

24 September 2021

**Re: Consideration of Travel Exemptions for ADF Families**

To the Premier of Western Australia, the Hon Mark McGowan:

I write to request your Government to reconsider the approval of travel exemption permits for the families of the members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who are in the process of posting to WA.

Established in 1986, Defence Families of Australia (DFA) is the Ministerially appointed group representing the equities of the families of current serving ADF members. As advisors to Government and Defence, DFA advocates for ongoing improvement in policy and practice. Our aim is to reduce the negative impacts of military service on ADF families, and to support the positive aspects of this unique Defence lifestyle. Defence families can face additional stressors as a result of their loved one's military service. During the pandemic, that gap is widened by instances such as your Government's current refusal to permit some ADF families into relocate to WA with their ADF member.

Your Government's current stance is that ADF members posting to WA from areas of higher risk of Covid-19 may be granted a travel exemption to enter the state for work purposes<sup>1</sup>. Distressingly, their family is not permitted to move with them<sup>2</sup>.

The first purpose of the WA Veterans and Families Strategy proclaims to "*recognise and support veterans and their families*"<sup>3</sup>.

Premier, your Government has the opportunity to stand by this commitment in helping to keep our Defence families together while the ADF member continues to serve in our national interests. These families have reaffirmed to DFA that they are willing to undertake the required testing and quarantine periods to facilitate their family staying together.

**In the strongest possible terms, DFA advocate for Defence families to be supported to co-locate with their soldier, sailor or aviator to enable their military service in West Australian posting locations.**

You are welcome to contact me if you require any clarification on this issue, DFA's role, or if you would like to discuss other issues concerning Defence families.

Yours Sincerely,



Sandi Laaksonen-Sherrin

**National Convenor, Defence Families of Australia**  
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<sup>1</sup> Current as at 23 September 2021, as per the [WA Government Covid-19 Controlled Border](#) webpage.

<sup>2</sup> [West Australian Government Fact sheet for travellers from a medium risk jurisdiction](#), updated 3 August 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Purpose statement as per the [Western Australian Veterans and Families Strategy](#).