



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP
Minister for Defence

THE HON. WARREN SNOWDON MP
Minister for Defence Science and Personnel

Saturday, 2 May 2009

**DEFENCE FAMILIES TO RECEIVE IMPROVED
SUPPORT**

The Minister for Defence, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP, and the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, the Hon Warren Snowdon MP, announced today that Australian Defence Force families will receive an additional \$55 million in support systems as a direct result of the Defence White Paper.

“The support of Defence families is integral to the morale, performance and retention of our men and women in uniform,” Mr Snowdon said.

“This funding will be used to create eight new Community Development Officers to help Defence families make links with their communities and develop social networks and systems of support in each of their posting locations.

“It forms part of a new “empowering” strategy to provide Defence families with the tools they need to be settle into their new communities as quickly and easily as possible.

“The additional Community Development Officers will also form vital partnerships between businesses, governments, and the wider Defence community that families rely on when they move into new areas.

“Defence will also provide support to Defence Community Groups through increased training and technical advice,” Mr Snowdon said.

In addition, post-deployment support will be introduced to families of Reserve members, including counselling and referral to other relevant community services.

“Currently, Reservists are deploying on operations for war-like service, peacekeeping or in humanitarian roles along side their regular counterparts. This initiative will mean that if the family is experiencing difficulty during the year after deployment, they can access appropriate advice and support services to ensure that emerging issues are dealt with by the family as a whole,” Mr Snowdon said.

Mr Snowdon also said that the Government was extending the trial health care arrangements announced in the 2008-09 Budget, and has committed additional funding over the next three years to progressively deliver basic medical and dental care to Defence families.

The 2009 Defence White Paper represents the most comprehensive statement on Defence ever produced. It affirms the Government's commitment to the defence of Australia, the protection of our sovereign interests and the security and stability of our region.

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