistance scheme is being held in Queensland from March through to August 2002.

The scheme has two parts:

- A Job Network recruitment service to encourage new recruits to join the regular and reserve Defence Forces; and
- A package of assistance to the partners of ADF members.

## JOBSEARCH WEBSITE

A website for Defence recruitment, employment and support is available on the Australian JobSearch website. The Australian JobSearch site contains a section dedicated to employment opportunities for the families of ADF members.

The address of the website is [www.jobsearch.gov.au/defence](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au/defence)

You can:

- Find out what employment opportunities are available in your new community;
- Put your resume on JobSearch and access automatic job matching and employers looking for staff;
- Find information on volunteering in your new location; and
- Find information on upgrading your skills or new career options.

There will be touchscreen Internet kiosks available in the Defence Community Organisation offices in Queensland for the pilot period. Many Job Network members also have touchscreen kiosks for your use.

## THE RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE THROUGH THE JOB NETWORK

The service will involve the national Job Network in assisting partners of ADF personnel to find employment or gain skills to improve job

opportunities. This network is regionally based and is ideally suited to provide personalised assistance specifically for partners of ADF personnel.

The Job Network will be providing a range of employment services to the partners of ADF personnel. These services include:

- Information about the Job Network and how it can help you;
- Overview on the employment situation and prospects in your new locality;
- Assistance in preparing or updating your resume;
- Forwarding introduction letters and resumes to Job Network members in your new locality and co-ordinating referrals to suitable vacancies; and
- Arranging interviews with the Job Network members in your new location.

**These services will be available only in Queensland during the pilot.**

Interviews with a Job Network member in a non-Queensland location will be accessible only if you are eligible for Job Matching services. Your Job Network member will give you all the information about your eligibility.

While the website [www.jobsearch.gov.au/defence](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au/defence) is ready and waiting for your visit, the Job Network recruitment and employment service and the touchscreen kiosks will initially be available only in Queensland during the pilot period.

If you are interested in finding out more about the employment pilot in Queensland please contact your local Defence Community Organisation office or Allan McGuckin on:  
**Phone: 02 6266 4434**  
Email: [allan.mcguckin@cbr.defence.gov.au](mailto:allan.mcguckin@cbr.defence.gov.au)

## Update on Defence Employer Sponsored Child Care Program

Defence has taken a leading role in the establishment of employer sponsored child care in order to assist personnel to meet their work and family commitments in areas where the local community is unable to fill the Defence child care need.

The Defence Employer Sponsored Child Care Program currently consists of 18 long term day care centres and 112 Family Day Care places. In total, the Program provides about 1,260 child care places. The centres are designed to meet State and Territory regulations for licensing and the requirements for Child Care Benefit.

A contract for the management of the Defence Child Care Centres was awarded to KU Children's Services in October 1998. For more information about KU Children's Services visit the website: [www.ku.com.au](http://www.ku.com.au)

### PROGRAM EXPANSION

As part of the expansion announced in May 2001, two new Defence Employer Sponsored Child Care Centres have recently opened. The Russell Hill Early Childhood Centre, which is licensed for 85 places, and the Durack Children's Centre, a leased facility with 60 licensed places, at Palmerston in the Northern Territory, both opened for business in February this year.

New or relocated centres have also been earmarked for East Sale, Williamtown and Holsworthy. In addition to these approved projects, the surveying of child care needs at Puckapunyal was undertaken in the latter half of last year with results due for publication shortly.

The surveying of child care needs will continue, with Adelaide and Perth next to be surveyed, in consultation with the Directorate of Strategic Personnel Planning and Research in the first half of 2002.

Joint venture child care arrangements are being negotiated with two Sydney-based organisations, to provide Defence families with access to child care places. Legal advice is being sought on whether joint venture arrangements will meet the Australian Taxation Office requirements for salary packaging.

The combination of joint ventures and the expansion of Family Day Care places, where possible, in Sydney is aimed at alleviating the crucial shortage of child care places for Defence families.

The Defence Child Care Program is seeking to establish or expand before and after school care, vacation care, Family Day Care and occasional care places in areas where there is a Defence child care need, though a lack of available child care workers is hindering the process.

Points of contact for the Defence Child Care Program are:

Ms Linda Godwin      02 6266 4428  
[Linda.Godwin@defence.gov.au](mailto:Linda.Godwin@defence.gov.au)

Mrs Carol McDonald      02 6266 3102  
[Carol.McDonald@defence.gov.au](mailto:Carol.McDonald@defence.gov.au)

Ms Jennifer Smith      02 6266 4893  
[Jennifer.Smith@defence.gov.au](mailto:Jennifer.Smith@defence.gov.au)

Please also visit the DCO website below for additional information on child care programs.

[www.dco.dod.gov.au](http://www.dco.dod.gov.au)

## Review of DHA's Performance Begins

The contract between DHA and Defence for providing relocation services is being reviewed after complaints during the recent posting period indicated that ADF members did not receive the high level of service they deserve at the height of the peak posting period.

"Depending on the outcome of the review, a decision will be made as to whether DHA will continue to provide this service," Mr Ken Moore, Head of Service Delivery, Corporate Services and Infrastructure Group said.

"This is a very important time for ADF members and their families and we aim to make sure that the problems experienced during this recent posting cycle are not repeated," Mr Moore said.

DHA took over relocation services on 1 July last year and reviewed its processes in August after initial feedback indicated that their processes were not satisfactory.

The majority of complaints were about non-payment of entitlements and lack of communication about the flaws in the system.

During November, Defence decided to suspend negotiation of the Relocations Agreement due to DHA's performance and pending an independent review which commenced at the end of the peak posting period in January.

At the same time Defence put in place a number of temporary measures to help DHA, including establishing a safety-net system for entitlements.

The review was due to be completed in early March and a decision will soon be made about the future of the contract.



## Happy 10th Birthday to Marilla House

Marilla House in Rockingham, Western Australia, celebrated its 10th birthday on 23 September 2001. The centre has been welcoming Defence families and the local community through its doors since 1991.

The birthday was a great success with 60 people celebrating with a cake, speeches from our honoured guests, and from our chairperson Joanna Winkler. We also had a jumping castle for the children, as well as some craft activities, which the children thought were wonderful.

Our guests included the Mayor of Rockingham, Chris Elliott and his wife Ann; LCDR Tim Cunningham of DCO Rockingham; and the Commanding Officer of HMAS DARWIN, Trevor Jones. Also present were Mark McGowan our local Member of Parliament (MLA) and Yogi Nourse of DCO Rockingham.

The cake cutting was done by one of our honoured guests, Yogi Nourse. Yogi was one of the founders of the centre back in 1991. Yogi plays an important role in the centre as a Family Liaison Officer for DCO in Rockingham.

Marilla House is run by a small voluntary group of partners. The centre offers services such as playgroups, workshops, lectures and lots more.



The centre provides Defence families with a wonderful and friendly place to unwind, meet new friends, and learn new skills as well as offering many activities for their children.

Places like Marilla House become especially valuable to Defence partners when their partners are away on deployment. It can sometimes be very hard to be on our own for long periods of time. This is when the friends that we meet here become our shoulders to cry on, or someone to have a laugh with and lighten the load.

We would like to thank not only the people involved with the preparation of the 10th Birthday, but also the people involved with the centre on a daily basis, including all of the children.

We hope that the next ten years will be even more successful for Marilla House and that Defence families in Rockingham continue to enjoy the many activities that we offer.

If you want to know more about what we do, please give us a call:

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