

defence

FAMILY

MATTERS

December 2001

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

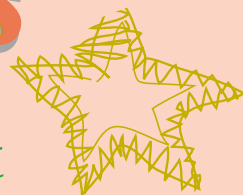
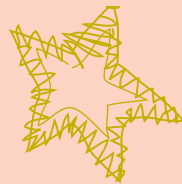
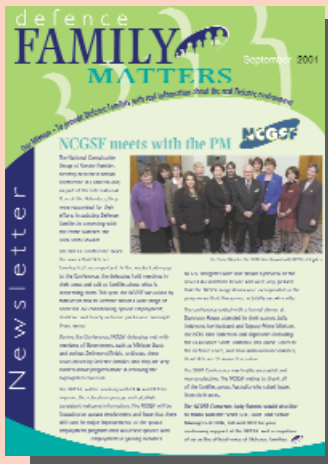


Newsletter

Merry

Christmas

from all of us here at
defence FAMILY MATTERS
to you and your family



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Military Super

Superhomeloans

As a member of Military Super or DFRDB you can now apply for a discounted home loan from Super Members Home Loans. The Military Super and DFRDB Boards have joined with more than 100 other super funds in offering this valuable ancillary benefit to you.

Super Members Home Loans has been in existence now for more than six years and is continuing to grow within one of Australia's most competitive markets. This year has seen its loans pass the \$4 billion mark, making Super Members Home Loans one of the biggest non-bank lenders in this country.

Super Members Home Loans consistently delivers one of the lowest standard variable interest rates available. CANNEX Mortgage Star Ratings gives Super Members Home Loans a five star rating, assessing against more than 3 000 mortgage products.

The main features of the loan offer are:

- a low variable rate - currently 5.74% per annum*;
- 1st mortgage security required (not available in conjunction with a Defence Force home loan);
- no application fee;
- same rate for owner occupied and investment loans;
- no fees for electronic re-draw.

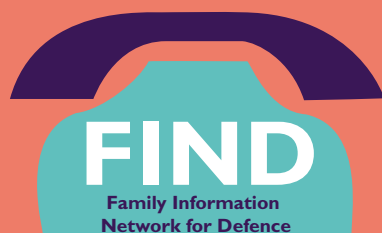
You can take advantage of this five star deal whether you're purchasing, building or just wanting to refinance your existing loan. This includes properties purchased for investment purposes.

To find out more visit the web site www.membersequity.com.au or phone Super Member Home Loans on 1300 654 990.

Contact ComSuper
 13 23 66

www.comsuper.gov.au

* Fees and Charges are payable.
 Current standard variable rate is 5.74% (effective 7th October 2001) and subject to change. Conditions apply.



1800 020 031

for any Defence personnel questions



A Personal Message from the NCGSF Convenor

Hi everyone!

I've written to you all before - in *defenceFAMILYMATTERS* or your local newsletter - but never on a personal note. After everything that has happened in the world lately, I really wanted to say something to you and let you know how much we care for you - the families of our wonderful men and women in uniform.

I have been married to my lovely fella for 12 years now. He's in the Navy and we have had a lot of living in those years. I have followed him through lengthy deployments, the Gulf War and through Timor. We've had four children, various vehicles, numerous pets and countless arguments.

But I'd do anything for him like follow him around the country and set up home time after time. I'll even watch him go to war; I'll be alone for endless months, waiting for him to come home to me. I'll write letters, take the garbage out, wait for the mailman, go to work, cry on the phone and pray that he's safe.

My civilian friends can't believe I'll do all of this - but I'm not the only one.

If you have ever been on your own while your partner is deployed or away for a lengthy period - you know what I am talking about.

Some typical moments you may relate to:

- missing them terribly,
- eating uncooked crumpets that your kids have made you when they pretend you are Dad on 'Fathers day'
- another wedding- on your own!
- fighting with the whipper snipper
- having a little (or big) cry
- the birth of a baby - without their dad seeing them take their first breath

- Being brave when you hear a noise outside
- Another birthday cake - that you bought for yourself!

When you love someone in uniform - it can be very hard. But you have friends!!

There are countless spouses that have been through what you are going through - talk to them, get support from them!

Defence also has support for you in the Defence Community Organisation 1800 020 031 and the National Welfare Coordination Centre 1800 801 026. Call them if you need them!

No-one will think less of you. No-one will think you are not coping. Actually the opposite - those of us that have been through a deployment of any kind, knows how good it can be to have a cuppa with someone who knows what you are feeling or go to dinner with a friend!

When my husband deploys again - I get comfort from another thought. He goes with the dedicated and professional men and women of our Defence Force. He's in pretty good hands!

So please remember that many of us know what you are going through, many of us will go through it again and there is support there for you - you just have to use it!

Also - stay away from your whipper snipper - they really are more vicious than they look!

Please take care of yourself and keep in touch!

Judy Swann can be contacted on
02 6266 2768

or email judy.swann@cbr.defence.gov.au

Or check out our website on

www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ncgsf

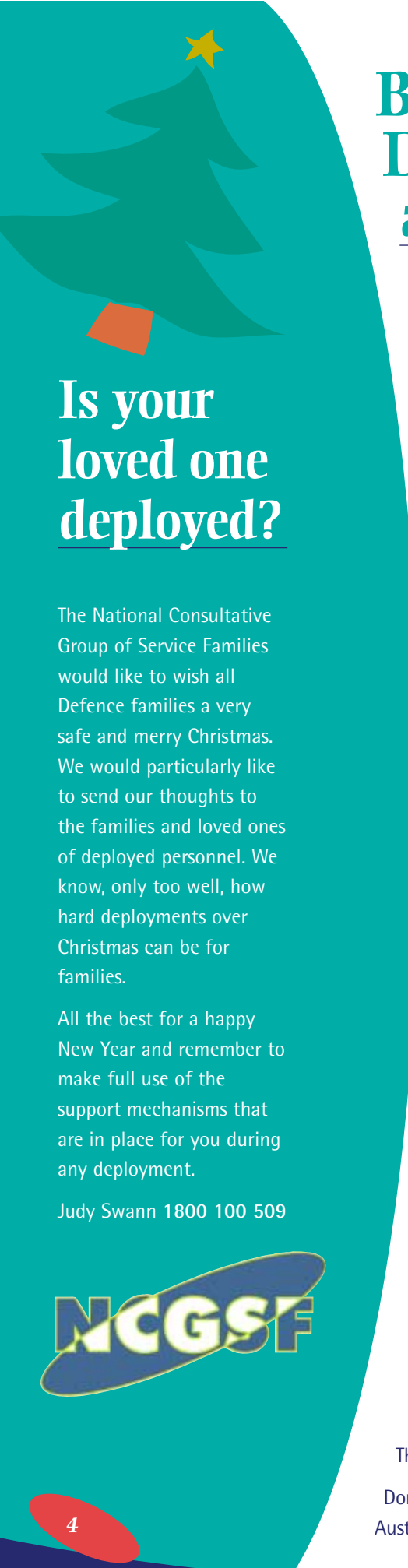


NCGSF Vacancy

Due to posting, the position of NCGSF National Delegate in Western Australia will become vacant in December 2001. This voluntary position must be filled by a spouse of a full-time serving member residing in Western Australia. 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.

Please call Nicole Burchill on 08 9527 6876 or Judy Swann 1800 100 509.

NCGSF



Is your loved one deployed?

The National Consultative Group of Service Families would like to wish all Defence families a very safe and merry Christmas. We would particularly like to send our thoughts to the families and loved ones of deployed personnel. We know, only too well, how hard deployments over Christmas can be for families.

All the best for a happy New Year and remember to make full use of the support mechanisms that are in place for you during any deployment.

Judy Swann 1800 100 509



Bruce Scott Farewells Defence Personnel and their Families

In bidding farewell as Minister for Veteran's Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister of Defence, Bruce Scott has expressed his thanks to the men and women of the Australian Defence Force, saying it had been an honour to represent both those who are serving, and those who have served.

'During my time as Minister for Veteran's Affairs and my term as Minister Assisting the Minister of Defence, I have had the great privilege to meet and work closely with many veterans and serving personnel, as well as their families.

'These people are indeed a very special group of Australians.'

Mr Scott wished his successor, Danna Vale, the best of luck with her new role.

'I am confident Danna, like I, will find her portfolio responsibilities as one of the more personally gratifying and rewarding opportunities that one could wish to experience.'

Mr Scott thanked his wife, Joan, and his Ministerial and Electorate staff for the loyalty and support they had given him during his time as Minister.



Army Digs Deep for Families in Need

Army members turning up for work at Robertson Barracks on the 10th of October were asked to 'dig deep' to raise funds for Defence families who have someone with special needs.



The Defence Special Needs Support Group provides assistance for people who have for instance, learning difficulties, chronic illness, intellectual disabilities, Cerebral Palsy, and mental health problems.

The Defence Special Needs Support Group covers the needs of both children and adults, with all monies raised providing support, information and assistance to families with special needs.

Defence Special Needs Support Group National Coordinator, Margaret Fisk, says 'special needs' is a broad category for anyone requiring additional medical treatment, therapy, or education support.

With no target set for the national fundraising campaign, Margaret Fisk says the monies collected will be used for the ongoing funding of their 1800 information line, as well local projects to help families in need.

The Dig Deep For a Dollar Day campaign raised \$1200 at Robertson Barracks.

Donations can still be made directly through Def Credit branches throughout Australia.



Welcome to the Australian Defence Force Family - Partners in Defence

This new program, Welcome to the ADF Family-Partners in Defence will be trialed in Brisbane early in 2002.

The program is particularly aimed at new military families but will welcome participation by any serving member and/or their partner, family or close friends. The program will give participants a unique opportunity to:

- learn about the Australian Defence Force mission and how military life is likely to impact on family functioning,
- develop an understanding of the range of support services and entitlements that can be accessed by Defence families, and
- network with key support personnel as well as other Defence families living close by.

"Welcome to the ADF Family-Partners in Defence is an initiative that confirms Defence's genuine interest in the welfare of its people and their families," said Lindsey Kranz, Director General of the Defence Community Organisation.

He added, "members and their families need access to realistic and comprehensive information about the military lifestyle, as early as possible, so that families can anticipate and plan for the demands that may be made on them."

Defence knows that the requirements on members to be mobile and offer unrestricted Service present significant challenges for their families. It understands that regularly moving the family and living without the member whilst he or she is absent on exercises and deployments can cause difficulties in terms of traditional family support, friendships, spouse employment, family income and continuity in education especially for children. It also recognises that separation and mobility can result in a significant increase in the day-to-day physical and emotional demands and responsibilities placed on the family.

Therefore, the Welcome to the ADF Family-Partners in Defence course will not only share useful information

with members and their families. It will also help families build networks of support as well as strategies that have been proven to help members and families successfully balance the demands of the military alongside their personal and family requirements.

Mr Kranz advised that participation in the course should be viewed as a very positive, proactive step taken by members and their families to ensure they are well-informed and well-prepared for the demands they will face throughout their military career.

At this stage in the course planning, participants in the Welcome to the ADF Family-Partners in Defence course will be able to choose to attend a one-day session, or four two-hour sessions spread over a four-week period. A pilot to trial the course will be held in Brisbane at the end of January 2002. It is expected that courses should be offered on a national basis by July 2002. The course content will also be posted on the DCO Website www.dco.dod.gov.au by mid 2002.

The program can be attended by members and/or their families regardless of whether they are new to Defence or not.

Participation is voluntary and there are already a number of people who have expressed interest in attending as well as a number of Defence families who have contributed to the development of the program.

If you are interested in participating in the Welcome to the ADF Family-Partners In Defence course, or have suggestions about the sort of information that Defence families need 'up front' in order to help them negotiate the demands of military life, please contact the DCO Project Officer.

Contact: Janet Stodulka

Address: Building B1 Victoria Barracks
 Petrie Terrace, Brisbane, Qld, 4001

Phone: 07 32334415

Email: janet.stodulka@defence.gov.au





SAS Regiment Auxiliary

The Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) Ladies Auxiliary was established in 1965 as a support group for partners of troops overseas on active service in Borneo and then in Vietnam, providing material support such as socks and Vegemite for the troops. Following the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, the SASR Ladies Auxiliary continued with similar but expanded aims.

Following a name change in 2000, the SASR Auxiliary (Inc) now aims to provide support and friendship to the SASR community and to raise money for charitable organisations. In keeping with its charter, the committee produces a bi-monthly newsletter, runs a playgroup and organises social functions for its members. The Auxiliary operates from its home, the Auxiliary House, situated within Campbell Barracks.

The Auxiliary has a proud history of fund raising. This year saw the 28th annual Art Show raise over \$25,000 for charity with the main beneficiary this year being the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Not only does the Art Show serve as a fantastic fundraiser but it is also a wonderful community event attracting over 800 guests on opening night alone and requiring the work of more than 100 volunteers over a weekend.

Due to the busy nature of the SAS Regiment, the Auxiliary stands at all times prepared to meet the changing needs of its members and forms a crucial part of the Regiment's Family Support Policy.

Contact: SASR Auxiliary
 Address: Campbell Barracks
 SWANBOURNE WA 6010

Cadets have a new home



The Directorate of Defence Force Cadets was launched on 17 September as part of the ongoing ADF Cadets enhancement program. At the launch, The then Parliamentary Secretary Dr Brendan Nelson said the new Directorate was the first step in establishing a cohesive management structure for the Navy, Army and Air Force Cadets programs. Dr Nelson welcomed Major General Darryl Low Choy as the first Director-General of Cadets along with the civilian and military staff who make up the Directorate.



MAJGEN Darryl Low Choy and Dr Brendan Nelson launching the Directorate



DefenceFAMILYMATTERS is proud to bring you a spotlight on one of our hard working Army units doing wonderful work out there in the Community. Please let us know if you would like to see a spotlight on your partner's unit, ship or squadron.

ATSIC Army Community Assistance Program

A partnership between ATSIC, the Department of Health and Aged Care and the Army has the aim of 'the improvement of environmental health and living conditions with remote Aboriginal communities.'

The ATSIC Army Community Assistance Program (or AACAP) started in 1997 and has seen the Army deliver around \$18m of direct infrastructure improvements to nine communities throughout Australia. During AACAP 2001, the Army's strong association with remote northern communities continued with the Northern Territory communities of Yarralin, Lingara and Mialuni agreeing to participate in the 2001 program.

During May to September, the Sydney based 17th Construction Squadron (an engineering construction unit of approximately 180 personnel) having deployed some 5000 km by road, undertook construction tasks in support of AACAP 2001. The tasks included:

- new community sub divisions (inclusive of water, power, and sewerage services and road works) and
- housing and facilities (inclusive of health / care centres and airstrips).

An additional benefit was the opportunity for local community members to take part in formal skills transfer training from our highly trained and skilled Army engineers, or Sappers. This skills transfer training included courses in:

- general construction
- carpentry
- plumbing and
- basic plant operations.

Army Medical Officers, Nursing Officers and Medics deployed from the 1st and



2nd Health Support Battalions took the

opportunity to conduct clinics and training, while the health related construction tasks were being delivered during May to September.

Several other Royal Australian Engineers units joined with 17th Construction Squadron to work together and achieve the large task list for AACAP 2001.

Support included:

- 21 Construction Squadron (located in Brisbane) provided integral support to the project throughout the provision of both specialist construction and quarrying personnel.
- 21 Construction Regiment (an Army Reserve unit located in Sydney) also provided personnel to fill critical trade gaps and to undertake the construction of a new community house in Yarralin.
- Combat engineer elements from the 1st and 3rd Combat Engineer Regiments (located in Darwin and Townsville) also provided critical trade support to undertake community tasks in Mialuni.

AACAP 2001 has been a wonderful opportunity for 17 Construction Squadron to carry out realistic training in preparation for operations, and to provide much needed health infrastructure improvements in the Yarralin, Lingara and Mialuni communities.

It is a credit to the units that carry out this work for up to four months at a time, as the communities

selected for AACAP are isolated, provide harsh working environments and limited infrastructure. Despite these challenges our soldiers are able to complete construction tasks, that would be considered challenging even in less extreme environments, on time, in budget and to the highest quality.



Defence Community Organisation Western Australia

The DCO WA Team consists of 15 staff who are located at our three DCO locations:

Leeuwin Barracks, East Fremantle on **08 9311 2310**
DCO shopfronts at Rockingham on **08 9553 5138**;
and RAAF Pearce on **08 9571 7016**.

Our mailing address is DCO WA, Locked Bag 5001,
Fremantle WA 6959.

Regional Director Bob Cowper
A/Area Manager Jeannie Thompson
Military Support Officer (Leeuwin Bks)
WO1 Steve Best OAM
Military Support Officer (Rockingham)
LCDR Tim Cunningham
Admin support Wendy Black
Admin support Wendy Gould
REDLO Geoff Curran
Social Worker Tania Girona
Social Worker Carol Jacobs
Social Worker Marion Palmer
Social Worker Kathy Street
Family Liaison Officer Nikki Bruechert
Rockingham Office
Family Liaison Officer Yogi Nourse
Rockingham Office
Family Liaison Officer Pat Renoux
RAAF Pearce Office

The WA area consists of Army, Navy and RAAF. The major country areas include Exmouth and Karratha.

In the previous 12 months we have seen a changeover staff with new social workers coming on board.

East Timor

Family and friends of personnel deployed to East Timor joined with DCO and Army Families WA Inc. for a number of activities including barbecues at Irwin Barracks.

Ships' Contact

In September 2001, DCO joined with the Commanding Officer of HMAS STIRLING and other support services to hold a morning tea for families of West based ships. Over 260 people attended and were addressed by the Commanding Officer of HMAS STIRLING and the Regional Director of DCO.

During the year Combined Contact Group has met for morning teas and a chat and have been supported by DCO.

International Year of The Volunteer

The Army Museum of WA in conjunction with DCO Perth held a morning tea on the 11th November 2001 to thank the many volunteers who assist in the very successful operation of the museum. There are 80 volunteers and board members who give their time freely in maintaining the museum and also work as guides for the many tour groups and tourists who visit. The museum has a fine display of Army artillery, uniforms and other memorabilia, which reflects the personal stories, and history of the Australian Army.

DCO WA acknowledges the valuable contribution of volunteers who have given their time and energy to community groups and in particular Defence support groups. Thank you to all the volunteers past and present.

Spouse Employment Assistance Program

Two information days were held in the first half of the year in Rockingham and Karrakatta. This time it was an information expo with guest speakers and lunch. Childcare was also provided. Application forms for the temporary employment register with Defence and to register for employment with Defence civilian contractors are also available. During the year, spouses are invited to contact DCO for further information and contact details for employment services including the

free job search training. Information expos will be held again in 2002 and spouses can register for an invitation and details.

Defence Family Support Funding Program

The three areas of Bullsbrook, Karrakatta and Rockingham were busy with information and prioritising meetings convened by DCO in March and April 2001. A number of new applicants applied for funding this year along with the Defence family support groups and community houses. Some of the community groups funded include Nursing Mothers Association, Little Smarties Playgroup and the Rockingham Women's Health and Information Service.

Childcare

The manager of the Defence Child Care Program visited in October 2001 to discuss childcare and visit the Sunny Centre and Flying Start childcare centres. The situation in Rockingham is being reviewed.

Families with Special Needs

The manager of the Families with Special Needs Program also visited to provide information on some changes to the program. Families may contact DCO for information about the program.

Emergency House

DCO takes bookings for accommodation at the house in emergency situations for personnel and families.

Briefings

Staff have presented and attended briefings for military and their families to provide information on a range of areas such as Welcome to WA, education assistance, suicide prevention, postnatal depression, posting turbulence and deployments.

Welcome to WA Pack

For new families, a welcome to WA pack has now been developed and printed. Copies have been sent out and are available on request. DHA have commenced sending these packs to families on posting.

Student Social Workers

Some of the new faces at DCO have been student social workers on placement for a few months from the University of WA and Curtin University.

Expanded Region

WA has now joined with the Northern Territory as a combined region sharing one Regional Director. This arrangement appears to be working well.

Next Year 2002

Next year we will say farewell to one of our Military Support Officers and welcome to a new Army Military Support Officer. A new baby will be born to one staff member early in 2002, another staff member is getting married at the end of this year, and one staff member is moving into the new house she has had built.

Current World Situation

DCO WA acknowledges the tragic consequences of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Uncertainties in personnel movements have subsequently affected many families. Families have been invited to join DCO and others on a number of occasions and further events in support of families will be held. Our ships and personnel have also been involved in the asylum seekers rescue and relocation. This has meant delays in personnel coming home from duty. Internet access from the ships has been off and on so information has not been as constant as families would like. DCO WA has conducted telephone calls to hundreds of families and spouses to pass on information and advise of invitations.



Don't forget to get your Application For Relocation (AFR) in as early as possible. This will get your removal underway and also get you onto the new HomeFind system as soon as possible. The NCGSF has worked very hard with DHA on your behalf to get the right information on screen. However houses can only be entered onto the system once DHA know that it's becoming vacant. Please get those AFR's back to help the whole system work well!

If you can think of any improvements, please let us know! Also, please feel free to contact us with any suggestions or comments about your relocation experience.

Air-conditioners in Darwin

The NCGSF enjoyed a great moment recently when something we have worked towards for years finally paid off. Minister Scott announced that DHA homes in Darwin will be retrofitted with Air Conditioning in all bedrooms. We have worked for many years to improve this aspect of life for Defence families in Darwin. Whilst the Minister specifically mentioned us in his press release, it is important that we thank the many others who also worked towards this great announcement.

On behalf of the Defence families in Darwin, we would like to thank Brigadier Mike Silverstone (Commander, Northern Command), Admiral Russ Shalders (Head Defence Personnel Executive), Brian Bell and Peter Redston (Directorate of Housing Policy), John Murray (Manager DHA, NT) and Minister Bruce Scott.

A special mention must go to Peta Renwick, NCGSF Delegate for the NT who met with many officials from Defence, DHA as well as Minister Scott, Minister Reith, Senator Tambling and others to express the need in Darwin for air conditioners in all bedrooms. There is no truth to the rumour that Peta organised senior officials from Defence to meet with her and local families in the hottest house she could find in Durack. Well maybe it's a little true....

National Conference

The NCGSF Conference was recently held in Canberra and was a great success. Every National Delegate attended the conference with the issues that are important to Defence families in their regions. We were fortunate to have some very senior members of Defence, DHA and Toll in attendance. We had the opportunity to discuss some of the new initiatives being developed within Defence like HomeFind and the 'Welcome to the ADF family' program. We also talked to them about your concerns regarding life as a Defence family including spouse employment, housing and education.

The NCGSF Delegate in your area will hold a meeting soon to talk to local families about the Conference. This meeting will include details of some of the new developments within Defence and the ways that Defence are addressing your concerns.

Please contact the Delegate in your area for the time and venue.

Have you returned recently from Overseas?

The NCGSF is interested to hear from anyone who has recently returned from an overseas posting. How were you supported

during your transition back into Australia: schools, work, homes, cars etc. Please pass on your story to us on 1800 100 509 or judy.swann@cbr.defence.gov.au

Are you Moving?

As we mentioned in an earlier edition of *defenceFAMILYMATTERS*, there are several new developments within Defence to make your relocation easier. DHA has a new website, TollTransitions has an inventory system 'online' and DCO have education and spouse employment information on their new website.

You can find all of these at:

www.dha.gov.au

www.tolltransitions.com.au

www.dco.dod.gov.au

Review into ADF Remuneration

As many of you may know, the recommendations of this review lead by Major General Barry Nunn (Retd) were recently released.

There were many recommendations that may affect Defence families and the NCGSF will be consulting with Defence when these are considered.

If you would like more information, you can read the recommendations at

www.defence.gov.au/remuneration or you can call the Delegate in your region.

Housing

The NCGSF is particularly pleased that the Minister has heard our concerns regarding the current classification and allocation systems for DHA homes. Defence and DHA have undertaken to review these processes and consult with the NCGSF. The NCGSF will also be working with DHA on the locations of DHA houses in relation to bases, schools and the spouse's employment. This is an area of great concern to many families and DHA have already agree to look at several areas where this is a problem.

Another Year Over...

On behalf of the NCGSF Delegates and Area Representatives, may we wish you a very Merry Christmas and safe travels during the holiday season. If you are relocating, we hope you get a great house, a great job and the kids settle into school well.

Please feel free to contact us at any time and our details are on our website www.defence.gov.au/dpe/ncgsf



Celebrating our Northern Region Defence Volunteers

A cool breeze was drifting across the calm waters of Darwin harbour, ablaze in the orange light of sunset. Another balmy tropical evening was providing an ideal backdrop to the clink of champagne glasses, as the Northern Region Defence Volunteers gathered for a cocktail party at the Cruise Ship Facility out on the Darwin Wharf. Over a hundred people had gathered to celebrate the International Year of the Volunteer.

Sponsored primarily by the Defence Community Organisation and 1st Brigade with the able support of the NCGSF, the Northern Region Defence Community lead by BRIG D. Roche thanked the tireless efforts and contributions made by the large number of Defence volunteers and their families.

A simple thank you was the theme of the night as certificates were handed out in recognition of the work and for the large array of services provided by the volunteers. It was acknowledged that these efforts go a long way to improving the quality of military life in Darwin. Acknowledgment also went to the quiet volunteer who goes about his or her voluntary work for no other reason than to do good in the community they live in.

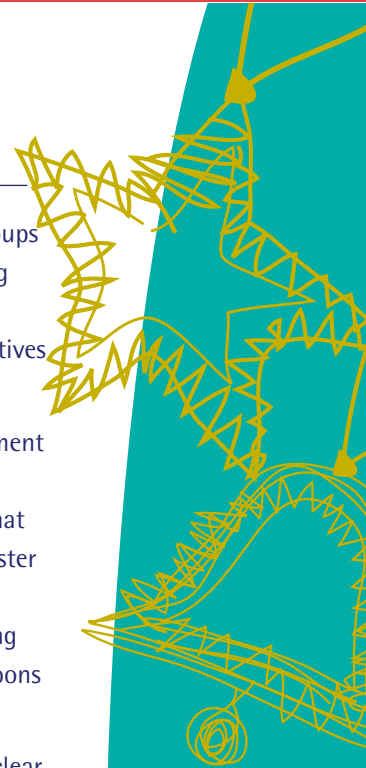
The classical tunes of the cello and violin players, kindly provided by the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, mixed in harmony with the hum of conversation and the chatter of laughter as old friends and new got together to celebrate the high status in which we regard our volunteers. It was a casual night, the only uniforms were those of the 1st Brigade catering staff circulating through the crowd with little delicacies on silver platters.

In amongst the party goers and volunteer groups were senior officers from all services including COMNORCOM BRIG M. Silverstone, the Area Manager DCO Annette Collins and representatives from all the Defence support organisations.

A highlight to the evening was an announcement made by the Northern Region NCGSF Representative, Peta Renwick, informing us that an approval had just been signed by the Minister for all DHA houses in Darwin to be fully airconditioned. This was met with a resounding cheer that rustled the yellow and purple balloons festooned around the room.

In all it was a great party as the stars of the clear tropical sky twinkled in the champagne glasses, the laughter and happy pride was the best recognition all of us could provide, for and with, our hard working volunteers.

Again a big thank you to all our Darwin Defence Volunteers, whether working in the Defence community or out in the community in general, your work, your support, and your commitment is truly appreciated.



Plan to Arrive, Alive

Another year is almost over and for many there's not much time left before a well earned break. There are so many things to do before setting off on the Christmas holidays on annual leave both at work and at home so there's always the inevitable last minute rush to get everything done. For many Defence personnel, Christmas, or any period of leave for that matter, means travelling in order to be with friends and family.

Many on their last day of work for the year hope for an early knock-off so they can race back to their home or barracks, throw the bags in the boot, pile in the car with friends and family and hit the road in order to beat the traffic and to get where they're going as soon as possible. Unfortunately in many cases there will have been little thought about the trip itself. How many times have you heard it said 'It's OK - I'll just keep going until I feel tired and then I'll stop' or 'We'll keep driving and just swap drivers'.

Since July 1996 until October 2001, 66 service personnel have been killed as a direct result of motor vehicle related crashes and another eight killed after been struck by vehicles. By far the majority of these have been off duty deaths with excessive speed, fatigue and alcohol being common causes.

Could they have been avoided? Absolutely!

Police Investigators don't refer to 'fatal accidents' they call them 'crashes'. There is always a reason and true accidents are very rare.

Planning is the key - we do it at work all the time - when going on exercise or Operations whether by air, sea or land, we do it and we do it well. Which route do we take, how far is it, when do we take breaks, fuel and food, orders are issued detailing every detail about the move. Unfortunately when we get in or on our own vehicles it's often a case of going as far and fast as we can in order to arrive as soon as possible.

In addition to the annual Defence Highway Rest Stop Program, this year the Defence Safety Management Agency (DSMA) has launched its 'Plan to Arrive Alive' road safety campaign. From the first week in December, units can expect to start seeing road safety posters, inserts in service papers and periodicals and information on the web.

This year do something different, don't leave your safe arrival to chance. On DSMA's Intranet and Internet sites, a number of tools, information sheets, and links are available to assist personnel in planning their trip. Included are such things as strip maps showing distances and route details between major towns and cities, a trip planner to record details of your proposed route and a blood alcohol calculator to assist with responsible alcohol consumption for those who plan to have one or two drinks along the way.

Plan to arrive alive this Christmas and come back safe next year.

Safety Helpline: 1800 019 955

Intranet: <http://dsma.dcb.defence.gov.au>

Internet: www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dsma



Christmas is just around the corner...

Plan to arrive alive!

Defence Safety
DSMA
Management Agency

Plan your trip via:
<http://dsma.dcb.defence.gov.au>
<http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dsma>

Ways to Boost a Child's Self Esteem

- 1 Give lots of kisses and cuddles to babies and young children
- 2 Smile and talk to them from the earliest age
- 3 Be consistent - if you say you will be somewhere or do something at a certain time, do so if you possibly can
- 4 Give praise for things achieved - like making beds, cleaning their own shoes, cleaning teeth carefully etc.
- 5 Tell children you love them - even when you think they don't deserve it.
- 6 Explain to children that parents need time to discuss things too. Children often interrupt but as they grow older they will realise they can remember to tell you later and will interrupt less often. (They LOVE interrupting when you are on the phone.)
- 7 Share daily activities - let your child plan a meal and help prepare it. Share a story. Have meals together at the table (without TV!)
- 8 Care for yourself. You need time out and rewards to cope with the demands of being a parent. Plan for these regularly, go for a walk, play your favourite tape or CD. If you care for yourself you can more easily care for your children.
- 9 Stay calm and be fair. You are the adult and your child's teacher. Your child will copy your behaviour. When you feel really stressed, as all parents sometimes do, get support and talk it over with someone.
- 10 Reinforce and encourage your child's good behaviour. Use praise or a special game or spend time with your child.
- 11 Spend time with your child. Play with your child, have some fun times or read together.
- 12 When children misbehave let them know they are okay - it's their behaviour that is not okay.
- 13 Talk together. Talk about every day things as well as big issues with older children.
- 14 Catch your child being good and comment on what you have noticed.
- 15 Children feel valued and important when family and friends watch them participate in school and weekend sports.
- 16 Take an active part in your child's schooling - help out at school where possible and show interest in their school activities
- 17 Laugh with your children not at them.
- 18 Have you had a hug today.

Reprinted from NAPCAN "30 Ways to Boost a Child's Confidence".

Joan Gilbert - Manager Education Policy and Special Needs.

Telephone 02 6266 4427.



Family Support Funding Program 2002/03

The Defence Family Support Funding Program (FSFP), managed by the Defence Community Organisation (DCO), provides grants for Defence families to undertake family support projects to help them to overcome some of the impacts of mobility. The program recognises that Defence families want to be able to help themselves to the greatest extent possible and to determine community needs in their area.

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 assists them in their area;
- support self-help projects that will assist a significant number of Defence families; and
- assist not-for-profit groups with a project or service that specifically targets Defence families.

For example, FSFP provides funds to aid the operation of Defence community/neighbourhood houses, local Defence community newsletters, craft groups, spouse support groups, skills courses and welcome groups.

Since it started, considerable infrastructure has been set in place through the funding provided by FSFP. Defence families can now have confidence that when they move to a new location there will usually be an active family support group offering a variety of activities for partners and their children.

New application process

A new FSFP OnLine application form is now available on the DCO website, and has been introduced to replace the previous electronic application process. The online application form is available from the FSFP OnLine link under the 'Grants' section at www.dco.dod.gov.au It is expected that the new web-based application form will overcome some of the difficulties previously experienced.

The online application form has been developed to be user-friendly and can be accessed easily from any computer with Internet access. To ensure that all application details are securely protected, an SSL 'lock' similar to that used by banks and financial institutions, has been built into the FSFP OnLine site.

If you or your group is interested in applying for a grant, it is important to firstly read and understand the revised FSFP guidelines to ensure that you are eligible to receive a grant. The guidelines can be found on the DCO website under the Grants section.

For further information on the FSFP, and ideas on grant projects, please contact your local DCO office or **FIND** on **1800 020 031**.



Defence Community Organisation Queensland Update

DCO Cairns

Ten out of Ten - that was the score for a 100% success rate of job placement for the lucky ten spouses who attained jobs after successfully completing the Spouse Employment Seminar.

The Mobile Students Support Group, which is a forum of local educators initiated by the Regional Education Liaison Officer, continues to develop effective strategies and resources to assist Defence children. Our DCO thanks to the local commanders who provided a wonderful goodwill function for key local educators to raise their awareness of Defence family issues.

The Defence Social Workers in Cairns travel to the remote areas of Papua New Guinea, Thursday Island and Weipa. The scheduled trips by the DCO Social Workers and Regional Education Liaison Officer (North Queensland), supplemented by regular phone contact and e-mails, are valued by members and families in these remote areas.

DCO Townsville

Members and their families, who participate in the Peaceful Partners, Peaceful Parents and Peaceful Kids programs in Townsville, are most positive in their comments. Originally DCO Townsville trialled these innovative projects in partnership with Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service who now auspice these programs. DCO Townsville staff conduct these courses to help ADF families enhance their strategies to manage prolonged and repeated separations.

Again the Information Expo was a great hit for new arrivals who were able to access local information by meeting service providers and volunteers hosting the numerous booths.

Forty partners attended the Spouse Employment Seminar early this month and found the guest speakers provided timely relevant information about local positions. Likewise, job seekers are heavily booking access to the DCO Spouse Employment Assistance Program computer to write applications and job search on the Internet.

DCO Family Support Funding investment in three local schools to employ part time transition teacher aides has

achieved a range of welcoming and farewelling initiatives for Defence children.

Members and families in Mt Isa are included in the range of activities provided by this office.

DCO Amberley / Darling Downs

Amberley staff welcomed the positive feedback from their Hey Dad parenting course, which assisted RAAF fathers with new understanding and skills.

A very successful Employment Information Seminar was run by Amberley staff in partnership with Saint Mary's Employment Group. The Seminar was well attended and staff received excellent reviews from participants.

Likewise a Relocations Seminar was very well received.

A Dads Caring for Kids parenting course was such a big success, that on request, a further course has been scheduled for the near future.

The Toowoomba based team has developed a very good partnership with the Unit Welfare Officers on the Darling Downs through regular training sessions that they undertake for these key staff. This enables the Unit Welfare Officers to develop further skills in assisting members directly or with referrals for help.

The Regional Educational Liaison Officer South Queensland regularly visits the Amberley, Toowoomba and Brisbane Offices to provide a local service to families and schools.

DCO Brisbane

DCO Brisbane had a particular focus in 2001 on providing opportunities for ADF members and their families to build on their knowledge and skills of ways to manage their military lifestyle.

This included presenting a range of courses that included focusing on parenting, relationship separation, balancing work and family needs and building relationships.

These courses included the Dads Caring for Kids course, which is held twice yearly and always well attended. The Relationship Separation Course for men was well attended and feedback was that it was a valuable experience for members. It will be conducted shortly.

By popular demand a course was also designed for women in the ADF to assist in balancing both work and parenting responsibilities. The course will occur prior to Christmas and is called 'Mums in the Military - A Balancing Act'.

A 'Relationship Enhancement' course presented jointly with Chaplains was a successful venture in assisting ADF members and their partners in building stronger relationships for the future.

Furthermore DCO Staff from this office provide services to Canungra and an area extending from Rockhampton to the Northern Rivers district of NSW.

Deployments

All of our staff members have been kept busy assisting members and families cope with the challenges of the impact of deployments including their reunion on return home. Each area has responded with a great team effort to the increasing demands of deployments.

Volunteers

The International Year of Volunteers was a timely catalyst for DCO to facilitate many ceremonies across the State where Certificates of Appreciation were presented to many volunteers.

At this time of heightened operations, the contribution of volunteers is significantly valued by the whole of Defence community.

A big thank you to all these valued people.

DCO Queensland contact details

Regional Director: 07 3233-4208

Regional Education Liaison Officer South QLD:
07 3233-4206

Regional Education Liaison Officer North QLD:
07 4771-1532


DCO Cairns Office: 07 4053-9300

DCO Townsville Office: 07 4771-1539

DCO Amberley Office: 07 5461-1678

DCO Brisbane Office: 07 3855-2822

Special Information for the Parents of Pre-School Kindergarten Children



Most children settle into school very easily, but things, which may appear to us to be a very small issue, upset a few children. The following list gives some of the things which other parents have found a little disturbing for their beginners, so that 'new to starting school' parents can prepare their child armed with a little more information.

Preparing your child for school:

- The children need to be able to recognise their own belongings, e.g. jumpers, school bags, drink bottles etc. It helps, therefore, if your child can recognise his / her own name - otherwise a symbol or picture may help. It is also desirable for children to know their address and telephone number, but don't worry if this is a problem.
- Teach your child to take the outer layer of clothing off e.g. jumper. Tying shoelaces is a terrible problem for teachers, and it does help if children can manage this. Shoes with a buckle or velcro may solve this problem.
- Children are expected to be able to use a handkerchief properly. See that the child brings one to school each day - a tissue will do.
- The playground can be a little frightening for a beginner, particularly for the only or timid child. There are large numbers of children, some quite large, milling around, and sometimes very noisy. The teachers will stay close to these children during the settling in period.
- In the classroom children are expected to be able to pack away their belongings, equipment and toys, so practice helps.
- Pack a lunch your child can cope with. Most children for instance eat less at school than at home, and it is better to pack too little and wait for the child to ask for more. Many children find glad wrap and similar plastic wrappings difficult to open, so use something easier to handle. Also some children get upset if they cannot 'get' into their banana, orange etc. so start them off at home. Drink bottles can be a problem as they are often hard to open and easily lost.

If you are familiar with the school routine, you can help the child with any worries or anxieties that arise and cause confusion.

Talk with your child about the safest way home, and the basics of road safety. However, it may be worth pointing out that the child does not leave the school at his / her own whim. The teacher is the person taking care of the child and must know they are safe at all times.

Joan Gilbert
Manager, Education Policy and Special Needs
02 6266 4427



Darwin Homes to be Fully Air-Conditioned

A program has been announced to ensure that all Service Residences/married quarters in Darwin are fully air-conditioned. All new homes built by DHA in Darwin since May 1999 have been fully air-conditioned but homes built before that only had air-conditioning provided in living areas and two bedrooms.

The new program will see about 1800 houses (on-base, off-base DHA owned and leased) upgraded to full air-conditioning. The program will cost \$3 million dollars and will be completed by DHA in the current financial year.



New Housing Choices for Married with Dependants Members

From the 25th of October this year, new and improved housing arrangements for both Members Without Dependants (often referred to as MWOD) and Members with Dependants (again, often referred to by the term MWD) were announced. These new arrangements will give Members Without Dependants greater choice over the type of housing they wish to live in, and at the same time, these new arrangements will give Members With Dependants some positive changes to current housing choices.

There are a number of beneficial flow-ons to accommodation arrangements for MWD as a result of the new arrangements:

- Contributions for MWD occupying a 2 bedroom Service Residence (married quarter), will be reduced to bring into their contribution into line with the contributions made by MWOD in non-sharing situations.
- Where 2 and 3 bedroom Service Residences (married quarters) are available, you now have a choice between occupying the either the 2 bedroom or the 3 bedroom residence. If you do choose to occupy the 3 bedroom residence, you will pay the higher contribution rate.
- MWD approved for Rent Allowance (RA) can now also choose between a 2 or a 3 bedroom RA ceiling and then pay the appropriate contribution for their choice. However, if you do opt for the lower ceiling/contribution then you will not be eligible for consideration of an excess ceiling rate.
- If you are classified as Married With Dependant and you were living in 2 bedroom accommodation (either SR or RA) before 25 October 2001, you should have already received a letter from the Defence Housing Authority outlining the change in entitlements. The contribution rates for MWD in two bedroom SR (including Inner City Apartments) will be automatically adjusted. Those MWD on RA who consider that they may benefit from the revised arrangements can apply to their local DHA Housing Management Centre for their RA to be re-assessed. They may elect the 2 bedroom ceiling and pay the appropriate contribution if they wish.

If you would like further information on how these new arrangements may affect you, please contact your local DHA Housing Management Centre. They will be happy to look at your personal housing situation and provide advice on the correct solution for your family.

Full information on the new accommodation arrangements can be obtained by accessing the Defence Personnel Executive Intranet site defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/dpe under 'hot issues, or by the Defence Personnel Executive Internet site at www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe_site/housing





L-R Rear: MAJ Marj Bullivant, CMDR Allan Vidler, WGCDR (AAFC) Graham Evans, LTCOL (AAC) Peter Christie, WGCDR John Anderson, LTCOL Greg Flinn, CMDR Richard Wallach ANC, MAJ (AAC) Peter Brown, Mr Patrick Foley, MAJ (AAC) Ian Cavanagh, Mr Mike Barrett, WGCDR Michael Rowe
Centre: LCDR Peter Barton ANC, SQNLDR (AAFC) Sherrill Lepp, SQNLDR (AAFC) Doug Oliver, Mr Ian Broad, WGCDR Lydia Stevens, MAJ (AAC) Max Neil, MAJ Phil Crawford, SGT (AAFC) Andrew Moller
Front: BRIG Michael Fairweather, CPO Dusty Goodluck, Kay Austin, MAJGEN Darryl Low Choy, FLTLT Nicole Brown, Mr John Stafford

Defence on Track with Cadet Safety Management

The ADF Cadets is a youth development organisation comprising over 25,000 young Australians and over 2,200 adult volunteer staff from 430 communities across the country.

Defence's sponsorship of the ADF Cadets – made up of the Navy, Army and Air Force Cadets programs – brings with it special challenges. For example, the majority of cadets are adolescents who have additional safety and workplace needs not found within other areas of Defence. Officers and Instructors of Cadets and cadets are not members of the ADF, but they are deemed to be Commonwealth employees for the purposes of OH&S legislation; and cadet activities are undertaken in military settings. As a result of these types of issues, Defence must put in place policies, training and procedures that meet legislative and workplace requirements while tailoring them to meet the needs of a volunteer youth development organisation.

A Directorate of Defence Force Cadets was formed in September to provide central management and direction for the three arms of the ADF Cadets. A key challenge for the new Directorate is to establish and maintain an integrated occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS) for the ADF Cadets that meshes with the overarching ADO safety management system.

At a recent weekend workshop held at RAAF Base Fairbairn, senior Defence and ADF Cadets personnel worked together to establish a framework for an occupational health and safety management system for the ADF Cadets.

Presentations and issues discussed included:

- Validation of Cadet Good Practice in Health and Safety
- Managing Youth and Risk
- Regulator Expectations
- Corporate Governance and Safety

- Building an Occupational Health and Safety Management System

Significant outcomes were achieved during the weekend workshop, including:

- A framework for a comprehensive cadet occupational health and safety management system
- Articulation of the ADF Cadets safety philosophy in an OH&S policy statement
- A safety training strategy for all ADF Cadets personnel
- A range a strategic objectives, targets and indicators for ADF Cadet safety.

In closing this first workshop MAJGEN Low Choy, Director General of the ADF Cadets, thanked all participants, remarking that their contribution and effort genuinely supported Defence's commitment to providing a quality youth development program in a military setting. MAJGEN Low Choy also noted that the ADF Cadets program constituted a significant investment in Australian youth and Australia's future.

Further workshops to progress specific elements of the ADF Cadets OHSMS will be convened in November and December 2001.

For more information and copies of the policy statement, please visit the ADF Cadets web sites. The ADF Cadets policy statement will also produced in hardcopy and distributed to all ADF Cadet Units and stakeholder organisations before Christmas 2001:

Internet <http://www.defence.gov.au/cadets/> and the Defence Safety Management Agency Intranet site at <http://dsma.dcb.defence.gov.au>.

Contact: Wing Commander Michael Rowe
Defence Safety Management Agency

Phone: 02 6266 3676



1800 IMSICK

A New Health Service for ADF Personnel within Australia

A toll free after-hours nationwide 1800 telephone health advisory service is now available for all permanent Australian Defence Force members within Australia.

This service, managed by the Joint Health Support Agency, will allow ADF personnel to discuss health concerns with trained health staff over the phone and to receive immediate advice as to where they need to go to receive appropriate investigations and treatment.

Introduction

An innovative free out-of-hours 1800 telephone advice service is now available to all permanent ADF personnel serving or on leave in Australia. Personnel will be able to ring and speak to ADF health staff about immediate health issues out-of-hours and receive advice and information on what they need to do. The advice will focus on the type of health care they need, the urgency of that need, and what they should do until they receive face-to-face medical attention. It will also allow the local Area Health Service to issue reference numbers to authorise treatment and track expenditure.

What are the Aims of this Service?

The aim of this telephone advice and information service is to make ADF health services more accessible, facilitate service delivery closer to where people live or are on holiday, and ensure that members are receiving treatment that is appropriate. It will also enable the member's parent unit to properly follow up treatment regimes and to verify accounts. The new service will streamline the authorisation process for ADF members seeking out-of-hours health care, making it a worry free and simple procedure at what may be a stressful time.

How will the telephone service operate?

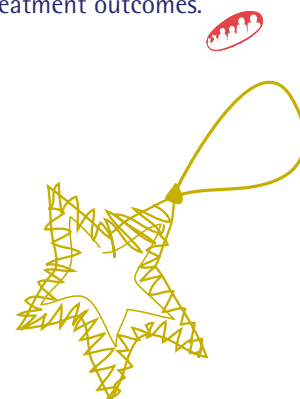
The service will operate from the nearest ADF health facility, utilising duty health personnel and on call Medical Officers. When a member is ill or injured away from the work place, and out of normal working hours, they simply have to call **1800 467 425**. The call will be automatically diverted to the nearest ADF health facility. The duty health personnel will note the member's personal details, unit and any relevant clinical details.

What happens next?

After taking your details, the health staff member will decide on a plan to best help you. This may include:

- taking your contact phone number and having a Medical or Dental Officer contact you directly, or
- advising you on a number of treatment facilities in your immediate area, which are accessible (you may even make a suggestion if you have extensive local knowledge), and
- issuing of a referral number (if required) that will be used to authorise treatment and track expenditure.

Often advice and reassurance is all that is needed. If you need to attend a local civilian health provider, or even a military health provider, then you will be asked to contact the **1800 467 425** number on completion of treatment to advise the duty personnel of treatment outcomes.



'tis the Season to be Jolly, not Sick from Food Poisoning'

Christmas Killers

An over stuffed fridge does not allow air circulation and will guarantee bacteria growth.

Potato Salad left out at room temperature, put back in the fridge and taken out again (how many of you have done this?), will grow bacteria. You are better off making several small bowls and leaving excess in the fridge for later, disposing of the left overs that were left out.

Poultry left out at room temperature to thaw will definitely grow bacteria. Rice: plain boiled rice and rice salad breed bacteria at room temperature. Children sharing drinks from the same can, will spread bugs.

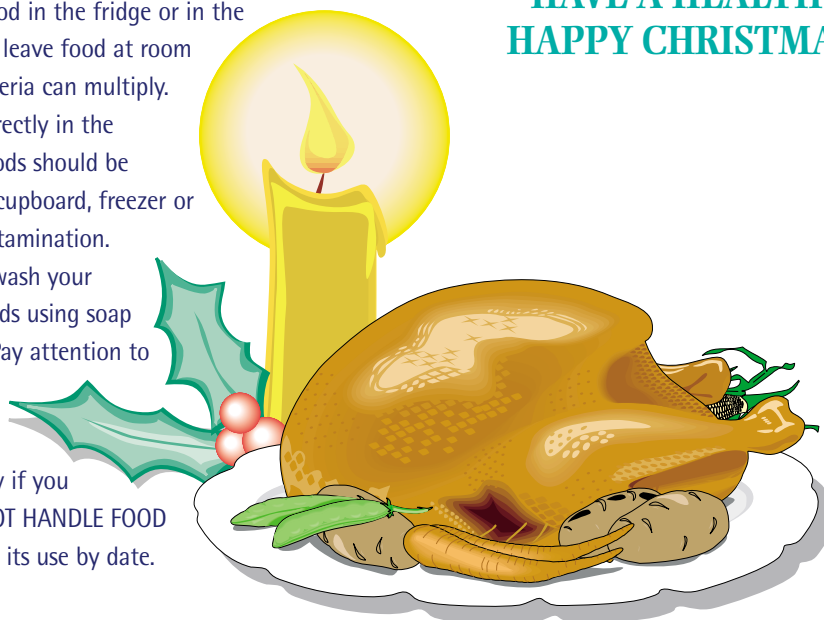
Food Safety Shopping Hints - Don't Buy - Swollen chilled packages as the contents are going off. Gas is produced and the container swells. Swollen or dented cans. The contents of severely dented cans should never be consumed. Food past its use by date. Dairy products that are not refrigerated. Frozen food packs with ice crystals or clumps of ice between them. This may indicate refreezing. Food in torn packages or with imperfect seals.

Food Storage And Handling - Always take frozen and fresh food straight home after shopping, especially in summer, and store straight away. Think about using an insulated container to protect food from heat and to prevent germs from multiplying. Thaw food in the fridge or in the microwave. The longer you leave food at room temperature the more bacteria can multiply.

Place hot food, covered, directly in the refrigerator to cool. All foods should be covered for storage in the cupboard, freezer or refrigerator to prevent contamination.

Before handling any food wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and warm running water. Pay attention to under fingernails and between fingers.

If you are unwell, especially if you have gastroenteritis, **DO NOT HANDLE FOOD** or serve it. Use food before its use by date.



Cook meats, especially minced meats until there are no pink areas. When reheating food make sure it is piping hot. Never refreeze thawed food. Keep pets out of the kitchen.

Avoid Cross Contamination - Raw meat, fish, vegetables and poultry contain large amounts of bacteria and can **CROSS CONTAMINATE** ready-to-eat foods if not stored or handled correctly.

Raw foods should be stored in covered or sealed containers. They should be stored below ready to eat foods to prevent meat juice spilling or dripping on other food.

Wash hands immediately after handling raw foods and before handling ready to eat or cooked foods.

Use different chopping boards, plates and utensils for preparing raw foods and ready to eat food. If you only have one board, wash it thoroughly in hot soapy water between use.

DO NOT use the same cloth for drying dishes and wiping hands or bench tops. Dish cloths should be regularly sanitised or replaced.

'If in doubt throw it out!' Cross contamination, sloppy hand washing practices and cross contamination can lead to food related illnesses.

**HAVE A HEALTHY,
 HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**



Support Available for You and Your Family

Recent operational requirements and the Christmas season fast approaching, means that now is a good time for a reminder about the wide range of services and staff that Defence has in place to support ADF families around the country.

Defence supports members of the ADF by also providing support to their families—to help ADF members and their families to achieve and maintain a balance between their Service and personal lives.

The Defence Community Organisation (DCO) provides counselling services for all ADF members (including single members) and families.

ADF members and their families can approach DCO for sensitive and confidential help with any matter of concern.

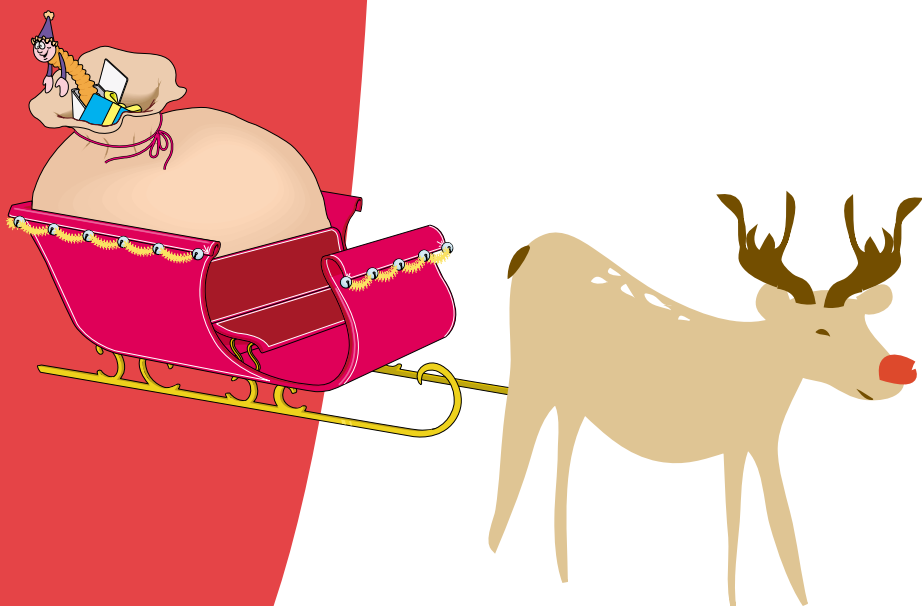
DCO also helps to manage Compassionate Returns to Australia, funerals, deceased estates, Wills, and the Australian Dangerously Ill Scheme (AUSDIL).

Defence community groups in regional areas throughout Australia are assisted by DCO through briefings, presentations, newsletters and support to self-help groups. Social Workers, Regional Educations Liaison Officers, Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) and Military Support Officers work in these local area teams.

The Defence Employer Sponsored Childcare Program is the largest employer sponsored childcare program in Australia. Over the next five years, this high-quality program will be significantly expanded with the number of Defence Centres increasing from 16 to 21, and more places available in Family Day Care, before and after school care and vacation care.

The Family Support Funding Program awards funding grants annually to Defence Community groups. The program provides grants for community projects developed by Defence families; encourages Defence families and groups to determine needs in a local area; increases opportunities for Defence families to initiate self-help projects; and encourages initiatives to help reduce some of the adverse effects that are sometimes caused by frequent postings.

The Spouse Employment Assistance Program assists ADF spouses who want paid employment and would like help in preparing for and finding work. An Internet Bulletin Board Service has been established in 30 locations Australia wide for access by ADF spouses, and computers in DCO offices and community centres can also be used for preparing resumes and applications. Information on local employment agencies is



included in local information packs, and employment seminars and work readiness training is offered. DCO can also pay for assistance by an employment agency.

Payment of registration or pre-registration training expenses for spouses whose professions require a registration fee in each State or Territory is also available.

Families with special needs are formally recognised and assisted in obtaining appropriate specialised equipment; access to respite and therapy services in the new locality; and appropriate housing which caters for the additional requirements of the family member with special needs.

New Families with Special Needs provisions were recently introduced to improve administrative processes and access to housing.

Children's education is addressed through DCO Regional Education Liaison Officers in each State and Territory who provide educational support and advice to individual families and to schools to encourage minimal disruption on the education of dependants caused by a mobile lifestyle. Issues about educational mobility are addressed with educational authorities at both the Commonwealth and State levels, and a program of research on the educational outcomes of mobility in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Education has begun.

Support to command is provided through specialist advice and projects for commanders at all levels—particularly in relation to family support on operations and deployments. DCO is involved in bringing general morale and welfare issues to the notice of the Services, maintains the DCO Crisis Support Centre in times of emergency, and directly supports exercises and operations.

Support Networks

National Welfare Coordination Centre

The National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) is tasked with coordinating welfare support for the families of personnel deployed on designated operations both overseas and in Australia.

The role of the NWCC is to provide 24-hour central coordination point for referral of national welfare and family support assets and monitor welfare support to personnel and their families.

NWCC also provides welfare and family support to personnel including visitors and Defence civilians working in support of specific operations who may be away from their home locations.

The NWCC can be contacted 24 hours on **1800 801 026**.

Family Information Network for Defence

The Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) is a toll free phone service that provides easy access to personnel information on matters of everyday interest or concern. It is a confidential service that is available to every Service person and family, anywhere in Australia.

FIND operating hours are currently 9.00am to 4.00pm Canberra time Monday to Friday. Outside these hours and on public holidays an answering machine will take your message and your call will be returned promptly the next working day.

Call **1800 020 031** for more information or visit the FIND website off the DCO homepage at www.dco.dod.gov.au

National Consultative Group of Service Families

Since 1986, the NCGSF have been working to improve the quality of life for ADF families by providing a recognised forum for your views, reporting, making recommendations, and influencing policy making that directly affects families. If you have any questions about what we do, or about a particular Defence policy issue, please contact one of our representatives.

To find your local NCGSF representative, contact your area's DCO office or call **1800 100 026**.

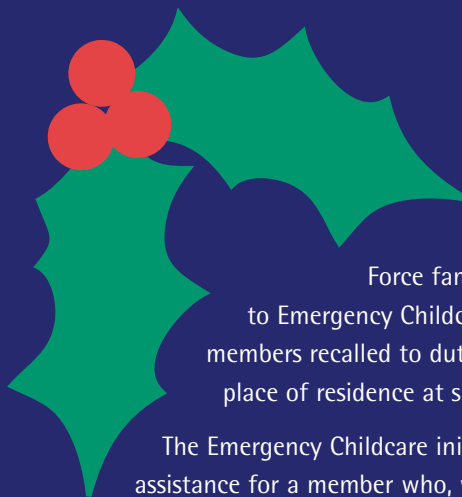
Further information

If you need any additional information, advice or support, please contact **FIND** on **1800 020 031**.

More information on family support initiatives and services is also available at www.dco.dod.gov.au

A Defence Community Organisation office is located on all major Defence establishments. Phone numbers, addresses and other information can be obtained from local publicity or by contacting FIND. The head office of DCO can be contacted on 02 6266 4400.





Emergency Childcare

Navy, Army and Air Force families will now have access to Emergency Childcare assistance for those members recalled to duty away from their normal place of residence at short notice.

The Emergency Childcare initiative provides financial assistance for a member who, with less than 48 hours notice, is required to travel in connection with duty, or is granted compassionate leave travel, and the member's spouse (or if the member is the sole carer, the person who would normally provide childcare) is unavailable.

This assistance is for expenses that are additional to any childcare expenses the member would normally have incurred.

The assistance will comprise a reimbursement for the cost of commercially sourced, properly licensed overnight emergency childcare for a period of up to 48 hours to enable the restoration of normal family care arrangements. In exceptional circumstances, the provision may be extended by an additional 48 hours.

There is no limit on the number of times a member can access this benefit providing the circumstances fall within the policy guidelines. The assistance will cover the cost of care for all children under the age of 18 years.

Funding allocated to this program is in excess of \$4m over five years. The initiative has been developed in recognition of the unique demands Service life places upon Defence families, and is part of the ongoing improvements to

personnel issues that are being addressed through the Defence People Committee.

Fringe Benefits Tax and Fringe Benefits Reporting

Reimbursement for emergency childcare will normally attract payment of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) by the Department of Defence. Such reimbursement will be included for reporting as a fringe benefit on a member's payment summary if the total of all fringe benefits received by the member over the FBT year exceeds \$1000.

The exceptions to this requirement are:

- Emergency Childcare which is provided at a Defence childcare facility designated for care of children under the age of six years, will not attract payment of FBT by the Department of Defence. Consequently, reimbursement in these circumstances is not reportable as a fringe benefit on a member's payment summary.
- Where the amount of reimbursement, which would otherwise be reportable as a fringe benefit, is less than \$100 and provided infrequently, the benefit will be exempt from reporting under the minor and infrequent rule.

For more information

Further details can be found on the Defence Intranet <http://defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/dpedet/>

Contact: Scott Taylor
Phone: 02 6265 3362
Email: scott.taylor4@defence.gov.au