

www.dsnsng.org.au

1800 037 674

ABN 68 090 485 608



Information for
Supporting Partners



PROGRAM
INFORMATION FOR
FAMILIES



LOCAL EVENTS AND
ACTIVITIES

DEFENCE SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT GROUP



Defence
Community
Organisation



aspenmedical

TOLL





The Hon Darren Chester MP

I am honoured to support the Defence Special Needs Support Group (DSNSG) as Co-Patron alongside the Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell. This gives me the opportunity to help raise awareness of the important work the group does in providing information and assistance to Defence families with special needs, both through its network of local support groups and nationally.

As a community, we must continue to nurture these support groups, making sure they have the required resources to support the needs of families in their area. The coordinators of each of these local groups are volunteers and are often family members of those with special needs, yet they give their time and efforts to generously help other families.

Through Defence People Group's Defence Community Organisation, Defence works very closely with the DSNSG to support delivery of information, assistance and advocacy for ADF families with dependants who have special needs. The DSNSG has received a Family Support Funding Program grant for 2018–19. This grant will allow the DSNSG to continue offering quality community support and engagement initiatives. An example of these initiatives is the *For Your Information* program, which provides the opportunity for families to attend workshops or listen to guest speakers regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder.

I know the work of the DSNSG has already had a significant impact on the lives of Defence families with special needs. In just over two decades, since it was established, the DSNSG has become a well-respected, national organisation of more than 3,000 families in Australia and overseas. While it can still be challenging for families to move from posting to posting, many organisations and service providers are now more aware of the additional hurdles faced by families with special needs. A number of new provisions have been implemented, such as the ability to transfer disability equipment on loan from a state or territory equipment scheme across borders.

I commend all of those associated with the DSNSG. You should be very proud of what you have all achieved through your hard work and dedication to such an important cause. Already, the group's credibility is such that other organisations are tapping into your networks to provide information for families, and the group is actively sought out for advice in relation to disability issues.

I am excited about the new projects DSNSG is working on to further assist families with special needs and I look forward to seeing the group continue to grow in both its outreach and reputation.

Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester



General Angus Campbell AO, DSC



**A MESSAGE FROM THE
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE**

As we pause to reflect on 2018, there is nothing more significant than the wellbeing of all those who serve in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and their families. It has been another exceptionally busy year for the ADF and I greatly value and appreciate the contributions made by Defence families and friends. None of this would be possible without your continued support. I am acutely aware of the additional pressure and responsibility that military life places on families and friends, and I welcome the support provided by the Defence Special Needs Support Group.

With over 4000 ADF families identifying as having a dependent with special needs, the Defence Special Needs Support Group provides invaluable assistance, ensuring a coordinated approach to assisting families in a range of circumstances and locations. At this time of year, I know many families will be dealing with the stress involved in relocating and trying to re-establish themselves in a new location. This can be a challenging period and I thank the local Defence Special Needs Support Group organisations all over the country who assist our families in settling and making the transition as smooth as possible.

To all members of the Defence Special Needs Support Group, and the family and friends who care for those with special needs, thank you for the invaluable support you provide to our ADF families. Wherever you are this festive season, my wife Stephanie and I wish you and your family a safe and merry Christmas, and a happy new year.



National Coordinator Sandy Soulsby

Throughout 2018 the National Executive Committee along with our wonderful Coordinators have been working with many stake holders to help improve services for our members.

As your National Coordinator I aim to support Defence Families and educate people about the uniqueness of special needs and promote the group to the wider community.

We have been honoured to have Air Commodore Henrik Ehlers AM, to accept the task of being our first ever Ambassador for the Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc.

2018 has also seen a great step forward with the Honourable Darren Chester MP joining us as a National Co-Patron. We also have the honour of the new Chief of The Defence Force General Angus Campbell AO, DSC joining us as a National Co-Patron.

Being a volunteer can be a very demanding role at times and with this I would like to thank all of our National Executive Committee and Coordinators for the time they give to help improve our member's lives.

I would like to make a special mention to Karen Dobbin for her continued help and effort over the last 21 years as a volunteer for the Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc. Karen has gone above and beyond to help our new Treasurer when she first started in her role, even though Karen had retired from this position. Karen also has been helping the Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc as our Storage Unit Coordinator for the past couple of years. Thank You Karen for all your help.

I would like to thank our CEO Mrs Kim Collins for all her hard work and dedication to her job. Kim is a great source of knowledge and help for me in my role as National Coordinator.

I would like to thank our Supporting Partners: Defence Health, APS Benefits, Aspen Medical, Defence Housing Australia, Toll Transitions and Navy Health.

I would also like to thank the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) AND Defence Families of Australia (DFA) for their continued relationship with us in improving Defence Special Needs family's lives.

This is the time of the year when a lot of our families will be relocating and along with this will come a lot of stresses. Please remember we are all here to help make your transition as smooth as possible.

I would like to wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas, may the joys of the season fill your heart with goodwill and cheer, may the chimes of Christmas glory add up more shine and spread smiles across the miles, today and in the New Year.



Chief Executive Officer Kim Collins

Well, what a busy year it's been, they just keep getting faster. One minute we are setting the goals for the year and the next thing we know we are setting the table for Christmas and going on holidays. Most people will be looking forward to a well-earned rest over Christmas and to spend time with family and friends and ponder what 2019 will bring. In 2018 we have focused towards addressing issues that our families face on a day to day basis, during postings and after postings with complex special needs.

We produced an annual report outlining the ongoing issues faced by families.

- Transitioning to Schools
- Employment for Spouses
- Financial Strains on our Special Needs Families
- Posting Issues
- Family Support
- Welfare Issues
- Removals and Housing Issues

We also spoke about our achievements for 2018

- Introducing of our National Ambassador Henrik Ehlers, AM
- Introducing our National Co-Patrons, The Hon Darren Chester MP, LT GEN Angus Campbell, AO, DSC
- Introducing of our Mascot Henry S Bear
- Introducing of our Special Needs Booklet
- MOU between Defence Health and Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our valued members and supporting partners for their ongoing support and we wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Safe, Healthy and Prosperous New Year in 2019.

Please see our website www.dsnsq.org.au for contact details along with Christmas shut down details.

I would personally like to say Thank You to the National Executive Committee and the Local Coordinators and our Ambassador Henrik Ehlers for a wonderful year with great achievements, and wishing you all a wonderful and happy and safe new year.

National Committee

National Coordinator/Secretary

Sandy Soulsby:

national.coordinator@dsnsq.org.au

0412 012 583

Assistant National Coordinator

Cherie Davis:

cherie.davis@dsnsq.org.au

0417 182 233

Assistant National Coordinator

Claire Macfarlane-Rowles:

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0415 737 116

National Treasurer

Melissa Snell:

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0448 608 611

National Memberships and Communications Officer

Rebecca Cant:

rebecca.cant@dsnsq.org.au

0429 326 499

CEO

Kim Collins:

CEO@dsnsq.org.au

1800 037 674

0447 851 861



Hi members, Rebecca here from Memberships. Thank you for your patience and continued support this past year during the membership update. This has been a challenging, rewarding, mindboggling task as a volunteer, with over 4000 combined (members & dependents) information to check, amend & record. Membership update letters were emailed & sent by mail, SMS mobile phone messages were also sent out with a request to contact memberships.

If you haven't received an e-newsletter, local event information or have not had contact from a coordinator this year please email memberships@dsnsg.org.au Your contact information may not be up to date.

Relocation Reminder send memberships your new contact details.

The DSNSG Facebook page is a member's only access support page designed for members to be able to voice their concerns, offer location advice & give support to each other through tough times. If you have a friend who you know would like to gain access, they will need to email memberships@dsnsg.org.au to obtain a membership application form or confirm their DSNSG membership. Membership forms are also available on the website: dsnsg.org.au

Have you looked at the new DSNSG Website? It's now easier to navigate & read.

Happy holidays & safe travels. I look forward to assisting you in the new year.

Rebecca Cant. Memberships & Communications Officer.

Northern Territory

0427 220 820

Tindal/Katherine: Colin Pickstone

katherine@dsnsg.org.au

Darwin: Vacant

darwin@dsnsg.org.au

Queensland

Amberley: Kirsten Pini

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Brisbane: Vacant

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Darling Downs: Staci Foot

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0455 901 395

Townsville: Cherie Davis

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Townsville: Helen Taylor

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South Australia

Adelaide and Woodside: Kristina

Rawlinson

adelaide@dsnsg.org.au

woodside@dsnsg.org.au

Townsville News

Townsville was donated a Signed 2018 Cowboy's Jersey and the Townsville RSL has supplied sponsorship towards getting the jersey framed so that we can raffle it off to raise funds for our Townsville families. The Cowboy's Jersey is on display at the Townsville RSL and will be drawn on Friday 14th December, time TBA anyone wishing to purchase tickets can purchase them at Townsville RSL, Bluewater Medical Practice, Little Snappers Swim School Deeragun or contact either Helen or myself for tickets. \$2 per ticket or 3 for \$5.



Canberra News

Over the last 12 months as coordinator of DSNSG, I have been working with DCO and the new EDLO here in the ACT. The aim of this was to introduce myself to the DSTA and DTM in the Canberra region, and to promote Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc.

This has included speaking at their meetings, attending various events such as the Professional Development Day, Coffee mornings at local schools, and sitting down one on one with the DSTA/DTM discussing how DSNSG could assist families in their school.

The feedback to this has been well received, with families contacting myself as they were not aware of DSNSG and the services offered.

Building this rapport has meant that I am able to assist families better when they contact DSNSG in relations to schooling for their child. I can point them towards to right people to speak with and provide them correct and up to date information. I am looking forward building and growing this relationship with DCO, EDLO, DSTA and DTM in the Canberra region.



Local Coordinators

Victoria

Cerberus/Mornington: Marina Talbot

mornington@dsnsq.org.au

0417 636 541

Melbourne North: Vacant

melbourne.north@dsnsq.org.au

Melbourne West: Vacant

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Puckapunyal: Vacant

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Sale: Vacant

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ACT

Canberra: Claire Macfarlane-Rowles

canberra@dsnsq.org.au

0415 737 116

Western Australia

Perth: Joanne Rossiter

perth@dsnsq.org.au

0422 467 359

Perth North: Vacant

perth@dsnsq.org.au

**Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc
Christmas Announcement**

DSNSG will be closing the following programs over the Christmas Break from the 30th of November till 4th of February 2019.

Drive Safe, C4K, FYI

The following programs will continue over the Christmas Break
FECF, Posting Plans

The National Helpline will be closed from the 6th of December 2018 till the 14th of December, and again from the 21st of December till the 28th of December 2018.

Over this period if you are needing assistance, please email the National Executive Committee on nationalcommittee@dsnsg.org.au, or call DCO helpline on 1800 624 608

The National Executive Committee and our CEO will be on a well deserved break over this period.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.





Perth Report for 2018 – Joanne Rossiter

In January this year my family was posted to HMAS Stirling WA and in April I applied for the volunteer position for the Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc Coordinator for Perth. This year I have made great gains in connecting with our local defence resources and making them aware of the Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc and the resources we provide for our families.

Defence Community Organisations have been a great resource in helping me connect with our local families in Perth through inviting me to their coffee catch ups, and family events held both south of the river. They have been a great opportunity for local RAAF, Army and Navy families to form connections. It was a lovely way to end the year attending DCO's afternoon teas in the park both South and North of the river consolidating relationships developed throughout the year with DCO and families.

I was privileged to get to know the now outgoing Defence Families Association WA delegate Victoria Dixon, a wealth of knowledge and wish her well with her new posting next year. I look forward to getting to know the new incoming delegate Ashley Smith.

It's been great to see the initiative taken by some RAAF spouses North of the river in forming the Pearce Families group this year, with the aim to connect and support partners and families posted to RAAF base Pearce. This group fills a much-needed gap.

A highlight for me this year was attending HMAS Stirling annual walk to work day for a 6.4km walk across the causeway to the Stirling Sports Field. This annual event promotes regular exercise and a cleaner environment. It was a great opportunity to develop broader relationships with the wider defence community at HMAS Stirling.

Ending 2018 on a high I was fortunate to be invited to the Defence Transition Mentor networking meeting where I got to meet the EDLO and speak to all the mentors about DSNSG, who we are and all the programs we provide. It was great then to sit in and learn more about the DTM and how they work within the schools. I am looking forward to 2019 to consolidate all the connections I have made this year.

New South Wales

Wagga Wagga: Vacant
waggawagga@dsnsq.org.au

Albury/Wodonga: Kylie Bonnor
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 0402 835 249

Sydney North: Vacant
sydney.north@dsnsq.org.au

Sydney South: Vacant
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Richmond: Vacant
richmond@dsnsq.org.au

Liverpool: Vacant
liverpool@dsnsq.org.au

Tamworth: Vacant
tamworth@dsnsq.org.au

Nowra: Nicole Gourley
nowra@dsnsq.org.au
 0401 415 799

TASMANIA

Tasmania: Vacant
tasmania@dsnsq.org.au

We are currently looking for Coordinators for the following areas:

Cairns, Liverpool, Melbourne North, Melbourne West, Perth North, Wagga Wagga, Richmond, and Sydney North, Sydney South, Puckapunyal, Darwin, Sale

*****Full training provided*****

If you are interested please contact the National Coordinator on 1800 037 674 or email national.coordinator@dsnsq.org.au



Adelaide Coordinator Introduction

Hi, my name is Kristina Rawlinson and I am the DSNSG area Coordinator for Adelaide.

My family and I have been part of the Defence community with the RAAF for the last 9 years.

Throughout this time, we have had posting to a variety of locations around Australia such as Wagga Wagga, Tindal, East Sale, Townsville and currently Adelaide.

I'm a mum of 3 children, 2 who have additional needs. A 10yr old with ASD/ADHD and a 5yr old with hearing loss and speech difficulties.

I look forward to meeting you all so please if you see me out and about come and say hello!



Amberley Coordinator Event

On Friday 30th November our Amberley families got together at the Ripley Providence community centre for a 'coffee catch up'.

We were joined by Chris Jones, EDLO for Southern QLD, as well as Rebecca from DCO BRISBANE and Debra Fairbanks - Smith from Defence Health.

We had a chance meeting with some local staff from NDIS partner, EACH who spotted our banner and popped in to say hello and answer some questions about the NDIS.

The children had fun using liquid chalk on a chalkboard floor mat and colouring in some special Christmas themed colouring sheets.

Defence Health provided our afternoon tea, which was a lovely antipasto platter and fruit platter, which everyone enjoyed.

It was a lovely, relaxed catch up for our group.



Grants - APS Benefits (Supporting Partner)

This grant can assist families with special needs to obtain equipment or other requirements relating to the person with special needs. Equipment, diagnostic appointments etc. This is a grant; therefore, you do not have to pay any of the money back. It is wise to sit down and really work out what you would like to have this grant help with and put it all together as one. APSBG will consider applications from families with Special Needs to assist with the purchase of equipment and other requirements relating to the applicant's needs.

However, please note that at least one member of the family must be a current member of the APS Benefits Group (for at least 12 months) to be eligible for consideration.

These approved funds are grants and do not need to be repaid. It is best to sit down and really think about what you require. The grant can be up to \$4000 to help cover the cost. If you can provide quotes and receipts that would help with the process of application.

To find out more about how to apply for this program please email

CEO@dsnsq.org.au

Computer4Kids (DSNSG Program funded by Defence Health - Supporting Partner)

Computer4Kids is a program in place to assist with the purchase of an iPad for families to use to support their child or children with special needs. iPads can be a useful tool to help with their education and everyday living skills. An iPad is a great form of assistance as it is portable, lightweight and can be taken everywhere as it takes up minimal space.

Families can download great applications suitable for the individual learning needs of their child. There are many applications to assist with behavior, motor skills, learning, literacy, numeracy and can be an essential tool for communication.

NOTE - There is a contribution fee that is payable to DSNSG from the families that access this program. You must also be a member of DSNSG for a min of 6 months.

To find out more about or to apply for this program please visit our website or please email computer4kids@dsnsq.org.au



Drive Safe - (DSNSG Program funded by Aspen Medical - Supporting Partner)

Our Drive Safe program assists and helps members of our DSNSG families with ASD, ADHD and Asperger's to gain confidence and self-esteem when learning to drive (16 years and above).

This program was developed as there was a need for teenaged and or older adults with disabilities needing specialised training and assistance to gain their driving licence.

Having a licence can offer a sense of responsibility and make job hunting more accessible to young men and women and in turn help to reduce the financial strain of having special needs.

To find out more or to apply for this program please

email drivesafe@dsnsg.org.au



National Parent to Parent Network – (DSNSG Program)

National Parent to Parent Network is designed to assist parent's contacting other parents who have children with similar needs. It can also work with a spouse contacting another spouse who has a similar or same special need.

It works in two ways – formal contact and informal contact.

1. Formal Contact

This is where a family may ask if someone else in the group has similar special needs and whether they could make contact with them. The National Coordinator or the Membership / Coordinator (or other NC member if requested) could then ring the other family and ask them if they could help out. Phone numbers are then exchanged, and the families talk to each other.

Formal contact can also be done by the local Coordinator, who might ring one of their families to help out another one of their families.

It is very important that confidentiality is maintained, and that phone numbers or details cannot be given out without permission of the family concerned.

1. Informal Contact

This informal contact is done via the DSNSG Facebook page where a family might put up a request for information and other families respond. There is no intervention by the National Committee or Local Area Coordinators in this case.

The National Parent to Parent Network has the ability to provide support and information, along with increasing the networks of the families involved. It also helps to reduce stress and anxiety as the family knows that they are not alone in dealing with the issues they have.

To find out more about or to apply

for this program please email

memberships@dsnsg.org.au



Family Emergency Care Plans - FECP (DSNSG Program)

The DSNSG Family and Emergency Care Plan is a tool that can be used by Defence families with special needs to help assist with the care of their loved one. It is based on existing type care plans and health care records but differs in that the Family and Emergency Care Plan will be tailored to meet the specific requirements of Defence families i.e. mobility and deployments.

The Family and Emergency Care Plan is primarily used for families who have the serving member deployed or absent on military duties (field, courses, exercises, on duty etc.) but is available to all our special needs families, **free of charge**.

For families where the member is absent on military duties, this means that the primary carer is left alone to care for the person with special needs. We have found through past experience that if the primary carer has suddenly taken ill then there is no readily available information in place to assist for when another person has to come in and provide immediate care to the special needs person i.e. what the normal daily routine is, what medication should be given, when and much more.

For families who use respite, Family Emergency Care Plan would solve the problem of instant repeating of information when a new support worker is put into the home or for emergency care. The information is then readily available for the new support worker to read.

The DSNSG Family Emergency Care Plan is laid out in folder format. The forms contained within are specifically tailored to meet the requirements of our families.

In addition, the following emergency items are also included - carer ID wallet card (identifying that the person is a carer), sticker to put on a window of car to identify that someone in the car has special needs and may need additional assistance/support in the event of an accident.

The program coordinator will hold a copy of all forms that the families have filled out. So that if an emergency service rings the 1800 037 674 number, quoting the reference number, we can easily track down the correct forms and let them know the emergency care plan for your family and help the person who will be caring for your family in the case of an emergency. **ALL FORMS WILL BE KEPT PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL, ONLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE CEO.**

To find out more about or to apply for this program please email

fecp@dsnsg.org.au



Posting Plan Program

Posting Plans are designed to assist a family with their posting in relation to the requirements of the person who has special needs.

The plan is put together by the National Coordinator in consultation with the family and may cover:

1. Travel
2. Housing
3. Housing modifications
4. Early Intervention Programs
5. Schooling
6. Equipment
7. Support Groups
8. Respite
9. Post School Options
10. Employment
11. Medications
12. Medical and Hospital
13. Therapy
14. DCO SN Policy – Assessment of Assistance on Posting (or Recognition of Special Needs)



The purpose of a Posting Plan is to identify and look at what is required in the new location for the person with special needs and how to access or implement what is required so that the transition from the old location to the new location is made more smoothly.

The National Coordinator manages the Posting Plan, helps the family identify and locate appropriate services and where necessary seeks additional advice and support on behalf of the family.

To find out more about or to apply for this program please email CEO@dsnsq.org.au





For Your Information – FYI (DSNSG Program)

FYI is a program that provides the opportunity for families to attend workshops or guest speakers at a greatly reduced cost.

DSNSG typically charges members a fee towards the cost of the workshop with DSNSG paying the rest of the full ticket price.

Due to the lack of formal and informal support available when families have to relocate, we understand this can place extra pressures which compound the stress with families. The aim of this program is to assist families in networking within their own peer support structure to gather information and ideas to ultimately decrease the isolation and stress that can often affect families with Special Needs.

The National Committee try to gather information in relation to various workshops that may be happening around Australia but sometimes it is hard to keep up to date.

We do appreciate information in regard to Education sessions, Seminars and Workshops that may be happening in your area. If you know of one happening in your area please provide us with a minimum of 8 weeks' notice, to ensure that we can send information to families with enough time to purchase tickets.

Details can be sent to

fyi@dsnsg.org.au



FAMILY EVENTS

Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc are proud to announce the introduction of a new program for our families. **Family Events!** After receiving much feedback from DSNSG members over the course of the last few years, many families have expressed that they would like more locally based community events that help to connect them with other DSNSG families in location.

Your local area Coordinator has the responsibility of organising these events. Details will be forwarded onto you through local newsletters, emails and in the DSNSG Facebook group. Coordinators and local families are able to suggest an event and if the National Committee approve, then details and Expressions of Interests are sent out to families. If sufficient expressions of interest are received, then families will be notified that the event will go ahead.

Some examples of Family Events are:

- ◆ Locally Based Special Needs Information Sessions
- ◆ Respite Weekends Away
- ◆ Family Fun Days
- ◆ Movie Nights etc.

If you know of any events that would benefit your local DSNSG group can you please make contact with your local area Coordinator at the relevant email address listed in this newsletter



Defence Community Organisation

For Australian Defence Force members and their families

Defence Community Organisation (DCO) offers a range of programs and services to help Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families manage military life. DCO's range of support includes local area office support, transition to civilian life post a military career, assistance with partners' employment, help with accessing childcare, help for families during crisis and emergency, relocation support, educational support for children and assistance for families when ADF members are deployed.

Posting to a new location?

Relocation due to posting is an integral feature of Defence life, which means you may periodically be required to move away from your established support networks and familiar resources. Connecting with your new community can help you access existing support mechanisms in place in the area, create new support networks, and find out about local resources, services and goings-on.

One great way to get to know about your local community is to come along to a DCO welcome event in early 2019. There are events for ADF members and their families at most major Defence locations across the country. While these welcome events are especially helpful for ADF families who have recently posted into the area, everyone's invited! Whether you're a single ADF member, a couple or family, it's a great opportunity to spend time at a relaxed social occasion where you can meet other Defence families and get to know more about the services and support available.

To find more information about welcome events in your region, visit [Events](#) on the Defence Community Organisation website.

Support is available throughout the holidays

Defence Community Organisation is available to support members and their families throughout the holiday season. Your local DCO office may be closed for a short time between Christmas and New Year. However, the Defence Family Helpline will continue to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Defence Family Helpline is your first point of call for support, information and connection with your community, including your local DCO team. It's staffed by qualified human services professionals, including social workers and psychologists.

The Helpline will continue to process applications for support for special needs families throughout the Christmas/New Year period, although some non-urgent requests that rely on other areas of Defence may not be able to be completed until the end of the Defence reduced activity period in mid-January.

You can contact the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 or by emailing defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

Find the information and resources you need

The DCO website contains a host of information about the support programs and services Defence Community Organisation provides to ADF families including those with family members who have special needs.

If you're new to the Defence Special Needs Support Group, and want to know more about how to have your dependant with special needs recognised and what support is available, visit the [special needs](#) section of the DCO website.

If you are looking for other information about absence from home support, partner employment, or local schools with Defence school mentors, or want to contact staff at your local DCO office, you can find it all at

www.defence.gov.au/dco.

Keep an eye out for our upcoming issue of *Defence Family Matters* magazine, which will hit mail boxes and the DCO website in December. There's a great story featuring Kirsten Pini, the newly appointed Amberley DSNSG coordinator, and her family.

DCO is also on social media, so to keep up to date with family events and activities in your area, follow Defence Community Organisation on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram so you don't miss out!



[20180208raaf8194170_0022.jpg](#)

Max meets Private Hall and Carly the camel, 26 Transport Squadron's mascot at the DCO Amberley's 2018 welcome event, held at the RAAF Base Amberley Heritage Centre.

Photographer: Corporal Colin Dadd.



[20180216raaf8185068_0085.jpg](#)

Logan, Grace and Caitlin find a friendly panda during DCO's 2018 Welcome to South Australia event at the Adelaide Zoo.

Photographer: Corporal Craig Barrett.



Defence Health has been providing support to military families and the Defence community for more than sixty years. The insurer is committed to helping members manage their health and wellbeing and to being a prudent manager of members' funds.

The Defence community has unique challenges – dealing with regular moves, long periods of separation due to courses and operations, and invariably, long distances away from extended family and friends.

In late 2017, Defence Health saw the opportunity to assist a very worthy community organisation, being the Defence Special Needs Support Group (DSNSG).

The DSNSG is a group of volunteers who support families with the additional challenge of caring for children with special needs. Defence Health has enormous respect for the group and has provided a grant of funds to ease the administrative burden imposed on the group's volunteers.

In addition to supporting DSNSG with funding, Defence Health has offered to research individual circumstances for some families who may be able to leverage further support from other federal or state agencies.

Defence Health is very proud to support this small group of very dedicated workers. They improve the lives and wellbeing of Defence families experiencing challenges well beyond those of most people in the Defence or civilian community.



Delivering practical solutions to meet your family's needs

Defence Housing Australia (DHA) can assist Defence families with special needs to find appropriate housing solutions to meet their specific requirements.

Whether it's in preparation for a move to a new posting location or to update the specialist medical requirements of a family member, the most important starting point is to contact Defence Community Organisation (DCO), who is the delegate for Recognition of Dependents with Special Needs and Assistance on Posting.

DCO will help your family through the process of completing your Assessment of Assistance on Posting (AD 355), which is the crucial first step in having your special needs status formally recognised by Defence.

Once this recognition is granted, DHA and the Defence Relocations and Housing (DRH) manager in your region will work together to offer ongoing assistance and practical solutions for your family.

DHA can give you access to one of our highly skilled Regional Housing Specialists to work as a case manager for your relocation, supporting your family and working with you and local providers to carefully consider how to best meet your needs. This may include help to find a suitable residence in close proximity to specialist education or medical services, facilitate modifications to housing in the new location and arrange appropriate accommodation while in transit.

It's important to note that DHA can only provide housing and modifications in accordance with what is listed in your approved Assessment of Assistance, so ensuring this is correctly submitted via DCO as soon as possible is vital. To apply, fill out the relevant form on the DCO website for the service you require and submit it along with all supporting documentation to the Defence Family Helpline.

For more information about how DHA can help assist families with special needs, visit our website at www.dha.gov.au/housing/families-with-special-needs.



Household goods removals uplift date on or after 1st March 2016?

For all members and their families who are relocating at Commonwealth expense in the coming months, there has been a change to the Toll Warranty Scheme for loss or damage to household goods incurred during a removal. The change applies to domestic removals where the goods have been uplifted on or after 1st March 2016 including consignments uplifted from storage.

The Warranty Scheme has been changed to allow for new replacement cover to be applied to items which fall **within predefined categories and age limits**. In cases where more than minor damage to an item has occurred, members will be supplied with a new replacement item if Toll Transitions determines that repair of the old item is not economical, and the item is eligible for replacement in accordance with a table (*see below*) of age-based item inclusions. **The existing like-for-like replacement or compensation cover will continue to apply to items which fall outside the specified age limits.**

Not every item that sustains damage will be replaced with a new item or compensation paid at new value. In the first instance damaged items will be repaired where practicable and compensation paid for minor damage. Read Toll's "**Your Defence Relocation Guide - Version 9**" and answers to **FAQs** available at www.tolltransitions.com.au/defence for full details of the

Toll Warranty Scheme.

1. an electrical item with a new replacement value of \$500 or more Examples: Television, 2. Surround Sound Audio System, Vacuum Cleaner
within 10 years of the removal uplift date new-for-old. 10 years or more before the removal uplift date like-for-like.
2. an electrical item with a new replacement value of less than \$500 Examples: Computer Monitor, Kettle, Small Television
within 5 years of the removal uplift date new-for-old. 5 years or more before the removal uplift date like-for-like.
- 3 an electrical white-good Examples: Refrigerator, Freezer, Microwave, Washing Machine, Dryer, within 15 years of the removal uplift date new-for-old. 15 years or more before the removal uplift date like-for-like.
- 4 a furniture item Examples: Bed, Dining Table, Chest of Drawers, Lounge Suite within 10 years of the removal uplift date new-for-old. 10 years or more before the removal uplift date like-for-like.
- 5 other items Examples: Picture frames, bicycles, BBQ, crockery, plastic tubs
within 7 years of the removal uplift date new-for-old. 7 years or more before the removal uplift date like-for-like.



The APS Benefits Group has been providing defence members and their families with access to professional and financial services for over 110 years. We support the Defence Special Needs Support Group by funding projects, providing benevolent grants to defence families in need and funding the Christmas parties for DSNSG families Australia wide.

We are an Australian owned, membership based not-for-profit organisation, dedicated to providing quality professional and financial services to our members/clients at 'fair' prices. Our aim is to meet your needs right through life – from cradle to grave!

Whether its tax, accounting, financial planning, a will or estate planning, a loan, any type of insurance, the peace of mind of a funeral benefit, or a fixed term investment –we have the range and resources to make sure you can get what you need.

We are your lifetime partner in achieving your financial goals and meeting your professional needs. Whether you are in Darwin, or Rockingham, Hastings or Townsville, you are being cared for by a team of experienced and committed staff who aim to deliver outstanding customer service and assistance.

We encourage all defence families to become members. For more information please visit www.apsbenefitsgroup.com.au or call us on 1300 131 809.

**Who is Navy Health?**

Navy Health is a not-for-profit private health insurer that has been offering great value health cover for more than 60 years.

Eligibility

Navy Health is available for all serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Forces (Navy, Army & Air Force) and their families (siblings, parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren).

You (and your family) are also eligible if you've ever been a civilian employee of the Department of Defence or a contractor to the Australian Defence Forces. It's important to remember that if you've ever been eligible at any stage in your life, you're welcome to join at any time in the future.

Defence discounts

We offer a 10% discount to Serving Families, Active Reservist (SERCAT 3-5) and DVA Gold and White Card Holders (DVA Card Holders must be covered by the membership).

How do you switch?

Switching health funds is easy. If you have already served your waits with another provider, you won't have any waits on an equivalent level of cover with Navy Health.

To find out more go to: navyhealth.com.au or call 1300 306 289



CEO Kim Collins Attended the Unconquerable Kind: A discussion On Veteran's Mental Health in Sydney



DSNSG Ambassador Henrik Ehlers and CEO Kim Collins attending DFA Dinner



Joanne Rossiter Perth Coordinator attending an even With DCO morning tea in Rockingham WA



CEO Kim Collins attending as a guest speaker at DFA Training in Canberra



Harman Christmas Treat with Henry S Bear ACT



Henry S Bear Hanging out with DFA in