



Australian Government
Department of Defence



Shoalhaven eNews

February/March

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Defence Family Helpline 1800 624 608

Welcome to 2021! It was a tough end to last year with erratic posting cycles, COVID-19 surges and a very different looking Christmas. But we hope you've had a great time recharging your batteries and enjoying the wrap up to 2020. If you're seeking support and information, the Defence Family Helpline is available 24/7 and can be reached on 1800 624 608 or email defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au. We have a lot planned for this year so stay tuned!

November/December Recap



Our monthly BYO Picnic in the Park has become a staple in our month. To finish off the year we explored the Sanctuary Point Learn to Ride park where families were able to enjoy the gated playground and connect with other Defence families. The Starkey family joined us on Evie's 11th birthday! Happy Birthday, Evie!

Eventbrite



In line with Australian Government guidelines on social distancing and non-essential travel, as well as gatherings and events in response to COVID-19, all Defence Community Organisation face to face social events have been restructured to follow appropriate guidelines.

To keep up with how these changes have impacted the way we host restricted face-to-face events, head to the [DCO Nowra Eventbrite](#) page. Here you can find all the information and registration details for upcoming events, including what you need to know during COVID-19.

We host a myriad of events each month, in addition to these are our reoccurring events:

- Coffee Connections: 2nd Wednesday of the month
- BYO Picnic in the Park: 4th Wednesday of the month

Chaplains Chirp- CHAP Jenny Schleusener



Relationships 5 – Communication

Hi families,

I hope you all had a great Christmas and had the opportunity to have some special time with family and loved ones.

The art of listening appears to be automatic. We all have ears so therefore we can all listen. This is not true without practice. Listening is **an important skill to learn** if you want a strong marriage or relationship. Listening has the power to make our partner feel loved and valued, it says 'you are worthy of my time and attention'. There is even a verse in a great ancient writing (the Bible) that says 'everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger'.

But there are a number of barriers to the art of listening. We all have virtual earmuffs that may filter what we hear. Background noise, lack of interest, preconceived ideas of what is going to be said and past memories or attitudes all affect our listening. One I personally have been aware of is listening in order to respond - I cease to listen to what really being said and start thinking of what I will say, sound familiar? We must learn to listen to understand, not respond.

[Here](#) is a demonstration in a work context.

Some of the bad habits that end communication are:

- giving reassurance or advice,
- intellectualizing (trying to rationalize it away),
- going off on a tangent (it triggered a thought of something else),
- interrupting.

Rather, we just need to listen to the feelings, thoughts and impressions and reflect and validate them. Many people feel shut down when these habits happen consistently and over time they just give up trying and don't talk at all.

[Here](#) is a demo of a couple. [Here](#) is another example.

This week's task is to sit and ask the following questions of each other with a willingness to listen and not get upset. Try using the techniques demonstrated and see how you feel:

- How do you feel when you are listened too?
- How do you feel when you're not listened to?
- What is it that makes someone a good listener?
- What bad habit do each of you have that needs to be worked on?

In doing this exercise try not to interrupt each other or defend yourself. But really listen to the words and try to identify the feelings attached. Remember, if

you're actually doing this task then you both want the same thing, a better communication.

This info is all from [The Marriage Course](#). I am planning to run this 7 week course in the Nowra district in the next few months. If you might be interested in doing the course, please email me as there will be limited space due to restrictions: jennifer.schleusener@defence.gov.au

Have a great week,

Jenny

A message from the Education Liaison Officer for NSW Ellen Blyth



As Term 1 begins, it is once again the time of year to send students off to new teachers, new schools and new beginnings.

For some, this New Year has begun with a move which can be a very positive experience for your child and family. But changing schools – whether it's between suburbs, cities, states or even countries – presents several challenges. Children are very adaptable. Most of them will manage moving to a new school quite happily. But it is important to be aware of how your child is feeling and coping.

For others, this year brings the hope for a different school experience, breaking out of the confines of COVID-19 and getting back to the school yard fun. The COVID-19 pandemic saw a meteoric rise in the use of online and virtual learning tools. Your child may have found an online or digital tool during this time that has helped their study, don't rush to put all the tech away with the return to face-to-face. If something works for your child, don't be afraid to see how you can adapt it into the new study routines.

Below are a number of resources and links to support you during the back to school period:

Defence Community Organisation has a range of financial support available to help minimise disruption to schooling caused by posting within Australia. If you have posted recently and notice any difficulties with your child's education reach out to your local EDLO via the Defence Family Helpline or review the range of supports available via the Defence Community Organisation website [here](#).

The NSW Department of Education has gathered some resources, articles, checklists and tools to help parents with the new school year. You can view these resources on the NSW Department of Education website [here](#).

Students on the Autism spectrum may struggle with transitions and after a period of immense change there are a range of ways to support student's transitions back to school. Positive Partnerships have curated a list of resources you may find useful. You can access these resources via the Positive Partnerships website [here](#).

Going back to school is a period of high emotion. Some students can adjust to the changes and settle into things quickly. However, some young people may find this a daunting and challenging time. Headspace has developed some tips for parents who feel their child may be struggling with being back at school. Check out these tips and other resources on the Headspace website [here](#).

Shoalhaven Defence Families Association



The **Shoalhaven Defence Families Association** and Kookaburra Retreat is a local community group where you can meet both Defence families and locals from the Shoalhaven community. Keep an eye out on their **website** and **Facebook** page for updates on events and activities. Weekly events at SDFA include:

- Kookaburra Playgroup every Tuesday 10am-12pm. During COVID-19, this will be conducted in the outdoor space to comply with government restrictions.
- Cuppa and Chat (Crèche available) every Monday, Thursday and Friday 9:30am-12:30pm.
- Fitness every Thursday 10am. Personal trainer Abbie will tailor a workout to your needs.
- Craft Activities - get creative with guidance using our large range of craft supplies.

Please note that the number of spaces are limited to meet government restriction guidelines.

To find out more information on how to become a member, reach out via social media, phone the office on 02 44245766 or **email**.

Kookaburra Retreat — where fun and support meet.

Shoalhaven Defence Catchups



Shoalhaven Defence Catchups is a group run by local Navy partner Natalie. The group invites fellow Defence partner's to connect both online through their Facebook page and in person through events such as dinner and coffee catchups.

To find out more, search "Shoalhaven Defence Catchups" on Facebook.

ForceNet



You can access ForceNet whenever and wherever you like using the free mobile application. Keep up-to-date with news, events and information. Stay involved with your unit group, other specific interest groups or group discussions and never miss that important notification again. ForceNet Families is also available via the ForceNet mobile app at Google Play and the App Store.

One Tree Defence Childcare Unit



Are you looking for quality childcare?

Then look no further! To enrol at One Tree Defence Childcare Unit, providers of the Defence Childcare Program, go to our website www.dcu.onetree.org.au or call 1800 270 640.

One Tree Community Services – Individual Case Management
Need help finding quality childcare?

This program supports ADF Families to find childcare, no matter their location and giving parents peace of mind knowing that their child is well cared for while they are at work.

What they do:

- provide support to families who need help to find appropriate childcare
- negotiate on your behalf with locally registered childcare providers to find a service that will best suit your needs and
- provide you with options that will allow you to make informed decisions regarding the placement of your child.

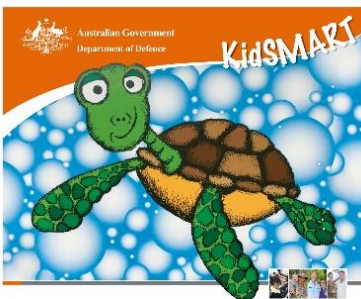
This service is accessible by following 4 easy steps:

1. Call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 or email the Defence Family Helpline at defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au
 2. The Defence Family Helpline will assess your eligibility and refer you to an individual case manager.
 3. The individual case manager will contact you and find you a suitable childcare place.
 4. When the case manager finds you a suitable match, they will contact you.
- If a suitable place cannot be found, you will be advised.

This service is FREE to all ADF Families across Australia.

For more information, visit the website www.dcu.onetree.org.au

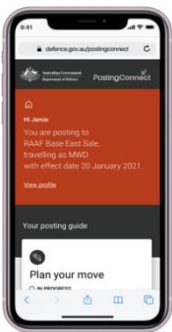
KidSMART, TeenSMART and FamilySMART



These DCO SMART programs are aimed at helping ADF kids and families manage military life.

These programs have been postponed until further notice in line with Australian Government guidelines on gatherings and events. If you are interested in taking part in a DCO SMART program in the Shoalhaven, please email the [DCO Nowra group inbox](#) to be placed on a waiting list.

Posting Connect – Providing a simpler posting experience



Posting Connect is a new Defence platform that will streamline the posting process for members and their families and is currently on track to be available from September 2020. ADF members will receive an email invitation on the Defence Protected Network (DPN) inviting them to use Posting Connect once a posting order has been issued. [Sign up to receive the monthly Posting Connect Newsletter](#) to ensure you receive the latest updates, or contact posting.connect@defence.gov.au or view the [Posting Connect website](#) for more information.

ADF Transition

ADF Member and Family Transition Guide



As part of DCO, ADF Transition is now offering virtual support in line with Government guidance on COVID-19 and is changing the way we support you and your family to transition to civilian life. Our local ADF Transition teams have been busy working on flexible ways to support you in these different times. Transition coaches are able to support you and your family by video call, phone call or email. They will help you progress your transition plan or adjust your timeline, depending on what works for you. Contact a coach in your local area to discuss your needs or access the ADF Member and Family Transition Guide online at any time on the [DCO website](#).

ADF Family Health Program



The ADF Family Health Program makes healthcare more affordable and accessible for recognised dependants of full-time ADF Members and Reservists on Continuous Full-time Service. Families can claim unlimited reimbursement of gap fees for Medicare recognised GP visits, and also receive a financial allocation (up to \$400 per dependant) for use towards allied health and medical specialist services.

Easy registration and electronic claiming make the Program extremely user friendly. The ADF Member can register family members by completing the WebForm ([AD858-1](#)) or they can find the form on the [ADF Family Health Program Website](#).

Once notified that they have been successfully registered they can start claiming quickly and simply via the ADF Family Health Program Website or via the ADF Family Health App which is available for both Android and Apple devices.

For further information on the Program and how to register please visit [ADF Family Health Program](#) website or phone 1300 561 454.

Navy Health



Established in 1955, [Navy Health](#) provides health cover to the wider ADF community, serving and ex-serving members and their families. As a not-for-profit health insurer and part of the Members Health Fund Alliance, Navy Health put their members at the heart of everything they do. They also offer a 10% discount off premiums for serving ADF members, Active Reservists (SERCAT 3-5) or White or Gold Veteran Card holders.*

*Active Reservists (SERCAT 3-5) and White and Gold Card holders must be covered by the membership for the discount to apply.

Defence Health



[Defence Health](#) are an award winning, not-for-profit health insurer with great value health insurance designed specifically for ADF families. If you're interested in private health insurance for you and your family, contact them on 1800 335 425.

Defence Special Needs Support Group Inc



DSNSG is a national, not-for-profit, benevolent volunteer organisation providing support, information, assistance and advocacy for ADF families who have a dependant with special needs.

For more information, visit the DSNSG [website](#), follow them on Facebook or email nowra@dsnsg.org.au

Open Arms



Open Arms remains open for business during this period and are encouraging clients to access mental health support through phone and video options.

In response to the pandemic, the Open Arms Client Assist Call Centre's 24/7 operation has been brought forward and is now live. You can access this service 24/7 by calling 1800 011 046.

Safe Zone Support is a free and anonymous counselling line and continues to be available during this time. Call 1800 142 072 to access this service.

To better assist during this time, the Open Arms clinicians and Outreach Program Counsellors are undertaking training to enable them to provide telephone and online video counselling.

Group Treatment Programs and Suicide Prevention Training have been postponed while they investigate an appropriate online delivery method. All clients who enrolled will be contacted and offered support.

The [Open Arms website](#) has been updated with additional self-help resources to support the veteran community, including a specific COVID-19 – Calming and Coping page.

Open Arms hopes you are all looking after yourselves and keeping well.
#StrongerTogether

Soldier On



Soldier On is a not-for-profit veteran support organisation delivering a range of services to veterans and their families. They provide a range of health and wellbeing services, employment opportunities, learning and education programs and community, social and sporting activities. To find out more, follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) or visit their [website](#).

Kookaburra Kids



The Kookaburra Kids Foundation delivers free camps and activities for young people aged 8-18 who are experiencing family mental illness. They aim to empower young people to build resilience, lifelong knowledge, skills and abilities so they can reach their potential. Kookaburra Kids provides a simple referral service, along with a range of resources.

To find out more information, follow them on Facebook, call 1300 566 525 or email info@kookaburrakids.org.au

Defence Families Australia (DFA)



[Defence Families of Australia](#) (DFA) is the official ADF families' advisory body to the Minister for Defence Personnel and the Chief of the Defence Force. The organisation sits outside of Defence systems, allowing DFA independence and impartiality to act in the best interests of ADF families.

DFA are currently hearing many questions about postings. Some families have had postings cancelled, postponed or looking different to what was expected.

It's safe to say nothing about 2020 has been expected.

What happens if you are getting posted during this time?

DFA recommends that you take the time to read the [Toll Relocation Guide](#) so you understand the basics of how a posting works. Do some research into where you are coming from and where you are going to. The advice will be different for each state or territory.

DFA recommends that you check regularly with your state or territory government website or with their social media pages as information can change quickly. You may need to download a border declaration depending on where you are relocating. You may be required to quarantine.

The new [PostingConnect](#) platform will be available from 1st September 2020.

Your Toll Case Manager will support and guide ADF Members and their families who are posting into a location that requires a quarantine period. Please do not hesitate to contact Toll with any concerns or uncertainty you have about your relocation.

If you have other questions, make sure you check in with

[Defence Housing Australia](#), Toll, or the Defence Family Helpline at

[Defence Community Organisation](#)

DFA are also there to advocate for you should you need them.

Contact the delegate for ACT and Southern NSW

at act.sthns@dfa.org.au and follow DFA on

their [national](#) or [regional](#) Facebook pages, [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

Australian Military Wives Choir (AMWC)



AMWC is a “no audition, no experience necessary” choir for women significantly connected to serving ADF members. They welcome new members at any time during the year and despite the word “wives” in their name, they welcome girlfriends, partners, wives, mothers, sisters, as well as female ADF members.

For more information or to join, email the Shoalhaven Coordinator, Justine at shoalhaven@amwchoir.com or take a look on the AMWC [website](#).

National Australia Bank – NAB



NAB have been providing Defence Force Home Loans since 1991. For over 25 years, NAB has assisted countless members of the Australian Defence Force with home loan expertise and discounted rates.

As one of the first Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme (DHOAS) approved home loan providers, NAB are committed to serving those who serve. Whether you are still in the Defence force or transitioning out, NAB is there for you. -

<https://www.nab.com.au/personal/home-loans/nab-defence-force-home-loan>

Smartsalary



Working from home? Smartsalary is saving you even more.

As a Defence member, you can salary package your work-related devices and save up to 45%!*

To make it more affordable, Smartsalary has halved the benefits admin fee to just \$25.

Eligible products include:

- * Laptop, tablet, smart watch
- * Mobile phone
- * Computer software
- * Home office
- * Self-education
- * Work related equipment, e.g. a computer screen, office chair or a printer.

Book a [phone appointment](#) to get started or [log in](#) to your Smartsalary account, click 'My Benefits', 'Portable Devices' and follow the prompts.

*Savings amount depends on your income tax bracket and personal circumstances.

Defence Family Helpline

1800 624 608

For advice, support or local community information, contact our Defence Family Helpline. The Helpline is the best way to access the programs and services that we offer to help Defence families manage the military way of life.

The helpline is available 24/7 and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

The information contained in this bulletin is sent out on behalf of other agencies and groups. It does not necessarily indicate DCO support or involvement. The intention is to provide information to readers so that they can self-select and research its suitability.

If you would like to receive this bulletin or no longer wish to receive it, please email your request to dco.canberra-nowra@defence.gov.au.



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Defending Australia and its National Interests
www.defence.gov.au

