

defence

FAMILY



DECEMBER 2002

MATTERS

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

Merry Christmas



**from all of us here at
defence Family Matters
to you and your family**



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Are you Posting to a New Locality Shortly? FLOs are there to help

Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) assist families with information about community resources and support activities, particularly helping to settle families into a new community on or after posting. FLOs are on staff at each of the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) Offices Australia-wide.

Each DCO Office provides a comprehensive Welcome Pack that has been created for new arrivals. These packs provide a range of information to assist families to settle into their new community and can be tailor-made to provide specific information such as childcare, employment, or special needs. Families are invited to contact their DCO office to arrange for a Welcome Pack to be either delivered to them at their new home, or to have one sent out to them prior to posting.

The majority of DCO Offices also publish a family newsletter that provides Defence families with up-to-date information on local services and activities. Families settling into a new area who find that they are not receiving local information should contact the FLO at their nearest DCO Office.

The contact details for your local DCO Office or FLO can be obtained by calling the Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) on the toll free number 1800 020 031 during normal working hours Monday to Friday.

***Have you been posted?
 Call DCO for assistance
 1800 020 031***

Christmas Messages

Danna Vale

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a safe, happy and peaceful Christmas, and to send you my best wishes for 2003.

I know there are some families who will be spending Christmas away from loved ones who are serving on deployment.



The HON Danna Vale, Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence

Our thoughts are with you and with your family members, who are serving our nation in places such as East Timor and Bougainville, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and the Persian Gulf, and on ships to Australia's north.

The men and women of the Australian Defence Force do an outstanding job defending Australia's national interests wherever and whenever they are called to serve.

They would not be able to do so without the love, support and understanding of their families.

The end of the year can also be a hectic time for Defence personnel and their families, when many face the challenges of new postings and moving interstate away from friends and family.

For those moving, I wish you every success in your move to a new home, and trust that you will make many new friends in your communities. In the past year as Minister I have seen the Defence community and network provide enormous support for personnel and their families - support that I know is very much welcomed.

I hope that as you look back on the year you share an overwhelming feeling of pride in the work of our Australian Defence Force. They are indeed the pride of the nation.

The Australian community is thankful for the men and women of the ADF, and for the commitment of their families who love and support them.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Danna Vale
 Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence

Brian Adams

The recent tragic events in Bali serve to remind us of the changed world in which we live. They also remind us how much the Australian people look to us as members of the Australian Defence Force to provide protection and security for our nation, and of the role the ADF plays in maintaining peace beyond Australia's shores.



RADM Brian Adams AM

Against this background, it is important that our people and their families feel they are being looked after and that their contribution is acknowledged and appreciated. Defence has done a great deal in the past ten years to improve conditions for its members and their families, through improvements to housing, childcare, and employment opportunities for their family members - but there is always more we can do.

The decision to leave the ADF is usually a family decision, especially given the unusual and sometimes immense pressures that are placed on Defence families. We are doing what we can to understand the issues that affect families, from feedback lines, through the chain of command, and through meetings with families when I and other senior ADF members visit the regions. It is critically important that you and your families let us know what we can do to help, through avenues such as the Defence Community Organisation, to ensure that what we provide meets your needs.

Some families may be unaware that problems they face can be readily dealt with if they contact the right area. In an organisation as large as Defence, finding the right area can be difficult. If you don't know where to start, try the Family Information Network for Defence. This hotline, manned during business hours, is there to make sure that Defence members, and their families, know who to talk to about assistance from Defence about allowances and all manner of other personnel information. FIND will return calls left on their answering machine in 24 hours.

For those of you travelling to visit family and friends over the Christmas/New Year period, please take care. I look forward to working with you next year, and I wish you a safe and enjoyable Christmas.

Brian Adams
 Head, Defence Personnel Executive

Army Amenities Fund

The Army Amenities Fund has recently leased a number of units in resorts across the country, which are available to use at subsidised rates to members of Defence. A brief snapshot of some of the resorts are detailed below.

Army Amenities Fund accommodation is made available to all regular service members and active Reservists, retired ADF personnel, and Defence civilians. Family members can also stay, provided the eligible member is present.

Please see the above website for the complete list of available accommodation around Australia. The websites also include current tariff information.

Bay Lodge Apartments Surfers Paradise, QLD

The Bay Lodge Apartments are only a few minutes walk from the heart of Surfers Paradise and only a block away from the family recreation area of Budds Beach.

Nestled in a quiet residential area close to the Nerang River, Bay Lodge offers access to the energy and lifestyle of Surfers Paradise with its famous surf beaches, as well as family living in self-contained units.

Bay Lodge features include undercover security parking, a heated lap pool, half court tennis, barbecue facilities and an outdoor spa.

Units Available = x4 two-bedroom

Bookings

Enquiries and bookings should be made directly to the Bay Lodge Apartments. Contact details are as follows:

- Phone: 07 5592 2811
- Fax: 07 5592 2557
- Email: baylodge@qldnet.com.au
- Post: 35 Palm Ave, Surfers Paradise, QLD 4217
- Website: www.baylodges.com.au

Grande Florida Beachside Resort Miami, QLD

Grande Florida Beachside Resort is south of Surfers Paradise on Queensland's beautiful Gold Coast. It is a low rise complex nestled in two acres of lush tropical rainforest gardens. The resort boasts two award winning lagoon style swimming pools (one heated), with sandy beaches and children's paddling pools. Other resort features include spa jets in the pool area, exercise room, games room and undercover security parking.

Units Available = x2 two-bedroom, x2 three-bedroom

Bookings

Enquiries and bookings should be made directly to the Grande Florida Beachside Resort. Contact details are as follows:

- Toll Free: 1800 627 804
- Phone: 07 5572 8111
- Fax: 07 5572 8863
- Email: info@grandefloridaresort.com.au
- Post: 7 Redondo Avenue,
Miami QLD 4220
- Website
www.grandefloridaresort.com.au



Kalbarri Beach Resort Kalbarri, WA

Kalbarri Beach Resort is 600 km north of Perth and around 400 km south of Monkey Mia. Kalbarri features spectacular coastline, brilliant boat and beach fishing, diving, the Murchison River and its magnificent gorges. August/September is the wildflower season.

The units are fully equipped, able to hold up to five family members. The resort has a 25 m pool, children's wading pool, poolside BBQs, spa baths, full and half tennis courts, large sauna, volleyball court and a licensed restaurant.

Units Available = x2 two-bedroom

Bookings

Bookings for Kalbarri Beach Resort are made through Ray White Kalbarri.

- Phone: 08 9937 1700
- Fax: 08 9937 1479
- Email: kalbarri.wa@raywhite.com
- Website: www.kalbarriwa.info



efficient drying room. The upper level has a communal lounge/dining room and kitchen, opening on to an outdoor deck area with a gas BBQ.

Units Available = 6 Bunk Room holding 4 people a room

Bookings

Bookings can be made on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 1200 to 1800. Bookings will only be taken from March for that year's ski season.

- Phone/Fax: 03 5735 7603

Surf Side on the Beach Sunshine Coast, QLD

Located at Kawana just south of Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast (an easy one hour drive from Brisbane), this relatively undiscovered region combines all the very best of the top tourist areas with the quiet tranquillity of an uncrowded stretch of beach. Boasting three swimming pools (one heated during winter) and private access to the beach, the resort has 2 1/2 acres of landscaped tropical gardens, security undercover parking, gas barbecues and many more features.

The resort is close to many attractions including Steve Irwin's Crocodile Farm, the Big Pineapple, the Glass House Mountains and much much more.

Units Available =
x1 two-bedroom,
x2 three-bedroom. Please note that the Royal Australian Air Force Welfare Recreational

Company also have units at the resort, x3 three-bedroom and x1 two-bedroom.

Bookings

Enquiries and bookings should be made directly to Surf Side on the Beach. Note that the contact details are as follows:

- Free call: 1800 802 305
- Phone: 07 5444 0044
- Fax: 07 5444 0668
- Email: info@surfsideholidays.com
- Post: PO Box 230, Buddina QLD 4575
- Website: www.surfsideholidays.com

Army Alpine Centre Mt Buller, VIC

The Army Alpine Centre, Mt Buller is 300 km north-east of Melbourne at one of Australia's premier ski resorts. During the snow season, it provides access to the resort for Service personnel and their dependants at an economical cost. The Army Alpine Centre is only open during the winter ski season.

The lodge is a two-storey, brick and timber construction, with six bunk rooms sleeping four persons each. Located on each storey are separate shower and toilet facilities. The lower level contains ski storage and preparation areas and a large,

Next issue we uncover what's on offer from the RAN Central Canteens Fund

Goolwa

Just an hour and a half from Adelaide, and less than half an hour from Victor Harbour, Goolwa is situated at the mouth of the Murray River. A sleepy town of some fifteen hundred people, Goolwa offers peace and quiet - while still close enough to local attractions.

The Army Amenities Fund owns three units for the benefit of all serving or former Defence members, which are just behind the Goolwa golf course in a peaceful neighbourhood, minutes drive from town. The units are modern, with three bedrooms (a master bedroom, and two rooms with two bunks and a cot), a spacious family/dining area, a well-equipped kitchen, a TV, reverse cycle air-conditioning, and a laundry. There is a communal playground and a gas fired BBQ out the back, and the lawns are bare feet friendly.

The units do not allow pets, however, there are pet minding services nearby. Use of the units also grants residents temporary golf club membership. Not only that, there is a gate leading onto the course just behind the units. Imagine playing a few holes before breakfast. The golf clubhouse is two minutes walk away for those wanting to dine out but not drive.

Peak booking season is from November to April, and Off Peak is from May to October. Peak rates are \$45 a day, or \$260 a week. Off Peak rates are \$40 a day or \$220 for the week.

The units do not provide linen, but arrangements can be made on your behalf by booking staff. Residents are asked to keep the units as clean and tidy as they found it, with cleaning supplies provided - however a cleaner can be organised at an additional cost. Please note that smokers are asked to refrain from smoking inside.

The units do not have phones, but mobile reception is excellent, and there is a pay phone within walking

distance. A cot and a high chair are provided, and there are certified baby sitting services available.

Goolwa is a sleepy town, with much on offer in the surrounding area. River cruises, whale watching, an adventure park, wineries, and Hindmarsh Island are all within a comfortable distance from the town. For you history and engineering buffs, Goolwa is also home to the first of the massive concrete barrages used to regulate the flow of the Murray into the sea. Goolwa was a thriving port at the turn of the 20th century but lost out to Victor Harbour, which in turn was vanquished by Adelaide's port. Many fine examples of architecture, and still functioning engineering works, can be found in Goolwa and other towns in the area.

In short, Goolwa offers families a chance to get away from it all, at very reasonable prices, but still has enough going on nearby if people feel active.

For additional information on the Goolwa units, or other accommodation on offer courtesy of the Army Amenities Fund, see their website at

www.defence.gov.au/army/aaf

Contact Details

Manager - Freda Rowe

20 Noble Avenue

GOOLWA SA 5214

Phone/Fax: 08 8555 0255

Email aafglwa@granite.net.au

Rates

Peak - \$45 a day, or \$260 a week.

Off Peak - \$40 a day or \$220 a week.



Goolwa Units



One of the Murray Barrages

Coping with Service Life

Not every member of the ADF copes with the demands of Service life. Even if a member personally copes very well with all the issues that arise, it should come as no surprise that their loved ones may not. Human suffering affects all members of the ADF and their families, whatever their rank and status in the Defence Community.

Depression, mental illness, suicide threats, loss and grief issues, gambling problems, relationship breakdown, financial problems, child misbehaviours and many other personal and family problems and concerns impact on lives in the Defence community. Every day these types of problems affect members of the ADF. The problems are deeply personal and in some instances the consequences can be tragic.

In the offices of DCO Southern, region staff in particular social workers, assist ADF members and families to work through their problems. If they cannot help, they refer those seeking help to professionals with the required expertise. In the last year or two, the number of suicides, deaths resulting in loss and grief, and relationship breakdowns have becoming alarming. So that the DCO is better resourced to support members and families

in these circumstances, staff in Southern region have made a special effort to develop further their knowledge, understanding and skill in suicide prevention, grief and loss counselling and relationship therapy.

When listing its achievements the DCO normally does not refer to the social casework it does with individual members and families. The organisation's silence about its casework reflects the quiet and private way it supports and helps people experiencing difficult and sensitive issues. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that the DCO achieves an enormous amount with its clients that necessarily remains hidden and unpublicised.

The Commanders of the ADF care about their members and their families. In the last twelve months the DCO has played a significant role in making the ADF's solicitude for its people real and tangible.

The Southern region of the DCO incorporates Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. DCO offices are located where there are major concentrations of Defence personnel.

Contact Details

Regional Headquarters

Contact: Regional Director
 Phone: 03 9282 3198

Tasmania:

Anglesea Barracks Office

Contact: REDLO
 Phone: 03 6237 7191

South Australia:

Keswick Barracks Office

Contact: Area Manager
 Phone: 08 8305 6736

Victoria:

Bandiana Office

Contact: Area Manager
 Phone: 02 6055 2169

Puckapunyal Office

Contact: Area Manager
 Phone: 03 5735 7723

Macleod Office

Contact: Area Manager
 Phone: 03 9455 3422

Melbourne West Office

Contact: Area Manager
 Phone: 03 9282 3244

Melbourne Central Office

Contact: Area Manager
 Phone: 03 9282 3244

Frankston Office

Contact: Area Manager
 Phone: 03 9783 9344

RAAF East Sale

Contact: Social Worker
 Phone: 03 5146 9029

DCO Southern Region

Defence Census Day 'Counting the People Who Count'

The Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, the Honourable Danna Vale has announced that Census Day will be Tuesday 18 March 2003. At the official launch of the Census on 6 November, the Minister said the Census will provide Defence planners with authoritative and up-to-date data on which to base personnel strategic plans and policies.

This will be the fourth Census but for the first time it will embrace the total Defence workforce with the inclusion of Defence APS personnel for the first time. This means the Census will reach about 88 000 Defence personnel. The Census undertaken in 1991 and 1995 were for permanent ADF members only, and the 1999 Census was expanded to include all active Reservists.

Policy makers and planners need a good understanding of the make-up of the total workforce, and a census is the most effective way of obtaining this information. The Census is voluntary and anonymous, but all Defence personnel will be encouraged to participate.

The key requirements to ensuring a successful Census are:

- The development of valid, simple and useable questionnaires
- An active and focused communications campaign aimed at encouraging the maximum possible response rate
- An efficient method of distributing and collecting questionnaires from all personnel
- Providing useable data and reports for use by Defence policy makers and other interested agencies.

An experienced consultant company, Roy Morgan Research Pty Ltd, has been engaged to develop and distribute the Census questionnaires, process the data, update the Census database and provide various reports (two of these reports will provide feedback to ADF members and their families, and Defence APS members).

The 2003 Census will consist of three separate

forms, for Defence APS, Reserve members and Permanent members. Reservists who are on Continuous Full-Time Service will complete the Reserves form. Defence APS members who are also active Reservists will be asked to complete both the APS and the Reserves forms. The Reserves form will be relatively short as duplication of questions asked in the 2001 ADF Reserves Survey has been avoided where possible. The questionnaires will also include short statements explaining why particular questions are being asked.

The questionnaires will be distributed to permanent and APS members through the functional chain, whilst Reservists will receive their questionnaires at their home addresses. Unit Census Coordinators have been appointed to assist in the process and to assist in Census administration. Arrangements are being made to ensure that all

'Counting the People Who Count'

ADF and APS personnel deployed overseas also receive the questionnaires. Special arrangements will be made for reserve units on duty overseas including in East Timor and Butterworth.

Key players in the administration of the Census are Unit Census Coordinators (UCC) who have already been appointed to assist in the distribution and collection of questionnaires.

A new Census website has been established which provides background information on the Census and information to assist UCC. The site is at:

DEFWEB

<http://defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/dpe/defencecensus2003>

Internet

www.defence.gov.au/dpe/defencecensus2003

Contact: Roger Wainwright,
Defence Census Manager 2003

Phone: 02 6266 3268

Email: Roger.Wainwright@defence.gov.au

Glass half empty?

By SGT Rob Orr

Why is it we often see the glass as half empty? How often has there been something you have really wanted to buy, to do, or to try...yet you failed to do it or put it off? Did you start your justification with 'I can't because.....?'

One evening, two years ago, at the Sydney Olympic Swimming Pool, where a capacity crowd had come to watch the likes of Michael Klim attempt to destroy the world record he had set in the relay, a 36 year old man lined up in the final 100 m freestyle heat. There were meant to be three swimmers, yet the two others had been disqualified. So the lone swimmer took his mark and off he went on the gun. Watching the world record pace displayed on the bottom corner of the screen, he turned at the fifty metre mark around 20 seconds outside of world record pace. When he touched the wall, the capacity crowd stood up and cheered. Why? The world record was around 48 seconds, his time was 1 minute and 50 seconds (approx.), the slowest ever at an Olympic Games. What made this man so special? From Equatorial New Guinea, Eric Moussambani, providing a legendary example of human spirit. Eric had only learnt to swim in January that year and it was only the second time in his life that he had completed a 100 m swim.

This example holds several important reminders of true spirit:

1. Whether it be fitness training or going to university, it is never too late to start;
2. You never know how far you can go until you try; and finally
3. Too often praise is given to those who achieve extraordinary results, whilst those who display extraordinary commitment and effort are forgotten 'in the middle'.

Now think back, what is the one thing you want to do (keep it legal!) And, rather than start with 'I can't' start with 'How can I?'

Rather than making a statement and 'closing the case', ask a question and begin to do something you were taught to do when you were six years old....solve a problem.

So do it....do it now...try that something different on the menu, thank the person who silently empties the rubbish bin, greet a stranger in the lift...and, as I always say

'Start your day with a glass that is half full...then... add cordial.'

SGT Rob Orr,
Physical Training Instructor
Royal Military College - Duntroon



DFM thanks Rob for his outstanding contributions to improving our health and fitness during this past year.
Editor

Defence Families have a big year in 2003

Defence reviews and external studies have all shown that the happiness and satisfaction of service families will make an enormous difference to whether a serving member remains in the Defence Force. It's the most obvious thing in the world to those of us whose partners are in the Defence Force and we are on the move (yet again) or facing deployments and separations soon. But we have always needed Defence and Government to see this as well if anything is to improve and make life a bit easier for us.

It's easy to sit back and feel cynical about all of these reviews and studies - where do they actually end up? Is anything ever done about it? On behalf of the organisation that has represented you in all of these reviews; I am pleased to say that 2003 will actually see the results of much of our hard work.

The Defence Families of Australia (DFA) has been very active in pushing the need for change in the following areas:

1. Improved relocation services through DHA and Toll
2. Consistent welcoming services through DCO
3. A more flexible and family-friendly housing policy
4. A more flexible and comprehensive Spouse Employment Assistance program
5. More support for families who are on their own during a deployment (particularly during an emergency such as illness)
6. Improvements to the Education Assistance application methods
7. Removal of FBT reporting for Remote Locality Leave Travel and Education Assistance.

This year has been a very busy time for the DFA. Apart from our name change (previously National Consultative Group of Service Families, or NCGSF),

we have been committed to attending all of the policy meetings, community forums and working groups that have the capacity to change the above aspects of our lives.

This is no mean feat! All of the DFA members are volunteers with children, normal jobs and deployed partners. As the only paid member of the DFA, I am committed to getting to every meeting in Canberra to discuss these issues facing Defence families, but with 4 children under 11- it's been very 'character building'.

But triumph prevails!!! I am very pleased with the progress we are making with a number of the above issues and we should see some real improvements in these areas in 2003.

Of course we can't take all of the credit. Although, it doesn't seem like it when you are on your own or moving to a new town, but many of the people in Canberra, particularly the excellent people in senior ADF positions, are extremely committed to making life easier for Defence families. I think we can all look forward to 2003 with some increased services and support for Defence families.

Please call your local DFA Delegate if you would like any further information. Details are on our website:

www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dfa

On behalf of the DFA, I would like to wish you all a very safe and happy holiday period!

Judy Swann
National Convenor

DFA
Defence Families
of Australia

A voice for Defence Families

A Dual Entitlement - Who Should Get It?

If you and your spouse are both members of the ADF there may be times when you both can make a claim for an allowance or entitlement. For some allowances, however, only one member can be paid the entitlement. The aim of this article is to provide information to assist decision-making in these cases.

You can jointly nominate one of you to receive the entitlement. In making this decision you might need to consider whether the entitlement will have any impact on your financial obligations to pay things like child support payments, the superannuation surcharge, and the Medicare surcharge. You may want to discuss this with your tax adviser.

If you do not nominate one of you to receive the entitlement, it will automatically go to whichever of you has the higher rank or the most senior if at the same rank. However, temporary accommodation allowance and rental allowance automatically go to the member with the higher rank, or most senior - and so does the requirement to contribute towards these two allowances.

The following is a list of those entitlements where you can nominate whether you or your spouse will receive the entitlement:

- Reimbursement for loss on sale of furniture and effects (PACMAN Chapter 4, Part 7, Division 1)
- Reimbursement for loss on sale of a vehicle (PACMAN Chapter 4, Part 7, Division 2)
- Reimbursement for childcare (Member's Guide, Chapter 4.5)
- Disturbance allowance (Member's Guide, Chapter 4.4)
- Assistance or reimbursement for home purchase or sale (Member's Guide, Chapter 4.12)
- Provision of reunion travel at Commonwealth expense (Member's Guide, Chapter 3.6)

- Reimbursement for education costs for a child (Member's Guide, Chapter 5.1)
- Reimbursement for the cost of insurance on removal of urgently required household items (PACMAN Chapter 4, Part 6)
- Reimbursement in place of a child's scholarship (PACMAN Chapter 5, Part 1).

The references in brackets are to:

- The Member's Guide to ADF Pay and Conditions, 2002 edition
or
- if specific information is not provided in the Member's Guide - the ADF Pay and Conditions Manual (PACMAN).

If you would like a copy of the 2002 edition of the Member's Guide please call FIND on 1800 020 031 or by email to FIND@bigpond.com.au

Copies may also be obtained through the Defence Service Centre (DSC) on 1800 000 677.

You may also view the Member's Guide electronically:

- Defweb at <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/dpepay>
- Internet at www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpedet

For the PACMAN, see:

- Defweb at <http://defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/dpedet>
- Internet at www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpedet

Chapter 14, Clause 14.10 in Volume 2 of the PACMAN provides full details of the dual entitlement provisions.



Fringe Benefits Tax Explained

Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) can affect your taxation obligations, child support payments and eligibility for government benefits. This article aims to outline some of the ways you might be affected as a Defence employee. First some basic facts about taxation.

Income Tax is deducted from salary and allowances as follows:

Taxable Income	Tax Rate %
\$0–6000	0
\$6001–\$20 000	17
\$20 001–\$50 000	30
\$50 001–\$60 000	42
\$60 001 +	47

The Medicare Levy is additional to income tax and is 1.5% of taxable income. ADF members with no dependants do not pay the Medicare Levy. Members with dependants pay the levy at half the rate (i.e. 0.75%).

FBT applies to remuneration other than salary, provided as goods and services and some cash allowances to the worker. The method of calculating FBT is designed to make the FBT have the same impact as the top marginal income tax rate plus the Medicare Levy, which is 48.5%.

The fringe benefit legislation is very broad in its application. Many items that you may not think of as a 'benefit' are classified by the tax legislation as a fringe benefit. When this happens, the Department of Defence pays FBT at the rate of 48.5% on the 'grossed-up' value of the benefit. The grossed-up benefit is simply the value of the benefit in pre-tax dollars. In other words, the grossed-up value is how much you would have to earn in order to purchase the fringe benefit yourself.

The actual value depends on whether Defence can claim for any GST on the benefit. For example, if you are provided with a fringe benefit that is subject to GST and costs Defence \$1000 you would have to earn \$2129.20 if you were to purchase the benefit yourself.

Another example of a fringe benefit provided to ADF members is the 50% subsidy on Defence housing. The Department pays FBT on the 50% subsidy.

FBT Reporting is a situation where the ADF pays the FBT on a benefit provided to you but is obliged to report the grossed-up taxable value of certain fringe benefits on your payment summary (previously known as a group certificate). The FBT reporting year runs from 1 April to 31 March. The value of benefits provided to you will only become reportable if the grossed-up value exceeds \$1000 in any FBT reporting year.

Reportable fringe benefits do not affect your income tax but may be included in income tests for government benefits and obligations, such as:

- The Medicare Levy
- The superannuation contributions surcharge
- Higher Education Contribution Scheme and Postgraduate Education Loans Scheme repayments
- Child support obligations.

In addition, the non-grossed-up value of fringe benefits is used to determine certain income tested government benefits such as the Family Tax Benefit and the parental income test for the Youth Allowance.

The Child Support Agency may include any income, including FBT reported items, and also FBT reporting exempt items, in assessing your liability to make or receive payments for your children. Problems arising about child support need to be resolved with the Agency direct (see Policy Guideline 14/2000 on the below website) or phone 131272 (general enquiries) for further information.

Child Support Agency www.csa.gov.au

FBT Explained

Items which may be FBT reportable are: air-conditioning allowance; education assistance (if child not in a critical year of schooling); HECS payment/reimbursement; childcare; remote locality leave travel out of Darwin, Cairns and Townsville; spouse accompanied travel; recreation leave free travel and the Defence Home Owner Scheme loan subsidy where qualification was obtained due to length of service.

The ADF does not have to report all FBT items. There are general exemptions, and some specific to ADF service. Details are in the Defence FBT Manual. The manual can be accessed through the Defence website by clicking on Chief Finance Officer, Defence Taxation Management Office, then the FBT button.

Salary Sacrifice is a method, acceptable to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) in which you forgo part of your salary in return for other employer provided benefits (e.g. superannuation or fringe benefits). In this case you pay the FBT, at 48.5% not the ADF. Generally, people using approved childcare centres, and those on higher incomes can gain some taxation relief from this scheme. Salary packaging for Defence is managed by a service provider, SmartSalary Pty Ltd. Further information on salary packaging can be obtained from the SmartSalary website listed below. To access the site use Employer Code: ADO.

SmartSalary www.smartsalary.com.au

Remote localities. Defence pays FBT on a range of benefits provided for personnel stationed in remote localities. However, the FBT Assessment Act considers that some of the cities we have called 'remote' are non-remote and therefore the benefits we provide for living and working in those cities are reportable fringe benefits. Defence calls Darwin, Townsville and Cairns as remote localities but the ATO does not.

Hence, the grossed-up value of benefits such as remote locality leave travel provided for personnel in these three cities are reported on individual payment summaries (where the value of the benefits exceeds \$1000 in a year).

The differences of view about what is a remote locality between the ADF and the ATO can be confusing, but the ATO is obliged to act under tax legislation regardless of how the ADF, or a private sector employer, may view things. The Defence FBT Manual on the Defence website explains the situation in more detail.

There is a large amount of detail that this article cannot cover. For more information go to the websites mentioned, or seek professional advice from a taxation expert.



Defence Library Service Temporary Employment Register

The Defence Library Service (DLS) is a national service that provides broad ranging information services to Defence Australia-wide.

The DLS is currently seeking applications from people who would like to be placed on a register for full-time, short-term (non-ongoing) employment. Vacancies may arise in both metropolitan and regional Australia, in the areas of: administration, client services, information technology/systems, and acquisitions and cataloguing.

To apply, please contact DLS on 02 6266 7737 or 02 6265 6217 for an information pack.

FBT Explained

Australian Primary Principals' Conference - highlighting the needs of Defence children

The DCO team of Robin Madin, REDLO ACT, and Joan Gilbert, Manager, Education Policy and Special Needs attended the Australian Primary Principals' Conference in Perth recently.



Robin eagerly staffs the booth

The conference is a yearly event and some 800 principals and key educators participated in this forum on a full-time capacity. Another 200 principals attended on a daily basis. Principals came from throughout Australia, with some even attending from New Zealand, UK and America.

DCO presented two workshops during the conference to highlight the importance for mobile children to feel included and experience a sense of belonging as soon as possible after enrolling in a new school. Many ideas were suggested to principals by Joan and Robin to raise their awareness of mobility and to engage in discussions that engendered a sharing of ideas that are currently practised in schools.

DCO also had a display stand throughout the conference where Joan and Robin were able to meet with and discuss the initiatives Defence has in place to assist families. A topic that

came up at almost every discussion was the Defence School Transition Aide Program and the benefits to families from the establishment of such a position.

Defence welcomed visiting principals to Leeuwin Barracks for refreshments one evening during the conference. This hospitality was appreciated by all and especially the overseas principals who thought it was a very special part of the whole experience.

If you would like to know more about education issues for Defence families please see the DCO website or contact Joan Gilbert.

DCO Website:

www.dco.dod.gov.au/dco/dcopublic.nsf

Joan Gilbert
Manager, Education Policy and Special Needs
02 6266 8424



***DFM would like to say a special thank you to Joan Gilbert of DCO for her outstanding contribution on providing education articles, for you and your family.
Editor***

New Book to Help ADF Members and their Families

The Australian Early Childhood Association together with the Defence Community Organisation has produced a new resource to help families manage deployment and the effects it can have on the family.

The new book *Parenting at Home and Away* outlines ways for Australian Defence Force families, and other families in the community, to deal with difficulties brought about when one parent is away from home for significant lengths of time.

The book, *Parenting at Home and Away*, was researched and written by Pam Linke from Child and Youth Health. Pam talked extensively with Defence Families across Australia and the result is a combination of insight and practical approaches that will help parents to cope with travel away.

The book draws together the experiences of Australian Defence Force members and their families who generously shared their experiences, their problems, their personal resources and creativity and combined that with what research and experience tell us about what children need for optimal development.



Launch of the new book

Major issues families are likely to face are also covered as are the needs of children of different ages and different situations. This is a special focus on understanding and managing the feelings that can either support or undermine both parents and children.'

The aim of the book is to provide the information needed to deal with the difficulties and make the most of new learning opportunities that parenting away brings.

Defence families can obtain a copy of the book *Parenting at Home and Away* from the local DCO office.

For further information regarding this book contact Joan Gilbert on 02 6266 8424.

STOP PRESS

Mobility Research: The Research Project 'Changing Schools...its impact on Student Learning', is expected to have been released by the time you receive this magazine. To obtain copies please visit the DCO website listed above. If you require further information please give Joan Gilbert a call on 02 6266 8424.

*Have you been deployed?
Call DCO for help on
1800 020 031*

Defence Choice Housing

As a result of requests by members for greater choice and flexibility in their housing options, Defence has endorsed enhanced housing options for members through a program called Defence Choice Housing. The development of this program has involved consultation with the Defence Housing Authority, the Service Headquarters, Defence Families of Australia (National Consultative Group of Service Families), and the Armed Forces Federation of Australia.

Choice Housing consists of houses that generally do not meet the Service Residence classification requirements but are nonetheless well appointed and typically well located. The basis of Defence Choice Housing is that any deficiency in amenity is offset by another aspect of the house, including the lifestyle choice it offers. Properties such as inner city apartments (and townhouses in some selected localities) and homes in highly sought after locations will be progressively available as part of this program from October 2002.

The proportion of new Defence Choice Housing properties to be provided will be determined on a region by region basis, having regard to the level of interest expressed by members to date. Availability of these properties will be limited in

the early stages of the program in order to gauge the demand.

Any member will be able to select an available Choice House and pay the appropriate contribution based on the classification of the property. Because Defence Choice Housing is optional, rejection of a property will not jeopardise a member's normal housing entitlement. Equally, a member accepting a Choice House does so on an 'as is' basis, that is, the member will not be entitled to further assistance to offset an apparent deficiency in the property (e.g. lack of storage).

Members wishing to obtain further information about Choice Housing and the availability of it in their locality should contact their Housing Management Centre.



DHA review

Corporate Services Infrastructure-WA has conducted a customer satisfaction survey on the performance of the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and TOLL Transitions that shows services are improving.

The survey interviewed 1108 Defence members that were posted to or from Western Australia in the 2001-02 financial year.

According to LCDR Robert Smith, Client Service Manager-Perth, most members contacted now have expressed their satisfaction with the performance of the DHA, with many stating that their removal was the smoothest they had experienced.

'In reviewing the results it is obvious that there has been an improvement. Admittedly the workload has reduced from the peak posting cycle but DHA's commitment to improving their services and their willingness to change their processes has seen the virtual elimination of previous systemic problems,' Robert said.

'While complaints have been received, most occurred during the Christmas posting cycle which accounted for 50 per cent of the total removals conducted for the year.'

If you would like any information about this review, please contact LCDR Robert Smith on 08 9311 2641.

Leaving the Regular Army? Do you want to keep your options open?

The Reserves may be the answer for you. It's a great way to meet good people in your community, and you would be sharing and maintaining those valuable skills you gained from your Regular Service. The Army Reserve is becoming an increasingly important component of the Army, so while you would be working with a different part, you still are a member of the same great team.

Transferring to the Army Reserve means that you also keep many options open. If you separate from Regular Service completely you would need to re-enlist. Reservists only need apply for a transfer to move to the Regular component.

There are also a host of other benefits to consider:

Defence HomeOwner Scheme

The scheme was introduced in 1991 to assist eligible members and ex-members of the ADF to purchase their own home by providing a subsidy on the interest of an \$80 000 home loan. This entitlement can be transferred if you join the Active Reserve with no more than a 21 day break in service.

Tax Free Salary and Allowances

Army Reserve Training Salaries (ARTS) and allowances are tax-exempt. Current reserve rates of pay are available in the PACMAN or the DSA website on:

<http://defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au./dpedsa/>

Study

Active Reservists who meet the criteria can apply for the Defence Assisted Study Scheme. DI(G) PERS 05-1 has more information.

Superannuation

If you are in receipt of a DFRDB pension and undertake full-time service as a Reservist, you can elect to have your contributions paid into the DFRDB scheme. The advantage is that your pension and commutation amounts will be recalculated. For more information please call the Comsuper hotline on 132366.

How do I join?

Call the local Army Personnel Agency in your discharge location to identify the opportunities and options.

Fill out an application for transfer to the Army Reserve when you are at the discharge cell.

Contact: MAJ Helen Stransky
Directorate of Reserves – Army
Phone: 02 6265 5298



Looking for Work? Require Assistance? Yes!! Then Read On

Whether you are posting into a new locality, or are returning to the workforce, the Defence Spouse Employment Assistance Program (SEAP) may be able to help you.

Work Readiness Training using DCO approved Job Network Members (JNM) may be able to assist you with:

- Building self-confidence
- Résumé writing
- Assistance with applications
- Marketing your skills and experience
- Improving interview skills
- Exploring new career paths.

Prior registration with Centrelink is not required to register your interest with a Job Network Member.

Free computer use

DCO maintains 46 community computers around Australia with Internet access to assist you with your job seeking. The computers come with a scanner and laser printer to allow you to prepare and print résumés and job applications.

The computers enable an online search for job vacancies throughout Australia, or direct access through web links to the Job Search database and many other Employment/Recruitment Agencies. Applications can also be entered on the Internet and emailed to employers.

You can use these and other Internet computers to access the DCO website listed below. The site provides information on employment assistance and links to the major online recruitment agencies.

www.dco.dod.gov.au

Defence can assist in registering to work in another State or Territory

If you have relocated and require assistance with registration expenses, short course upgrades or re-registration, Defence can help you through the Professional Registration Expense Payments (PREP) scheme. PREP is very flexible and may be able to assist you if you have changed jobs and incurred any of the above expenses.

Childcare

If at any time during Work Readiness Training or while completing a short upgrade or re-registration course, childcare is required, upon application, DCO can cover these costs.

Please note that all financial assistance extended to the client during Work Readiness Training or re-registration, including childcare, is Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) reportable.

If you would like further information on these and other spouse employment assistance measures please contact FIND for the information or contact details on your nearest DCO office.

FIND

| 800 020 031 |

**Family Information
Network for Defence**

*Have you just arrived in your
new location?*

*Call DCO and ask for the
Family Liaison Officer on
1800 020 031*

Employment Assistance for Partners Revisited

The Defence Spouse Employment Assistance Program (SEAP) is undergoing redevelopment based on recommendations in the recently released review of the program. Copies of the Executive Summary of the review and information on spouse employment initiatives are available from the DCO website listed below.

www.dco.dod.gov.au

What's happened so far?

- A employment project team has commenced working with key stakeholders within Defence, including Defence Families of Australia to develop a new employment assistance program
- A streamlined version of the current program is continuing while the new program is fully developed, and the employment pages on the DCO website are being updated to provide:
 - Information and helpful links on superannuation
 - Information on childcare centres and important contact details.

The review recommended Defence consider the following possibilities:

- Maximising the employment assistance available across Defence
- Meeting a broad range of employment needs
- Using employment professionals
- Assisting with childcare when looking for work
- Expansion of assistance available through the Government employment networks
- Marketing the assistance available to partners

- Additional assistance in remote and isolated communities that have high unemployment levels
- Continuation of Professional Registration Expense Payments
- Availability of DCO Internet computers in all DCO offices and most Defence community and neighbourhood houses
- Ongoing redevelopment of the DCO website.

When is the new program expected?

It is expected that the new program should be ready to be launched around late March to April 2003. Further information on the new program will be provided as the program is developed.

Contact: Allan McGuckin

Phone: 02 6266 8421

Email: allan.mcguickin@defence.gov.au

Contact: Phil Garvin

Phone: 02 6266 8423

Email: philip.garvin@defence.gov.au



Taking it easy for the Christmas & New Year Period

A message from the ADF Drug & Alcohol Program, an initiative of the ADF Mental Health Strategy.

Alcohol is a common part of many social occasions and is widely used and enjoyed by most Australians. There is mounting evidence that low to moderate use of alcohol provides health benefits, however misuse can impact on work, relationships, health, and it is a factor in motor vehicle fatalities and injuries, drowning, and violent assaults.

In the lead-up to the holiday season, it is timely to give some thought to your drinking patterns and how much you drink, to minimise any harmful effects that alcohol may have on your health and well-being. The following guidelines have been developed by the National Health & Medical Research Council to help Australians to make informed choices about alcohol use.

Drinking has a different impact for each of the sexes

To lessen the risks to your health, in the short and long-term, and to gain any longer-term benefits to your health:

- Men should limit their drinks to no more than 28 standard drinks over a week and no more than 6 standard drinks on any one day
- Women should limit their drinks to no more than 14 standard drinks over a week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day
- Both men and women should have one or two alcohol-free days per week.

Drinking increases the risk of something going wrong

If you participate in activities that involve risk or a degree of skill (for instance driving, boating, skiing, or operating machinery), avoid alcohol before and during these activities.

Watch out for your guests

If you are responsible for service of alcohol (for instance at a party or other social function):

- Actively promote responsible drinking
- Try to make sure people being served alcohol do not become intoxicated
- Suggest alternative drinks to alcohol
- Refuse to serve alcohol to people who are intoxicated
- Look for ways to reduce possible causes of harm in the setting
- Closely supervise or monitor young people.

Health and Happiness

If you have a health or social problem related to, or made worse by, alcohol, consider not drinking, stopping drinking for several weeks or months, or drinking at low levels (substantially below the levels indicated for sexes above). If you have developed severe alcohol dependence or have a severe health problem made worse by alcohol you should not drink alcohol at all.

Drinking around those who may have problem

If you have a relative or friend who has, or has had, a problem with alcohol you should be sure to have regular alcohol-free days (one or two days per week) or you might wish to consider not drinking at all if in their presence.

Drinking and Mental Health

If you have a mental health problem, including anxiety or depression and/or problems with sleeping you should be particularly careful to stay within the safe drinking levels listed for sexes, and talk with your doctor or pharmacist about possible side-effects.

Drinking and Medication

If you take medication or other drugs be very cautious about their interaction with alcohol. Up-to-date information on medications that may interact with alcohol can be obtained from the MIMS website listed below, or consult your doctor or pharmacist

www.mims.hcn.net.au

Alcohol can be particularly dangerous, even lethal, when used with medications or other drugs, legal or illegal, that have a similar effect (i.e. that depress the central nervous system).

Drinking and older people

If you are an older person you are advised to consider drinking less than the levels set for sexes.

Drinking and younger people

If you are a young adult (18-25 years) you should be especially careful not to drink beyond the levels listed for sexes; you should not drink at all for at least several hours before undertaking potentially risky activities; and you should not mix alcohol with mood altering drugs.

Drinking and under 18

If you are a young person up to 18 years you should follow the recommendations above and if you choose not to drink, others should support your decision.

Drinking and Pregnancy

If you are pregnant or might soon become pregnant you should consider not drinking at all. If you choose to drink, you should have less than 7 standard drinks over a week and no more than 2 standard drinks (spread over at least 2 hours) on any one day.

Drinking and Social Pressures

If you choose not to drink alcohol you should be supported in your decision and not feel pressured to drink for potential health benefits. Those truly concerned for your well-being will support your decision.

For most Australians, use of alcohol is an enjoyable part of the festivities and celebrations at this time of year and is generally associated with relaxation and socialising. By following the guidelines above, you will be drinking responsibly and your use of alcohol in this manner can contribute to your enjoyment of the season.

Have a merry Christmas, a happy New Year, and a safe holiday period.

Contact: Donna Bull

National Coordinator for ADF
Drug and Alcohol Program

Phone: 02 6266 3230

Email: donna.bull@defence.gov.au

Defence Community Organisation - Sydney West

Community Groups

The Defence Community Organisation (DCO) supports many social groups in the Sydney West area, and anyone in the family of a serving Defence member, married or single, is welcome to attend any or all of the activities on offer.

The groups are funded through the Defence Family Support Funding Program (FSFP) and are assisted by the Family Liaison Officers from the Sydney West office. These groups also have something else in common; they offer friendship and an understanding of the unique lifestyle that Defence families share.

The Family Liaison Officers are available Monday to Wednesday to assist you with any queries you may have concerning these groups. They can also provide you with other community information for your local area.

FLOs Sydney West 02 4587 1130

Some of the Social Groups are as follows:

Tuesday Coffee Break Group meets on 'off-pay' Tuesdays, 10am-12pm at 1 McNamarra Ave, RAAF Base Richmond.

Glenbrook Family Support Group Inc. meets on the third Wednesday of each month, from 9:30am-11:30am and the same evening at 7pm at the DCO Office, Building 91, Defence Establishment Orchard Hills. On site child minding is provided at a cost of \$2 per family.

Baby Bombers Playgroup meets every Tuesday from 9:30am-11:30am and Thursday 9:30am-11:30am at the DCO Office, Building 91, Defence Establishment Orchard Hills.

Playgroup RAAF Richmond meets on Mondays from 10am-12pm at 3 McNamarra Street, RAAF Base Richmond.

Kissingpoint Cottage

Kissingpoint Cottage is a Defence community house that offers a diverse program of activities available to Defence Force Members and their families.

The Kissingpoint Cottage Community House is located at 282 Kissingpoint Road, DUNDAS NSW 2117. Phone or fax the cottage on 02 9874 4052.



Kissingpoint Cottage

Relocating to WA - things to know

Moving house is an often frustrating, and always stressful experience. Especially if the distance is great, such as the opposite of the country! Below are things particular to a WA move that you should know to make the move a bit less stressful, courtesy of the Client Service Manager - Relocations (CSM-R) officers in Perth.

If you're undergoing a WA move, remember that CSM-Rs are there to help. They liaise with Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and TOLL Transitions in the Perth region to assist Defence families in dealing with these organisations, and are located at Building Two, South Leeuwin Barracks in Riverside Road, East Fremantle.

Things to know for a WA move

Depending on where you leave from, it can take between 10 and 21 days for your removal consignment to arrive in Perth. This also applies to the transport of your motor vehicle.

If you have only one vehicle, you need to decide if you want to send your car early enough to arrive at your new locality at the same time as you do, or send it last thing and be without a car for a couple weeks in your new locality. There is no provision for hiring a car at Departmental expense. Keep in mind that if you are posted to HMAS STIRLING or a Western based ship, there is no public transport between Rockingham and Fleet Base West. If you are posted to RAAF Pearce it is about 20 km from the nearest TAASA (Temporary Accommodation Allowance Serviced Apartments) accommodation.

If you are travelling or in TAASA over Christmas and you have purchased Christmas presents before you leave, it is a good idea to bring your kids presents with them to avoid disappointment. Don't pack them in your consignment.

The housing situation in WA is usually quite good, however during peak posting periods there is high demand for housing. To avoid disappointment and the frustration of extended periods in TAASA we suggest that you use Homefind where possible. House Hunting Trips are not normally approved to WA. It can take as

long as two to three weeks for your furniture to arrive, which is usually enough time to find a place to live. Homefind can be used. This of course does not preclude you from requesting a House Hunting Trip as each case is viewed on its merits.

It is important that you read the TOLL 'Easymove Home Guide'. There is important information regarding your entitlements, responsibilities, contractor obligations and phone numbers. For example the Removal Contractor is required by the terms of his contract to unpack your belongings at delivery to your new address. Should the removalist try to dodge his responsibility then TOLL should be contacted immediately on 1800 819 167 or give your friendly Client Services Manager a ring. The guide also outlines the procedure for making a claim if there are items lost or damaged.

Please adhere to quarantine restrictions, no fruit, vegies, plants, seeds or honey. If in doubt contact the WA department of agriculture who will assist you. Quarantine information is provided at all entry points into WA and sniffer dogs are present at the Airport. Custom do make random checks of consignments and if they find seeds, plants etc attached to your lawn mower for example, they will not allow its delivery and you may be made to pay for its cleaning. Therefore make sure you do clean outdoor equipment thoroughly as per the hand book instructions.

The Client Services Manager-Relocations staff of WA wish you all the best for the Christmas season. If you are going on posting in the next cycle we hope you have a pleasant and safe removal. If you are leaving or coming to WA and need assistance from your local CSM-R our contact details for any enquires are below and we would be pleased to here from you if have any difficulties or problems.

Client Services Manager

Bob Smith

08 9311 2641

Robert.Smith6@defence.gov.au

Assistant Client Services Manager

Robin Anderson

08 9311 2628

Robin.Anderson@defence.gov.au

Defence Housing Authority in WA

The Housing Management Centre WA HMC Perth is located in Applecross, which is just off the freeway at the Canning Highway exit. There are two outposts at Rockingham and Bullsbrook. DHA addresses are as follows:

Perth

Level 2
43 Kishorn Road
APPLECROSS WA 6153
Telephone 08 9210 3400
Fax 08 9210 3460

Rockingham

23 Chalgrove Avenue
ROCKINGHAM WA 6168
Telephone 08 9591 4401
Fax 08 9591 4460

Bullsbrook

C/- RAAF Base Pearce
BULLSBROOK WA 6084
Telephone 08 9571 3352
Fax 08 9571 3285

Western Australia Region - DCO

The Defence Community Organisation in Western Australia has a Regional Office located at Leeuwin Barracks and two shop front Offices, one at 23 Chalgrove Avenue Rockingham and the other at RAAF Base Pearce. Australian Defence Force members and their families can contact staff from 0830 - 1630 Monday to Friday at the following addresses:

Defence Community Organisation Leeuwin

Building 2 (North)
Leeuwin Barracks
Riverside Drive,
EAST FREMANTLE WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6160
PH: 08 9311 2310

Defence Community Organisation Rockingham

23 Chalgrove Avenue,
ROCKINGHAM WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6168
PH: 08 9553 5136

Defence Community Organisation Pearce

Family Services Centre
RAAF Base Pearce
BULLSBROOK WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6084
PH: 08 9571 7015

Defence Community Organisation After Hours Emergency service

Officer of the Day HMAS Stirling
08 9553 2679

Duty Officer Leeuwin Barracks
08 9311 2250

If you experience difficulty contacting the Defence Community Organisation contact the Family Information Network for Defence on 1800 020 031.

Websites

You can find more information on the DCO, TOLL Transitions or DHA websites at the following addresses:

www.dco.dod.gov.au
www.tolltransitions.com.au
www.dha.gov.au

DCO Relocation Services

Privacy Issues

Since early 2001, Defence Families of Australia (formerly NCGSF), the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) have been looking at how Defence shares information to improve the relocations process, particularly between DHA and DCO.

One outcome was the discovery that the Privacy Amendment (Public Sector) Act 2000 does not allow for the transfer of information from DHA to DCO without the informed consent of the member. The application of this Act meant that DCO could no longer use DHA data for the purpose of providing information and services to members and their families unless this consent had been obtained.

What Has Been Done?

DFA, DHA and DCO have worked closely together to overcome this problem. DHA has reworded the Application for Relocation (AFR) which now informs members that their details may be passed to the Department of Defence for the provision of relocation services. These new forms will be used from October 2002 onwards. The significant role of DFA in ensuring this problem was finally resolved, and the cooperation of DHA in reproducing the AFR, has been outstanding and enabled DCO to continue to support to our mobile members and their families.

However, DCO is unable to use the DHA data obtained prior to October 2002 for

the provision of information and services to relocating members and families, which could affect up to 5000 members. DCO is addressing this issue through a number of actions such as using the DHA Relocations Pack, PMKeyS data, and Posting Orders to contact members prior to relocation; however, it is expected that many members will not be identified.

What Can You Do?

Anyone who received an AFR prior to October 2002, and did not receive a DCO Welcome Book in their DHA Relocations Pack, should either contact their local DCO Office or call the Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) on 1800 020 031. They will organise an information pack for your new posting location and can provide advice, or answer any questions you may have, about how DCO can assist you with your move.

Additionally, members are encouraged to check their details on PMKeyS by contacting their Orderly Room, Admin Officer, Shopfront, or Customer Service Centre as appropriate to ensure that this information is correct. Please note that defence FAMILY MATTERS uses this information to address the magazine, so if your details are not corrected when you move you may miss out on future editions.

If you are on the move, please assist DCO to provide you with information and services that aim to improve your relocation - contact FIND 1800 020 031 or your local DCO office for advice on the range of services available to assist you through this period.



DEFENCE



Puckaonline

By MAJ C.E. Whitting

The Puckaonline website is a joint initiative involving Land Warfare Development Centre, Puckapunyal and District Neighbourhood Centre, Defence Community Organisation, and the Action Plan for People Team.

Puckaonline is a cooperative program, with a focus on Army personnel, to members and families being posted to Puckapunyal, intended as a one-stop shop for Puckapunyal destined personnel. The information is also available as a CD for those with a computer but without internet access, and as a brochure to augment the 'Welcome Pack'.

The website aims help ease the posting transition, while at the same time, informing families of the often-unheralded benefits of a posting to Puckapunyal. The website gives families direct access to education, housing, employment, health and a variety of other facilities on base and across the local region as soon as they receive their posting orders. In addition to the functions already mentioned, puckaonline also provides information and links to tourism, entertainment, fitness, Defence and community sites as well as providing children and teenagers with their own web links.

For example, a family currently posted to Darwin could access the various schools online in the Seymour region, contacting them and registering their children prior to even departing Darwin. Further, parents can contact local doctors through the health link to make them aware of their children's needs and assessing their ability to provide assistance, well before departing their locality. The always onerous task of selecting a house is now made easier through the housing link to DHA. Although much of the application can be done online, contact names and numbers allow members to discuss their requirements in person with DHA professionals.

Puckapunyal recognises the importance of spouse employment when relocating, and has provided spouses and partners with the opportunity to contact employment

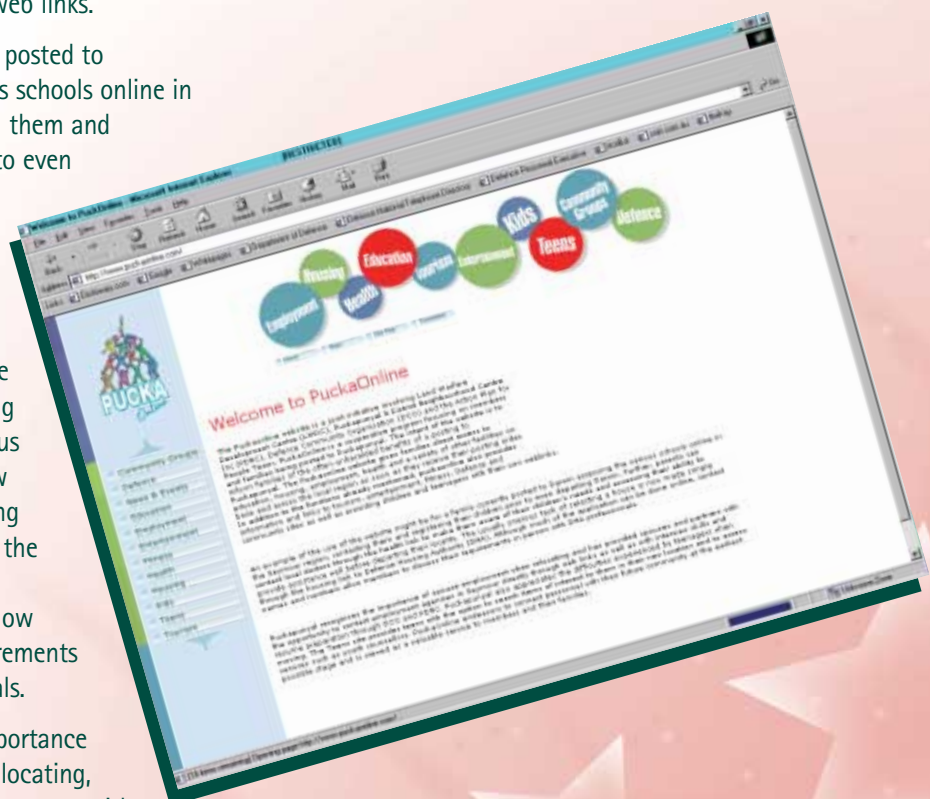
agencies in Seymour directly through web links as well as with interview skills and résumé preparation through DCO.

Puckapunyal also appreciates the difficulties experienced by teenagers when moving and the Teens site provides teens with the option to not only search items of interest to them in their new location but even links to confidential counsellors in the event of difficulties.

The website endeavours to connect personnel with their future community at the earliest possible stage and as such, is viewed very much as a valuable service to members and their families.

The website provides a service to members, a means of promoting the benefits of a Seymour posting and improving the Army's knowledge about Puckapunyal as well as complementing retention initiatives. Puckaonline is only part of a larger overall plan involving the redevelopment of Puckapunyal that includes modern housing, a recognition of the importance of spouse employment, a \$1.7 million children's centre and a holistic approach to education from kindergarten through to grade 12.

Check it out at www.puckaonline.com



Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year

from everyone at Toll Transitions

In the Spring edition of Defence Family Matters we outlined how to organise your removal. By now many Defence families will have moved or are about to move. In this edition we again ask families to consult their Easymove Home kit for removal information, and we highlight the process for unpacking and carton collection, and making a claim for any lost or damaged goods.

Unpacking & Carton Collection

At Delivery the Provider (removalist) will:

- Park the removal vehicle on the road adjoining the house. If you allow the vehicle to be parked elsewhere, you may be responsible if buildings, lawns and driveways are damaged
- Carry out the delivery within reasonable hours
- Place your furniture and cartons in any reasonable position you request of them. Our contract requires removalists to place items only once
- Unpack all cartons, except those containing clothing. Call Toll Transitions on 1800 819 167 immediately if they refuse to unpack cartons
- Reassemble all furniture they dismantled at uplift
- Unpack all containers, except clothing, no matter who packed them. The removalist is not required to put items away in cupboards
- Protect surfaces onto which they unpack, such as dining tables, with pads and cloths
- Remove all cartons, paper and debris associated with removal
- Provide you with your copy of the ICR which you must sign after you have recorded any obvious losses or damages on it - note; if you disagree with the removalist's notations, briefly record your concerns before you sign the document

- NOTE: Toll Transitions Indemnity cover will not apply to items in cartons or containers you elect to unpack unless there is loss of, or obvious damage to the carton. If you choose to unpack cartons, note and initial this on the ICR against the item number of the carton(s) concerned e.g. against items 154, 16, 192 note 'owner unpack' and enter your initials
- If you elect to unpack cartons the removalist will return to collect the empty cartons within two weeks of your delivery, provided you have flattened the cartons and stored the waste wrapping paper in mattress covers, or similar. Removalists are not required to pick up wet or damaged cartons or paper.

Recently Moved?

Indemnity Scheme

Toll Transitions and its panel of Providers observe the highest possible service standards in each removal. Occasionally, despite everyone's best efforts, loss or damage can occur. If this happens, you are covered through Toll Transitions Indemnity Scheme for any removal related loss or damage to your household and personal effects. In its Indemnity arrangements, Toll Transitions will make good any damage or loss to your personal effects, provided it is as a result of your removal. We will arrange repairs where practicable and, where not, we will replace the item with a like one, or pay compensation based on its repair or cost of replacement with a like item. Do not replace lost or damaged items until you have Toll Transitions' approval to do so. If you do, you will not be covered by our indemnity.

Your effects are covered to a maximum of \$100,000 as part of the arrangements between Toll Transitions and Dept of Defence. You may purchase Top-Up Indemnity at your own cost if your inventory value exceeds this amount.

If an item is damaged beyond economical repair Toll Transitions will, as its first option, offer to replace the item with a like item. For example, our offer would be to replace a three-year-old Phillips sound system in reasonable condition with a Phillips sound system of similar age, style and condition. Our

staff will manage the transaction throughout and any transportation and installation costs will be met by Toll Transitions. Should you choose not to have an item made good - repaired or replaced - and you ask for cash compensation the amount we pay you will be based on the cost of repairing the item, or of purchasing it from a reseller (usually a second hand dealer) and delivering it to your residence.

The Indemnity Scheme does not offer any form of 'new for old' replacement.

Where you are compensated to the full value of an item the item concerned will always become the property of Toll Transitions and we will make suitable arrangements for its collection. If an item is lost in a removal we will try to replace it using the same principle as for damaged items, using information we obtain from you. If this is not possible, or if you prefer to be paid compensation, the figure will be arrived at as we do for damaged items. The value you give to an item on your inventory we will take as a guide only. Toll Transitions employees will use the many means at their disposal to determine the value of an item at the time it is lost or damaged. Repair or replacement action or payment of compensation will be based on that assessed value.

If you have not moved with us before or if you have not lodged a claim, we recommend you talk to our staff about how the Indemnity Scheme operates. In the event of loss or damage, call Toll Transitions on 1800 819 167 immediately. The sooner you do, the sooner we can help you.

Damage to Essential Items

If essential items such as your washing machine, refrigerator, clothes dryer, television or microwave are inoperable, we will arrange for immediate repair or hire of a loan item. Call us on 1800 819 167.

If you need to lodge a claim:

- You will find a claim form in your Easymove Home Kit. If you need assistance call our Toll Transitions Freecall number - 1800 819 167.
- Claims should be lodged with Toll Transitions within 14 days of your delivery. If you are unable to do so, please call 1800 819 167 to advise us of the delay.

Conditions

- Any claim determined to be fraudulent will not be met, and as appropriate, further action may be taken
- Check the list above for items which are not covered by the Indemnity Scheme
- Any item replaced by a like item, or for which the equivalent compensation is paid, becomes the property of Toll Transitions. We will arrange with you to collect such items.

Damage to property

The Toll Transitions Indemnity Scheme covers only your movable furniture, clothing and other household goods. If, as part of your removal, the removalist damages your residence, outbuildings or letterbox, you should attempt to resolve the matter with the removalist. If you are unable to do so, contact Toll Transitions on 1800 819 167. Ideally, this contact should be made while the removalist is still at your residence, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Appeal process

If you disagree with our employee's decision on how your claim is dealt with you may ask us to review the evidence. If having done so you believe the matter has not been properly dealt with you may ask your CSM-R to arrange an Appeal hearing.



Thank You and Merry Christmas to DCO

Reflecting on Brian Adams' (Head, Defence Personnel Executive) words, we know that there is always more that we here at Defence can do to improve conditions for you and your family.

Recognising that, I think it is important to take a moment to applaud the hard work that the people of the Defence Community Organisation do behind the scenes for all of us here in the Defence community.

We often only hear of DCO when things go wrong or when there is a crisis. It is easy to forget the invisible work that goes on day after day in improving the policy that impacts on, and improves your life.

The people of DCO have your best interests at heart and we thank them and wish them all the very best for 2003.

Editor

