



# Community and Defence families

## Defence Community Organisation

### Connecting Defence families with local communities

**At Defence Community Organisation we recognise that Defence families are strongest when they are connected with their local communities. We provide a number of support and information services to help you to connect with and contribute to your local community, and we also engage the wider community in support of Defence families.**

Relocation due to posting is an integral feature of Defence life, which means you will periodically be required to move away from your established support networks and familiar resources.

Getting out into your new community can help you to:

- access existing support mechanisms in place in the community
- create new support networks for yourself
- be informed about local resources, services and goings-on
- get orientated more quickly and smoothly
- have a richer experience in your new home
- build on your skills and develop strategies for managing challenges
- find people with like interests or experiences
- have fun, and
- make a difference.

We have information and resources available to guide you to what community access points (such as groups, organisations, events or opportunities) might suit you best.

Communities are also enriched by the skills, experiences and ideas Defence families bring to them. You might choose to contribute to the community by volunteering in a local organisation, participating in a community group or starting your own.

Having an active presence in your community will also help to raise awareness of the Defence lifestyle and thus increase the support available to Defence families in the wider community.

#### Community groups and events

We maintain a directory of Defence- and community-run groups, organisations and events in each posting area, which you can readily access by contacting the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** or visiting the DCO website.

#### Community groups

There are a wide variety of community groups and organisations which may benefit Defence families, including toy libraries, playgroups, Defence partner support groups, craft groups, hobby groups, sporting clubs and many more.

Key national support organisations, such as the Defence Special Needs Support Group, also operate on a local level, holding meetings and activities for families.





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Defence maintains and helps fund community centres and neighbourhood houses around Australia, where community group meetings or family-orientated activities can be held.

Joining local community groups can help you to make friends and create new support networks, and provides a forum for Defence families to share their experiences, skills and strategies.

### Community events

Attending events run by community organisations or local authorities is a great way to expand your social network and get out into the community.

DCO also holds a variety of local events, such as welcome events at the start of each year, celebrations of National Families Week, workshops, information sessions and social and family activities.

### Finding the support and resources you need

Are you wondering where to start, or looking for a particular service your family needs? Our specialised team members—Family Liaison Officers and Community Liaison Officers—have extensive knowledge of local services, resources and communities and can provide you with advice and information, before or during your posting.

We can also refer you to appropriate community resources or agencies according to your needs.

### Other ways to stay in-the-know

Your local DCO teams and the Defence Family Helpline have rich regional information available, but you can also refer to various Defence publications, such as local DCO newsletters, *Defence Family Matters*

(a tri-annual lifestyle magazine for Defence families), and Service newspapers. These publications will also keep you informed about any changes in the Defence environment that might affect families.

All of these publications are accessible on the DCO website.

### Community group funding

Financial assistance is available for community organisations which run programs to help support the unique needs of Defence families or connect them with each other and the wider community.

For more information, contact the Defence Family Helpline on **1800 624 608** or see the Funding for community groups handout.

**For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit [www.defence.gov.au/dco](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco) or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.**

The Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for the families of ADF members.

The best way to access these services is to call **1800 624 608**. The all-hours Defence Family Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

