



Notification and bereavement support

Defence Community Organisation

Defence Community Organisation provides a range of support and advice to Defence families in times of bereavement.

In the event of the death, serious injury, missing or captured of an ADF member, Defence provides practical and emotional support to the family.

NOTIFICATION

When Defence members die, become seriously or very seriously ill or injured, are missing or captured, Defence ensures all relevant people are notified. A notification team will formally advise relevant people of the condition of the affected Defence member.

Relevant people include the primary emergency or alternate emergency contact and next of kin as nominated on Defence One. The member's Command will task a notification team consisting of a suitably trained Defence member and Service Chaplain to communicate casualty information.

CONTINUING SUPPORT

In the event of a serious or very serious injury or illness, Defence Community Organisation may provide a Case Management Team. Family assistance can include practical administrative and social work support.

In the event of a death in service, Defence offers a Bereavement Support Team to assist and support the family. This support is available to all bereaved Defence families, regardless of the cause of the member's death.

Defence Community Organisation contacts the family within 24 hours, and a Bereavement Support Team will be offered to provide tailored practical and emotional support to you as a member's family.

YOUR BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

The Bereavement Support Team is made up of a Defence Social Worker and Military Support Officer, who are supported by a larger team.

As every family and every grieving process is different, the social worker assesses your needs and coordinates the support accordingly. They can provide emotional support, advice or referrals as necessary and will be your main point of contact.

The Military Support Officer advises your family of the necessary military administration involved and can assist you in making practical arrangements, while remaining in close communication with your member's unit.

The support team can link your family into useful agencies such as ComSuper, Legacy and the Department of Veterans' Affairs as well as any community resources that may meet your needs.



Families may choose the level of military involvement and all of the support team's actions will reflect and respect your family's wishes.

The team can also provide information if there is media interest or any required Commission of Inquiry.

Support provided for an injury or illness will be for a set period of time. Your family usually continues to receive support after bereavement for up to 6–12 months depending on your needs and the social worker's assessment.

PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

When a loved one dies there are many decisions and arrangements that may require your consideration.

Your Defence Community Organisation support team can assist you through these practical concerns including directing you to entitlements and provisions available to you.

FUNERALS

The team discusses funeral options with your family, and the Military Support Officer can assist you in working with your chosen Funeral Director on the funeral and burial arrangements. In most cases, Defence assists with the reasonable costs of a military or private funeral service.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Defence makes a contribution of towards an eligible deceased member's funeral costs. In most cases, the contribution is sufficient to cover costs of a military or private funeral service. This should be discussed with the Bereavement Support Team.

Dependants who were financially reliant upon the ADF member may be able to access a series of bereavement payments. The purpose of these payments is to provide immediate relief for the loss of the deceased member's financial support. This assistance consists of four payments of the member's fortnightly salary and is tax-free. Bereavement payments are not the same as compensation, and are separate from the member's Personal Estate.

Defence Community Organisation can also provide financial assistance for a member's dependants to travel to the funeral location. This includes return travel expenses, two nights' accommodation and meals, within reasonable limits.

Additional payments such as leave entitlements, cash-in-effect and balance of salary or compensation depend on individual circumstances.

WILLS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

If the member's Will has been stored at Defence Community Organisation Headquarters, it will be forwarded to the proper representative to assist with executing the member's wishes.

Our team also coordinates the storage, removal, disposal or release of the member's personal effects in consultation with the family.

MAKE SURE YOUR FAMILY IS SUPPORTED

It is very important for ADF members to register their primary emergency contact, alternative emergency contact and next of kin on Defence One, and keep their details up-to-date.

We also strongly encourage serving members to have a current Will and power of attorney, and to send their will to Headquarters Defence Community Organisation for storage.

These steps are essential for Defence to properly carry out the wishes of the ADF member and provide their family with support in the event of their death.

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for ADF members and their families.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit

www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

