



Special Needs Assistance

Welcome to Special Needs Booklet

Since mid-2017 the Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc has seen a need for an information booklet which outlines the assistance available for Special Needs Families in the Defence Force.

The information booklet covers who Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc (DSNSG) are, what DSNSG does, and the programs we provide.

The information booklet also covers the Support and Assistance provided by:

- Defence Member and Family Support Branch (DMFS)
- Defence Housing Australia (DHA)
- TOLL Transitions
- APS Benefits Group (APSBG)

DSNSG has been actively and successfully raising awareness at the Federal level of the difficulties that DSNSG families face during postings.

The result of all this is that whilst it is still sometimes difficult to move around Australia, many organisations and services providers are aware of the additional problems faced by families with Special Needs in the Defence force. Indeed, several provisions have subsequently been put into place.

With this, we have all come together to provide this booklet which we hope will help families understand the processes and what is available for assistance when posting, and what support is out there for our special need's families.



Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc.

The Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc. (DSNSG) is a well-respected national organisation with many local support groups, which supports families located both around Australia and overseas. We provide support, information, assistance, and advocacy for all ADF families currently serving and ex serving who have a dependant (child, spouse or other dependant) with Special Needs.

DSNSG co-patrons are:

Minister for Veterans and Defence
Personnel and Chief of the Defence Force.

DSNSG Ambassador.

DSNSG supports ADF families with Special Needs dependants by:

- providing a National Network of ongoing peer support to all families regardless of the disability/Special Needs involved
- link families together with similar needs
- liaise with Defence and other Federal and State departments concerning the issues that affect families with Special Needs, particularly those being mobile
- raise public awareness regarding the difficulties that Defence families with Special Needs can face
- provide a coordinated approach through the local and national network in obtaining disability information
- provide assistance in accessing disability services / equipment and information
- disseminate information relating to disabilities / Special Needs as well as any Defence-related issues.

Other Assistance Available from DSNSG

Access to grants

The APSBG Grants Scheme is proud to offer financial assistance of up to \$4000 to cover the expenses of equipment or other related costs for children with Special Needs. APSBG will only consider applications from families who have a dependant with special needs

Provided us with quotes and or receipts of the equipment /other items.

Please note that at least one member of the family must be a current paid 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.

Applications must be submitted on the APS Benefits Group's forms, which are available from the DSNSG General Manager.

To find out more about this grant facility, new membership forms and application forms

Proudly Supported by APSBG

Email general.manager@dsnsg.org.au.

Computer 4 Kids

Computer 4 Kids is a program where we can assist with the purchase of an iPad for families to use to support their child or children with Special Needs, with their education and everyday living skills. An iPad is the best form of assistance as it is portable, lightweight, can be taken everywhere and takes up minimal space.

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

Note: There is a contribution fee payable to DSNSG from the families that access this program. **This is a once off assistance to help provide the initial iPad. You can only apply for one iPad per child in the family**

Proudly Sponsored by Defence Health

To find out more,

Email computer4kids@dsnsg.org.au

For Your Information

FYI is a DSNSG Program which assists families with Special Needs dependants to network and develop support structures.

The program provides financial support for families to attend workshops, Webinars and order resources books.

FYI is a program that provides the opportunity for families to attend workshops or guest speakers/webinars. Workshops include behavior support, additional information for parents and carers about the Special Need the dependant has and other workshops/webinars that help meet the needs of the dependant. DSNSG welcome our Special Needs families to send through

any workshops or seminar information that may benefit other members for consideration to be included in the program.

Email fyi@dsnsg.org.au

Drive Safe Program

Our Drive Safe Program is to assist and help members of our DSNSG families with ASD, ADHD, and consideration of other Special Needs to gain confidence and self-esteem when learning to drive (16 years and above with a current learner licence). This program was developed as DSNSG saw a need for teenagers with disabilities needing specialised training and assistance to gain their driving licence. Having a licence makes job hunting more accessible to these young adults and in turn, helps reduce the financial strain of having a Special Need.

Note: **There is a contribution fee payable to DSNSG from the families that access this program. This is a once off assistance to help provide the initial lessons. You can apply for driving lessons, one per child in the family.**

Proudly Supported by Australian Military Bank

Email drivesafe@dsnsg.org.au

Posting Plan

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 goes more smoothly. The CEO 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.

Email: general.manager@dsnsg.org.au

Family events

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.

Some examples of family events are:

Family Emergency Care Plan

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 deployment.

The Family Emergency Care Plan is primarily designed for use by families who have the serving member deployed but is available to all our Special Needs families, free of charge.

For families where the member is absent on duty, the primary carer is left alone to care for the person with Special Needs. We have found through experience that, if that primary carer is hurt or suddenly takes ill, there is no readily available information in place to assist when another person must come in and provide immediate care to the person with Special Needs. For example, what the normal daily routine is, what medication should be given, when and more.

For families who use respite care, a Family Emergency Care Plan would solve the problem of constant repeating of

- Locally based Special Needs information sessions
 - Family fun days
 - Movie nights and more!
- For more information, please contact your local area coordinator or
Email: nationalcommittee@dsnsg.org.au

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 and Emergency Care Plan is laid out in a folder format specifically tailored to meet the requirements of our Defence Force families. Also included are a Carer ID wallet card (identifying that the person is a carer) and a sticker to go on the window of a car to identify that someone in the car has Special Needs and may need additional assistance or support in the event of an accident.

The program coordinator will hold a copy of all forms that the families have filled out. This is so 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 emergency.

To find out more or to apply for this program please email fecp@dsnsg.org.au.



Defence Housing Australia

Defence Housing Australia (DHA) understands that some Defence families have family members with special needs. When these needs affect your housing requirements, DHA takes them into consideration to assist you in finding your housing solution.

Defence Members Family Support will refer your application to DRH who will assess your requirement against the Defence Pay and Conditions Manual (PACMAN) and supporting medical evidence.

All special housing needs must be supported by medical evidence from a specialist, or they cannot be approved. You will receive email advice on DRH's decision. A copy of the email will be sent to DHA and the regional Defence Relocations and Housing Manager to assist you with your housing needs.

Special housing considerations can be forwarded directly to DRH at drh.sa@defence.gov.au once you have a AC832 recognition Minute.

Please contact the DWSN team at DWSN.program@defence.gov.au for Recognition of Dependents with Special Needs or for assistance in contacting DRH and what is required.

Once DHA have received the email from DRH, the Regional Housing Specialist will be in contact with you to discuss housing options. Your housing entitlement will be determined by your assessment of assistance and may include:

- house hunting trips
- house accessibility i.e., ramps, lighting, size of or automatic door entry
- amenities or room sizes to accommodate large families
- houses in close proximity to education facilities (for special / advanced education needs)
- houses in close proximity to healthcare or respite facilities (for special healthcare needs)
- consideration of environmental factors (heating, cooling or lighting).

DHA will negotiate with DRH to approve the modifications, and DHA will implement the required changes.



Dependants with Special Needs

DMFS provides assistance to Defence families who have dependants with special needs. This assistance focuses on reducing the impact of relocations and minimising any interruption to specialist services that the dependant needs. The assistance available is not intended to duplicate services provided in the new locality; but aims to provide interim assistance to ensure continuity of care where dependants would otherwise be placed on a waiting list, until government supported services can be accessed.

The definition of special needs includes children and adults, and covers a wide spectrum of cases including physical, intellectual, sensory, learning or behavioural difficulties, psychiatric illnesses or disorders. It also includes academically gifted or talented children.

For further information refer to [PACMAN Chap 8 Part 6](#) – Dependants with special needs.

Recognition of dependants with special needs

In order to receive any of the assistance and support services available, you will first need to have your dependant with special needs formally recognised by Defence. You can have your dependant recognised at any time. For further information refer to [PACMAN Chap 1 Part 3 Division 2 Section 1.3.84](#).

To gain formal recognition, you will need to complete an **AF098 Form**, available on the Defence intranet. The application must specify the nature of the special needs, as assessed or recognised by a specialist medical practitioner or psychologist. Completed forms can be submitted for processing to the dwsn.program@defence.gov.au.

Once your dependant is recognised by Defence, you may be entitled to receive assistance in the event of a posting.

Assistance available

Pre-posting visit

Where it's necessary for the dependant to visit the new location before posting, DMFS can assist with accommodation and travel costs for the dependant and one family member. This is only granted in instances where it's not possible to make arrangements for support from the old location or there's a definite requirement for face-to-face contact with a department or institution in the new location. For further information refer to [PACMAN Chap 8 Part 6 Section 8.6.7](#). An **AF098 form** will need to be completed for this assistance measure.

Accessing services and equipment

When families are posted they may have difficulties accessing the services they require or had previously in last posting location, as waiting periods may apply. DMFS may provide short-term funding toward costs for interim services or equipment until the state or territory government agencies can deliver the service. DMFS can assist with respite care, personal care, therapy services, and special equipment hire. For further information refer to [PACMAN Chap 8 Part 6 Section 8.6.8 -10](#). An **AF098 form** will need to be completed for this assistance measure.

Special assistance during removal

During the move to your new posting location, you may apply for a valet unpacking service on arrival. Once you have been approved for this assistance, you can make arrangements through your Toll Transitions case manager before the move. For further information refer to PACMAN Chap 8 Part 6 Section 8.6.13. An **AF098 form** will need to be completed for this assistance measure.

For families who require special accommodation and travel arrangements, please contact your Toll Transitions case manager for further advice.

If your family requires additional travel time, you may be eligible for travel at a shorter distance each day when travelling. Please contact your administrative Unit for further advice.

Education assistance

You may receive assistance with access to programs or services your dependant requires which are not available from the new school or other government agencies. This may include:

- funding for a therapy service or tuition not provided at the school but critical to educational progress
- assessment of needs, toward development of an educational program, or
- reimbursement of private schooling costs, where a necessary special program is only available at a private school.

For further information refer to PACMAN Chap 8 Part 4 Division 2 Section 8.4.14, Children with special needs. An **AD301 form** will need to be completed for this assistance measure and sent to dco.educationassistancescheme@defence.gov.au

Specialised staff, including DMFS Education Liaison Officers (EDLOS) and Defence School Mentors, can also assist you with education advice and support in each region.

Other support available

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Families wishing to find out more about the Federally Funded National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) should visit www.ndis.gov.au. The Scheme is being rolled out in stages across Australia, so visit the website to find out if it's available in your area, or the area you are posting in to.

More information

For more information about support for dependants with special needs, contact the Dependants With Special Needs (DWSN) Program on dwsn.program@defence.gov.au or the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.



Toll Transitions' relocation service

Toll Transitions provides Defence members and their families, including those with a dependent who has special needs, with a comprehensive relocation service.

In addition to organising relocation requirements as outlined below, Toll Transitions notifies Defence Housing Australia (DHA) of a member's relocation, so they can assist with the housing solution.

Toll case managers

A relocating Defence member is appointed a Toll Transitions Case Manager and an alternate Case Manager to help with their relocation. Case Managers assist Defence families with questions about their relocation and provide the appropriate contacts and resources to assist with their move.

Case Managers will:

- highlight the need for a pre-removal visit (PRV) where required
- arrange the pack/uplift/delivery/unpack of furniture and effects, and assess and organise any long-term or short-term storage requirements for furniture and effects
- book travel and temporary accommodation (losing and gaining locations) required during the relocation
- calculate and arrange payment of relocation allowances
- approve payment of relocation expense reimbursements.

Attendance at PRVs or carrier inspections

Toll Transitions removals specialists known as Transitions Consultants (TCs) are highly trained in all aspects of both domestic and international removals, with many years' experience in the removals industry. TCs physically visit a significant proportion of Defence member's homes and conduct PRVs, and/or carrier inspections (CI).

The PRV enables TCs to assess a Defence family's move requirements to determine the scope of the relocation, to assess the volume of goods and to ensure that any special service requirements are identified. TCs also conduct CIs at Defence families' departure or destination locations. They can attend whilst the removalists are onsite, enabling Toll Transitions to ensure that the removals are conducted according to Defence requirements and Toll's stringent quality procedures.

The attendance of TCs for a PRV and/or a departure or destination CI, provides Defence families with additional on the ground support, and the TCs can assist with any questions or concerns Defence families may have regarding their move on the day.

Full or partial unpack at delivery

Once Toll Transitions has received the member's application for relocation (AFR) and inventory, Case Managers will explain the unpack options available so that Defence families can select the option (full unpack or partial unpack) which works best for them.

If a full unpack is elected the removalist will unpack all cartons, other than those containing clothing, onto a flat surface.

If a partial unpack is elected, the removalist will only unpack those cartons containing

breakable items (as agreed with the Defence member at uplift). All other personal effects will be unpacked by the Defence family including clothing packed by Defence families and cartons that had been packed by the removalists (non-breakables) at the uplift location.

The Defence member/partner can change the election up to and including the time the removal is delivered. However please note that changing from a partial to a full unpack late in the process may mean that the removalist may have to return to complete the unpack on another day.

Warranty

Toll's warranty extends to cover the contents of cartons unpacked by Defence members (excluding breakables and PBO items). PBO items are not covered by warranty, except in the case of loss or of obvious damage to the carton caused by the removalist. Members should ensure that any carton with obvious damage is unpacked by the removalist in the Defence member's presence and any damage noted on the inventory condition report (ICR).

Toll's Warranty Scheme allows for new replacement cover to be applied to items which fall within predefined categories and age limits (refer to the age-based item inclusions table in Toll's Your Defence Relocation Guide). 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 the table of age-based item inclusions.

Like-for-like replacement or compensation cover applies 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" and FAQs available at www.tolltransitions.com.au/defence for full details of the Toll Warranty Scheme.

Move Plan App

The Move Plan App gives Defence families easy access to the details of their relocation itinerary that they will need to know as they progress through their relocation.

The app provides members with up-to-date details about their relocation including removal dates, allowances, travel dates including airfare information (where applicable) and accommodation details. The information in the app mirrors the information available in the member's current Move Plan Letter.

The app is available for both Android and Apple iOS mobile phones. It can be downloaded from the Google Play Store and Apple iTunes App store by searching for Toll Move Plan. Defence members can logon to the Toll Move Plan App using the same valid username and password that they use to access Toll Transitions' website www.tolltransitions.com.au/defence

Your Defence Relocation Guide

Refer to Toll Transitions "Your Defence Relocation Guide" for full details of Toll Transitions comprehensive relocation service. The guide is available at www.tolltransitions.com.au/defence.

If you require any assistance, please call Toll Transitions on Free call number 1800 819 167.

Checklist

- Have you updated your circumstances with the Defence Community Organisation? If you've had changes or updates in diagnoses in the past few years, it is best to keep these details up to date.
- Do you need assistance with housing and modifications?
- Is your specialist letter less than two years old?
- Have you checked with your Specialist that your medication script can be filled in your gaining location? In some states there may be an application for transferring of state-based schedule 8 (S8) medications, before posting into a new location it would be beneficial to contact your gaining location to find the process related to your medications.

The relevant State or Territory authority should be contacted for further information.

Australian Capital Territory
ACT Health, Pharmaceutical Services
Phone: (02) 6205 0998

New South Wales
Department of Health, Pharmaceutical Services
Phone: (02) 9879 5239

Northern Territory
Medicines and Poisons Control) Phone: (08) 8922 7340

Queensland
Queensland Health, Drugs of Dependence Unit
Phone: (07) 3328 9890

Tasmania
Department of Health and Human Services, Pharmaceutical Services Branch
Phone: (03) 6166 0400

Victoria
Department of Health, Drugs and Poisons Unit
Phone: 1300 364 545

Western Australia
Department of Health, Pharmaceutical Services Phone: (08) 9388 4980

Are you aware of the assistance that is provided to Defence families with Special Needs when posting? For further information call the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

Do you have NDIS funding? If yes, have you started your process to transfer these funds to your gaining location?

Have you linked into support groups in your gaining location? For further assistance email your local area Coordinator from DSNSG, these details can be found on our website www.dsnsq.org.au

National Coordinator | national.coordinator@dsnsq.org.au

National Committee | nationalcommittee@dsnsq.org.au

Memberships | memberships@dsnsq.org.au

General Manager Kim Collins | general.manager@dsnsq.org.au |
Helpline: 1800 037 674