



**Defence
Families**
of Australia

Advocacy Map

Summer 2023

About us

Defence Families of Australia (DFA) is the official group appointed by the Government to represent the interests of the families of current serving ADF members.

Established in 1986, DFA advocacy has impacted every aspect of Defence life in that time.

As the official advisors to Government and Defence, DFA advocate for ongoing improvement in policy and practical support.

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.

DFA is independent of the Department of Defence. Our team is connected to Defence family communities across the country, and are largely veterans or family of ADF members.

In recent years the Australian Defence community has been facing the biggest set of stressors in a generation.

The whole country is carrying more than normal on their shoulders, but many Defence families bear additional weight. So DFA's work is more important than ever.

The advocacy goals in this document reflect actions or changes to the Defence support sector and Defence policy which would benefit families. A listed goal which is not marked 'Complete' is not guaranteed to be delivered.

DFA endorse and/or advocate for these changes, working with service providers and decision makers over time to provide evidence, consult on and refine the best reasonable actions to achieve positive impacts on families.

Some goals would require funding to implement and/or deliver. In these instances, competing demand of public funds must be considered where the services relate to public sector providers.

In publicly listing these goals, DFA aim to raise awareness of the Defence family experience, of the services available for families, and of the recent changes to policy or support.

Importantly, this document also encourages collaboration with other service providers, ex-service organisations or other interest groups to push a goal to fruition.

If you wish to help progress these or additional advocacy goals, please reach out to the DFA team to discuss collaboration opportunities.

dfa.org.au

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country across Australia on which we live and work, and pay our respect to them, their culture, and Elders past and present.

ABN 27 688 368 241

Advocacy Map

Summer 2023

The Advocacy Map is a biannual snapshot of DFA's current advocacy. This dynamic document aims to provide transparency of our work, and to offer the opportunity for Defence families and other stakeholders to support these advocacy efforts. Goals are triaged and addressed over time within DFA resourcing constraints.

This map details work that may take several years to achieve. The outcomes are delivered by a range of service providers, in collaboration with DFA.

Our top five advocacy themes are:

Communication: supporting the development, establishment and evaluation frameworks of clear, consistent, easily accessible and timely information for families.

Flexible Housing: supporting greater flexibility, options and availability of suitable housing, including growth to meet current and future needs.

Family Employment: raising awareness of the skills, experience and potential of spouses and partners, working aged children, and other immediate Defence family members, and providing advice to organisations to build their focus and programs in Defence family employment.

Education: working with State and Territory Governments, and education bodies to raise awareness of the needs of Defence children, advising on how to minimise disruption and challenges in streamlined and suitable access to education at any posting location.

Breakdown of Relationships: addressing shortfalls and gaps in current policy related to temporary or ongoing relationship separation, advocating for the Department of Defence to lean in on initiatives to provide support and reduce instances of family and domestic violence.

Map legend

Timeframe of Advocacy Goal:

S – Short term
M – Medium term
L – Long term

Status of Advocacy Goal:

Complete
Underway
Ongoing

[PRIORITY GOAL] – These priority goals have been identified as key areas of focus.

It is important to note that not all advocacy goals are listed in this document. This includes goals which may be triggering to some people, relate to an active investigation, may breach privacy for one or more families that DFA is supporting, or is not yet fully investigated and defined by DFA.



Send your feedback or enquiries to

advocacy@dfa.org.au

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADF	Australian Defence Force
APS	Australian Public Service
ARF	Accompanied Resident Family
BSC	Base Service Contract
CDF	Chief of the Australian Defence Force
CO	Commanding Officer
Defence	Australian Commonwealth Department of Defence
DFA	Defence Families of Australia
DFTP	Defence Force Transition Program
DHA	Defence Housing Australia
DMFS	Defence Member and Family Support Branch, Department of Defence
DRH	Directorate of Relocations and Housing
DRHM	Defence Relocations and Housing Manager
DSM	Defence School Mentor
DSR	Defence Strategic Review
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs
EDLO	Education Liaison Officer
FDV	Family and domestic violence
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
MINDP	Minister for Defence Personnel
MP	Member of Parliament
PEAP	Partner Employment Assistance Program
R2	Defence Recruitment and Retention team
RA	Rental Allowance
RLLT	Remote Location Leave Travel
SEG	Defence Security and Estate Group
SR	Service Residence
URF	Unaccompanied resident family
XO	Executive Officer

Advisory committees and steering groups

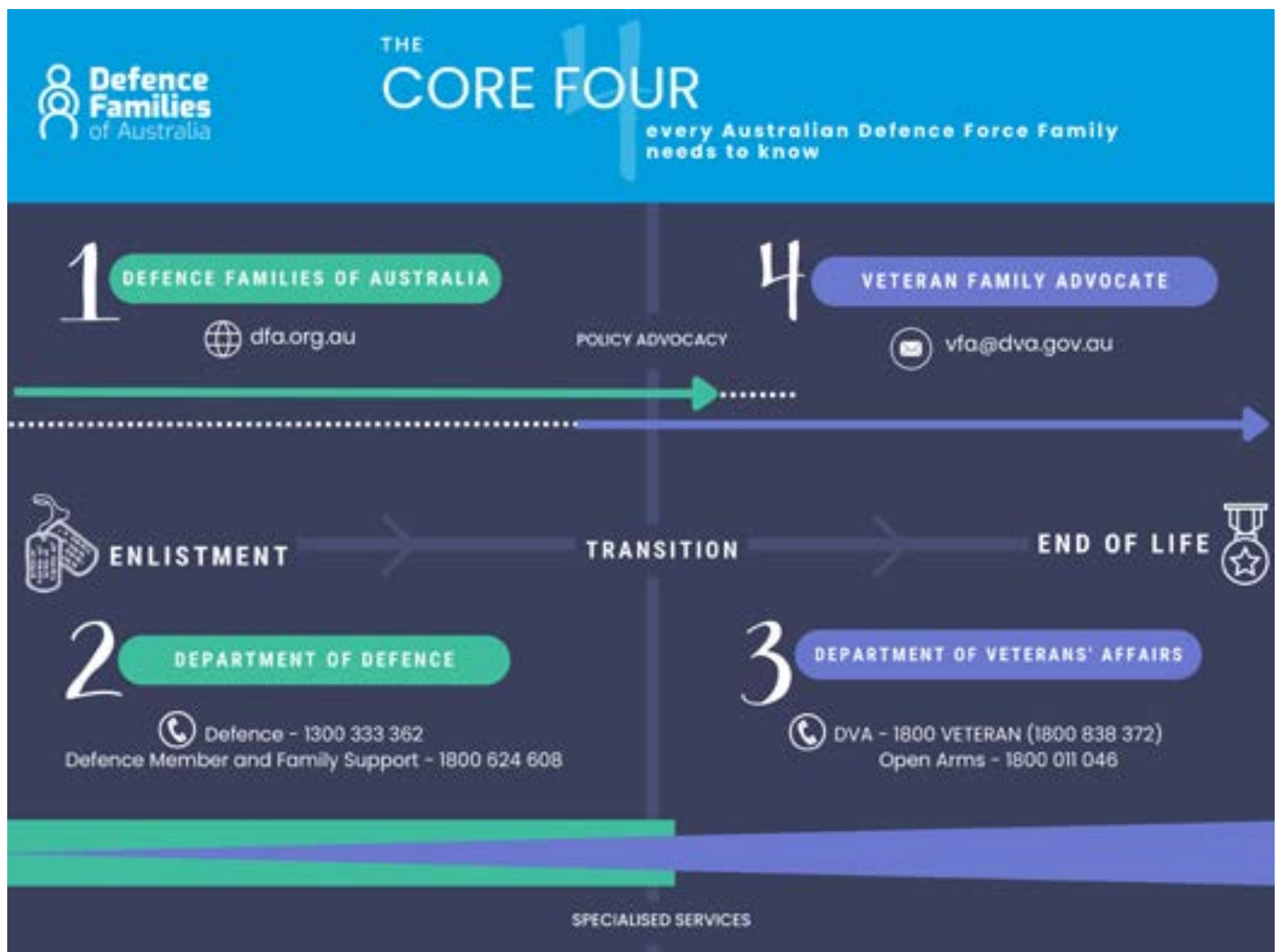
The Defence Families of Australia team provides family representation and advice to the following committees and groups:

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Veterans' Advisory Group
- Australian Military and Veterans Families Study Research Advisory Panel
- Australian War Memorial Veterans and Families Advisory Group
- Briefing to CO/XO courses for RAN, RAAF, Army
- Briefing to Defence schools and academies
- Defence Act Review Committee
- Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Strategy Steering Committee,
- Defence and Veteran Family Wellbeing Strategy Working Group
- Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Steering Group
- Defence Community Organisation Family & Support Funding Advisory Committee
- Defence Housing Australia Advisory Committee
- Defence People Committee (for agenda items related to families)
- Defence Reserve Support Council
- Defence Resilience Forum
- Defence School Mentor Network
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Deputy Commissioner's Consultative Forum
- Expert Advisory Group, Defence and Veteran Suicides
- Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT)
- Family Domestic Violence Working Group
- Female Veterans and Veteran's Families Policy Forum
- ForceNet Working Group
- Intimate Partner Violence in Transition and Wellbeing Research Programme (TWRP) Advisory Committee
- Joint Transition Authority Advisory Committee
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group
- Princes Trust Australia Advisory Committee
- Princes Trust Australia Veterans Advisory Council
- Regional Stakeholder Roundtables
- Returned Service National Defence Personnel & Family Committee
- RSL Lifecare FDV Community of Practice
- Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Stakeholder Reference Group
- Security and Estate Group Industry Partners ADF Family Member Employment Opportunities Initiative (advisory role to: Ventia, BGIS, Downer, Veolia, Wilson, MSS Security, Cushman Wakefield, Augility, Aurecon, Compass)
- Service Families Research Consortium
- Wellness Action Through Checking Health (WATCH) Working Group
- Younger Veterans Forum.

The Defence community Core Four

With more than 10,000 different service providers, companies and community groups across Australia supporting the Defence and veteran community, it is not surprising to hear people feel lost navigating the Defence family support system.

Regardless of where families are in their Defence family journey – whether they have just enlisted or completed training, are moving to a new phase in life with a family, or thinking about transitioning back into the civilian world – this graphic will give families an idea of the 'Core Four' of advocacy bodies and support service providers for ADF families in Australia.



Completed Advocacy

Over the past six months, we completed the following advocacy goals. Many additional advocacy goals were supported but are ongoing, and remain in the broader map.

Advocacy goals relate to changes in policy and practice which DFA have supported to varying degrees.

It should be noted that the delivery of these changes is generally made by service providers including Defence, DHA, and other areas of the Australian Government.

Communication		
Advocated for improved communication including family information sessions for 7RAR/9 Brigade families impacted by unit relocations as part of the Defence Strategic Review Army restructure. SA, NT and North QLD DFA delegates attended, presented and supported the family information sessions, assisted in Career Management Agency activities and engaged with Command to collaborate further as the restructure progresses.	S	Complete
Provided Defence leadership advice on improving the effectiveness, uptake, reach and usefulness of ForceNet as a communications platform for Defence families.	S	Complete
Promoted awareness of the 'Core Four' support agencies for current and former serving members and their families via the Core Four campaign (refer to page 6).	S	Complete
Provided DMFS with further feedback and suggestions to continually improve the <i>Defence Member Family Guide</i> .	S	Complete
Request update the Fundamental Inputs to Capability (FIC) in Section 1.5 of the <i>ADF Capability Life Cycle Manual</i> to include families. This is to ensure capability managers consider the potential impacts to families in Defence planning, thereby reducing the negative impacts on families and improving ADF retention and performance.	M	Complete
Flexible Housing Options		
Advised on the Defence Housing Review regarding regional and national housing trends and related issues.	S	Complete
Collaborated with the Assistant Minister of Defence and Defence's Recruitment and Retention (R2) team on establishing housing roundtables to give members and families opportunities to directly provide feedback on housing, and participating in focus groups to illustrate housing trends and family needs.	S	Complete
Family Employment		
Advocated to the Defence Security and Estate Group (SEG) contract partners to progress development of ADF family employment initiatives, including delivering a briefing and provided resources to SEG partners. A SEG Base Service Contractors Defence family initiative would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> leverage the underutilised workforce of Defence family members as prospective talent for these Defence industry companies, and enable Defence families to access a range of long-term career options with Defence industry who have a footprint at bases across the nation (jobs may be transferred with each posting). 	S	Complete
Connected Defence SEG Base Service Contract (BSC) partners who are seeking to establish a Defence family employment initiative with MINDP.	S	Complete
Published the <i>Defence Family Career Comeback Course Evaluation Report</i> based on the successful 2022 pilot program. The Evaluation Report serves as a blueprint for other tertiary institutions and enterprises to develop their own programs for Defence family members.	S	Complete
Provided advice and feedback to tertiary institutions on the pilot Defence Family Career Comeback Course to help them develop their own versions of the program for Defence families.	S	Complete

Education		
Improved awareness of the role of DMFS EDLO for education matters to overseas lateral transfers when arriving in Australia through the DFA blog.	S	Complete
Participated in Defence School Mentor network meetings nationwide to collaborate with DSMS to improve outcomes for Defence school children.	S	Complete
Breakdown of Relationships		
Provided advice on the <i>DMFS Commanders and Managers Guide to Responding to Family and Domestic Violence</i> .	S	Complete
Advocated for key stakeholders including Bravery Trust and Soldier On to develop targeted support for families impacted by family and domestic violence, including financial control.	S	Complete
Additional Goals		
General		
Fulfilled advisory role to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (2021-2023) on engaging with Defence families, providing multiple submissions and giving critical insights into the Defence family experience.	L	Complete
Defence Family Advocate provided a private session hearing with the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.	M	Complete
Represented Defence families in the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Stakeholder Reference Group.	S	Complete
Consulted with Bravery Trust to highlight untapped Defence family cohorts for focus such as family and domestic violence victim-survivors, lateral transfers and new recruits.	S	Complete
Provided advice to Legacy SA and Broken Hill regarding programs, focus groups, research projects, and future needs of potential beneficiaries.	S	Complete
Consulted with Veterans SA, Legacy SA and Broken Hill, and DMFS in the development of the <i>Veterans SA 2024/25 Strategic Aims and Outcomes</i> for South Australian Defence families.	S	Complete
Participated in the Veterans SA Partners and Families Round Tables for the <i>Veterans SA 2023/24 Strategy</i> .	S	Complete
Collaborated with Australian War Widows to advocate for the Commonwealth Government to implement the recommendations of the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal Inquiry.	S	Complete
Provided a submission on the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal Inquiry to support the recommendation for recognition for members and families of ADF personnel who are injured, wounded or killed in or as a result of service.	S	Complete
Provided advice on requests to Members of Parliament to support complex Defence family cases in their local community, linking families to relevant support and providing policy improvement advice and positions to MPs.	S	Complete
Provided advice to the Attorney-General's Department on the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and establishing a new federal administrative review body.	S	Complete
Advocated to have lapsed pool and gym facility access reinstated for members and families posted to Thursday Island (Weiben). Army is currently reviewing policy.	S	Complete
Collaborated with the National ESO Forum in an advisory role on the formation of a peak ESO body.	S	Complete

Family Stability		
Provided a Letter of Support and advice on the establishment, development and operation of the Lives Lived Well Northern Adelaide Veterans and Families Hub to ensure Defence families' needs are considered.	S	Complete
Advised Defence's Recruitment and Retention (R2) team on strategies to improve family satisfaction and retention.	S	Complete
Consulted with Soldier On on their programs and services including advocating for the inclusion of specific Defence community cohorts such as older children, Special Forces families, ex-partners and ex-partners impacted by family and domestic violence.	S	Complete
Advocated for <i>The Overseas Lateral Recruits Scheme Handbook</i> (2016) be updated to ensure that families are better informed.	S	Complete
Advised Defence and Government to include relevant family support contact details in their statements in response to any incidents or crises.	S	Complete
Provided a submission for the <i>Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding</i> to the Minister for Emergency Management, stating DFA's position is that emergency services should be appropriately resourced to reduce what has become an unsustainable dependence on ADF members to regularly fill current gaps, and that consideration should be given to the impact prolonged and frequent deployments of ADF members in emergency services roles may have on Defence families.	S	Complete
Confirmed the DFTP process to ask all members who they would like to bring to their meeting/s with a transition coach, i.e. spouse, family member or other support person.	M	Complete
Health		
Connected external providers of family counselling services to DMFS for inclusion in resource lists as additional options for family support e.g. Australian Institute of Family Counselling.	S	Complete
Financial Stability		
Issued a public statement on the need for Defence to take a people-centric approach, following news about personnel having to repay money paid to them incorrectly due to an historic Defence mistake in allowance and conditions administration.	S	Complete
Childcare		
Provided a submission for the <i>Australian Government's Childcare Strategy</i> to ensure the children of Defence families are considered as a unique cohort.	S	Complete
Family Research		
Consulted on research and focus groups for the <i>DHA Digital Adoption Strategy</i> on the issues Defence families experience with DHA's call centre and online services.	S	Complete
Represented Defence families at the Service Families Research Consortium - a network of stakeholder and researchers who meet twice a year to discuss gaps and priorities for Service families and the latest research/programs, hosted by Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESH).	S	Complete



AIR FORCE

Communication

1.1 [PRIORITY GOAL] Seek Defence commitment to establish a Defence Families Working Group or Committee to support effective communication strategies and resources for Defence families. This includes creating and consulting on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction sessions for families of newly enlisted members; • Family engagement content and initiatives for Defence Command e.g. family readiness plans, family information sessions. 	S	Underway
1.2 [PRIORITY GOAL] Advocate for and collaborate with Defence on the development of an 'opt-out' approach to direct family communication.	L	Underway
1.3 Seek Defence commitment to develop a family section on the Defence website that includes all Defence community information, posting and relocation guidance, etc.	M	Underway
1.4 Advance initiatives for greater awareness and uptake of Defence support services, e.g. the development of a communications campaign to promote the Defence Family Emergency Assistance Scheme.	M	Underway
1.5 Drive clear, consistent processes of data collection of family contact details in Defence.	M	Underway
1.6 Advise the ForceNet Working Group on community feedback about the platform for ongoing improvement and uptake.	M	Underway
1.7 Support Defence to develop a ForceNet guide for stakeholder engagement with Defence families.	M	Underway
1.8 Collaborate with DMFS, Defence, and local stakeholders including community organisations to improve family readiness through the provision of useful and relevant information to families including: the member's base and unit contact information; emergency support services; local organisations and support services.	M	Underway
1.9 Assist DMFS to improve the quality and consistency of communications to Defence families.	M	Ongoing
1.10 Provide feedback to Defence on the <i>Defence Member and Family Information Guide</i> to drive continual improvements.	S	Ongoing
1.11 Maintain a mentoring, advisory and supporting role to the Defence community to establish engagement options for the community.	S	Ongoing
1.12 Advocate for messaging to reduce hesitancy to seek help.	S	Ongoing
1.13 Advocate for review and update of processes, policy and culture reinforcing negative career impacts for seeking help	S	Ongoing
1.14 Advocate for and deliver communications tailored to families to highlight the scope of support, and encourage asking for help.	S	Ongoing
1.15 Distribute more than 120 information packs to Command, Transition Centres, Community Hubs and DMFS offices about DFA's work to complement an online campaign to raise awareness about key themes and issues in the community.	S	Underway
1.16 Collaborate with DMFS to organise and facilitate nationwide family focused forums to engage families to provide direct feedback on the <i>DVA and Defence Family Wellbeing Strategy</i> .	S	Underway

Flexible Housing

2.1 [PRIORITY GOAL] Seek greater transparency of Defence's long term housing policy and strategy among key stakeholders for improved decision making.	S	Ongoing
2.2 [PRIORITY GOAL] Obtain commitment for greater stability in SR availability and a simplified, more flexible RA process.	M	Underway
2.3 [PRIORITY GOAL] Consult with DHA to enable families to make informed housing choices, with the following updates to the Homefind website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of lease date and terms; • If the house permits or prohibits a home-based business. 	S	Underway
2.4 [PRIORITY GOAL] Obtain commitment for the following housing policy amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable families to reject a SR and/or obtain RA due to proximity to family employment, schooling and required medical services. • Remove an offer of employment (partner) as a prerequisite to obtain housing in the Flexible Housing Trial and RA applications. • Enable families to reject a SR when less than 12 months remain on the lease. • Subsidised RA is provided in the event a DHA lease is ending within 12 months. 	M	Underway
2.5 Ensure senior decision makers understand the need for Defence families to have greater housing choice and flexibility.	S	Ongoing
2.6 Obtain commitment for policy to be updated to enable families to use temporary accommodation allowances flexibly at either the losing or gaining location/s.	S	Underway
2.7 Progress the expansion of housing band categories e.g. Rent Band Choice.	L	Underway
2.8 Advise DHA on appropriate processes for families in a SR to be given reasonable notice and clarity on the sale or re-banding of properties they currently reside in.	S	Underway
2.9 Advocate for Defence and DHA to review accessibility of service residences for families with additional mobility needs, including supply and policy.	S	Underway
2.10 Collaborate with key housing and relocations stakeholders at Regional Meetings nationwide to discuss emerging trends and issues and to represent Defence families.	L	Ongoing



Family Employment

3.1 [PRIORITY GOAL] Highlight the business case for family employment by raising awareness of the transferable talent, skills and career experience of Defence families.	S	Ongoing
3.2 [PRIORITY GOAL] Support private and public sector organisations (including Defence service providers) to develop and promote Defence family employment programs and/or advise them on how to engage Defence families in meaningful employment opportunities.	S	Ongoing
3.3 [PRIORITY GOAL] Collaborate with DMFS to raise awareness and uptake of the Defence Partner Employment Assistance Program (PEAP).	S	Ongoing
3.4 [PRIORITY GOAL] Secure expansion of PEAP to enable partner access following a member's transition from full time service.	M	Underway
3.5 [PRIORITY GOAL] Advocate for national recognition of professional registrations, licenses and certifications of Defence families.	M	Ongoing
3.6 [PRIORITY GOAL] Obtain commitment from Defence to review posting practices and increase awareness and training in Career Management Agency staff to facilitate longer posting term career planning.	M	Underway
3.7 Pursue the expansion of the Queensland Government Connecting the Sector Veterans' Mentoring program eligibility for families to access this program, including veterans and families in other states and territories.	L	Underway
3.8 Collaborate with Veterans SA and other state and territory governments to research the impact of posting relocations on family employment through changes to certifications, qualifications and licenses.	M	Underway
3.9 Advocate for ESOs and service providers to expand employment program eligibility to include ex-partners of ADF members.	L	Underway
3.10 Advocate for financial assistance for partners who operate small businesses to assist with expenses incurred as a result of re-establishing their business when relocating.	M	Underway
3.11 Support and progress DMFS and DHA review of home-based business needs, prevalence and application processes.	M	Underway
3.12 Advocate for increased promotion and availability of before and after school care, outside of school hours care, and home-based care.	M	Underway
3.13 Raise awareness and uptake of current support options for emergency or ad hoc childcare for parents in the case of member absence.	M	Underway
3.14 Review and consult on the Defence Family Emergency Assistance Scheme to ensure it is more accessible and relevant including child care support during member absences.	M	Underway
3.15 Advocate for a childcare subsidy to support civilian partner employment during deployments or domestic operations.	M	Underway
3.16 Advocate for expanded eligibility to enable non-serving partners to receive government funded parental leave during a relocation when employment in the new location has not been secured.	L	Underway

Education

4.1 [PRIORITY GOAL] Enhance the DSM program through advocating for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and selection criterion to include lived Defence experience or the ability to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Defence family experience; Increased funding to accommodate higher demand related to the expansion of the program to include children of recently-transitioned veterans. 	M	Underway
4.2 [PRIORITY GOAL] Engage state and territory Education and Veterans' Affairs Departments as well as government officials to recognise Defence children as a priority cohort with exceptional circumstances, and to secure their participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a system of identifying Defence school children to facilitate appropriate funding allocation; Championing the uptake of ADF Aware training school staff; Permit schools to accept a Defence Posting Order as proof of address for zoning and enrolment purposes, prior to a family securing housing. 	L	Underway
4.3 Support CDF's initiative to request state and territory education departments recognise Defence children as a priority cohort, and participation in implementing supports for families.	L	Underway
4.4 Raise awareness of the Defence boarding subsidy available for Defence children.	L	Ongoing
4.5 Advocate for schools to review boarding fees to align with the Defence boarding subsidy for Defence children.	L	Underway
4.6 Request DMFS increase communication about the <i>Moving Schools Checklist</i> as a resource for families, e.g. prior to peak posting cycles.	S	Underway
4.7 Obtain commitment by DMFS to review the tutoring reimbursement scheme to explore options to reduce or remove upfront payment of tutoring costs to reduce financial burdens on Defence families, in addition to expanding eligibility to include children before negative academic outcomes.	S	Underway
4.8 Advocate for greater awareness and uptake of the DSM program.	L	Ongoing
4.9 Support greater stability in DSM numbers and reduce gaps in service where vacancies occur by progressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions to increase advertisement of vacancies; DMFS to communicate recruitment delays to families, and confirm alternative services; Improvements to enable consistent application of the program in all states and territories, including recruitment, selection and training processes. 	M	Underway

Breakdown of Relationships

5.1 [PRIORITY GOAL] Obtain commitment for policy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow either the member or the partner to authorise a removal; Prevent a member from stopping a removal following the breakdown of a relationship. 	S	Underway
5.2 [PRIORITY GOAL] Raise awareness of the risk of housing policy being misused in instances of family and domestic violence.	S	Ongoing
5.3 [PRIORITY GOAL] Obtain commitment for an accommodation allowance to cover accommodation for member and partner between an uplift and downlift if required in a breakdown of relationship removal, to address a current gap in policy. Where this pertains to dual serving members, both members should be entitled to this provision.	S	Underway
5.4 [PRIORITY GOAL] Secure Defence and DHA commitment to extend the 28-day removal deadline to 90 days.	M	Underway
5.5 [PRIORITY GOAL] Secure commitment for the following policy amendments for bereavement (death of a Defence member): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the option for grieving families to remain in a SR or other Defence-funded rental property for up to 18 months following the death of a member; Bereavement support process to be aligned to entitlement periods. 	L	Underway
5.6 [PRIORITY GOAL] Obtain commitment from Defence to examine the implementation of a trial separation period for couples considering ending their relationship.	L	Underway
5.7 Advocate for an official, step-by-step procedure for relationship breakdowns (including when FDV is a factor) for families to be developed and included in the DMFS <i>ADF Member and Family Guide</i> and website. This procedure should include the key external support services for former partners to use when they are no longer recognised by the ADF as a resident family member.	M	Underway
5.8 Advocate for Defence to provide dedicated point-of-contact or case managers to provide practical support to navigate ex-partners through relationship breakdowns including: performing a 'check in' on the family when a categorisation change occurs; guiding them through the housing and removal process; informing them of their rights, responsibilities and entitlements; referring them to mental health support where necessary; and connecting them with external support services.	L	Underway
5.9 Obtain commitment from Defence that the FDV Review and FDV Strategy committee will draw on expert advice from FDV experts, such as Phoenix Australia.	M	Underway
5.10 Obtain commitment from Defence to implement reporting on FDV, with units and DMFS to consolidate data on the prevalence and nature of cases reported.	M	Underway
5.11 Advocate for the Defence FDV review to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended access to DMFS social workers for (partner) victim-survivors following a relationship breakdown where FDV was a factor; Extended or unlimited Open Arms access where FDV was a factor in a relationship breakdown; Options for DHA to provide timely and comprehensive phone and email responses to rental reference requests for members and ex-partners rental applications. 	M	Underway
5.12 Represent the interests of Defence families in an advisory role on the <i>Defence Family and Domestic Violence Strategy</i> working group.	M	Underway

Additional Goals

General		
6.1 DFA National Delegates support individual families where they encounter issues or failures in the support system. This accounts for more than 500 families per year with highly complex issues, and thousands with minor issues or questions.	S	Ongoing
6.2 Represent the interests of Defence families in an advisory role on the <i>Defence and DVA Family Wellbeing Strategy</i> development steering committee, working groups and workshops.	S	Underway
6.3 Obtain parking allowance to cover airport parking fees where there is no other option than to drive to the airport for RLLT.	M	Underway
6.4 Obtain commitment for a parking allowance for members within the ACT Parliamentary Triangle.	M	Underway
Inclusivity		
6.5 Engage with the below groups to ensure inclusion in DFA advocacy, and support their connection to timely information on relevant services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Defence families Defence Indigenous Affairs, Regional Indigenous Liaison Officers, Indigenous Liaison Officers Religious Advisory Committee for the Services Defence LGBTI Information Service (DEFGLIS) New Defence families (recruits) Regional Defence families, e.g. Thursday Island, Norfolk Island, remote bases in NT/WA Overseas posted families ADF Defence Attaches in overseas posting locations Defence families with special needs Defence Special Needs Support Group. 	S	Ongoing
Housing and Removals		
6.6 Advocate for DHA and DRH to establish a process to provide phone references when requested by real estate agents for private rental accommodation.	S	Underway
6.7 Secure acknowledgement or addition of a recognised partner on SR tenancy agreements.	S	Underway
6.8 Support the review of SR standards in remote locations such as Thursday Island, Tully and Weipa.	S	Underway
6.9 Raise awareness of the impacts of living in remote locations on families.	S	Ongoing
6.10 Confirm commitment for regular RA and rental ceiling reviews to be aligned with current market conditions.	M	Underway
6.11 Secure commitment from Defence to communicate a clear course of action, contingencies and appropriate support for families when they are unable to secure housing due to current housing supply issues.	M	Underway
6.12 Obtain commitment from Defence and DHA to review and update policy regarding ownership rights and their maintenance responsibilities, and ensure inconsistencies are addressed.	M	Underway
6.13 Collaborate with Defence and DHA to advance the installation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate heating and cooling in all SRs as standard capital inclusions; Sustainable energy options, such as solar panels, in SRs; Security screen doors; Electric car charging stations in all SRs by 2035. 	L	Underway
6.14 Obtain commitment for policy to be amended to include a bond cleaning allowance for families in RA properties.	L	Underway

6.15 Obtain commitment for policy to be updated to include an additional night of temporary accommodation to cover self-cleaning following uplift, in lieu of 6.14.	L	Underway
6.16 Advocate for Relocations Briefings to be reinstated at bases where this has not yet occurred.	S	Underway
6.17 Support planning for family related considerations (e.g. housing, medical, education) for the DSR-endorsed increase of ADF presence in Northern Australia.	L	Underway
6.18 Progress the expansion of the Live-in Carer entitlement to include all recognised dependents with special needs, the removal of the requirement for a carer to be a relative, and inclusion of a bedroom entitlement to accommodate a Live-in Carer.	M	Underway
Overseas Postings		
6.19 Engage Defence and Qantas (national provider) to further subsidise pet transport expenses for families undertaking overseas military postings.	M	Underway
6.20 Collaborate with Defence on the development of overseas posting information sessions and information for families considering and returning from overseas postings.	M	Underway
6.21 Support the review of overseas posting information and communications campaigns to ensure it is relevant, timely and useful.	M	Underway
6.22 Engage Toll to improve communications to families regarding international delivery of belongings.	M	Underway
6.23 Advocate for Defence to expand eligibility and reduce bureaucracy around processes to access services on return to Australia.	M	Ongoing
6.24 Advise Defence on communication campaigns to increase family awareness of available education and employment support for overseas postings.	M	Ongoing
6.25 Advocate for a review of the following overseas posting entitlements in consideration with current costs of living including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • storage of car/s; • removal of loss on sale of a motor vehicle; • entitlement for car hire due to sale of car; • costs of pet transport to/from Australia. 	M	Underway
Health		
6.26 Drive the expansion of the eligibility criteria of the ADF Family Health Program to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror two years post-transition date for SERCAT 6/7; • Include the families of Reservists on continuous full-time service. 	M	Underway
6.27 Support the review of the ADF Family Health Program and provide recommendations to improve the program.	M	Underway
6.28 Obtain commitment from Defence to review on-base medical services to ensure high quality, timely health services are available for Defence members.	M	Underway
Financial Stability		
6.29 Consult with the ADF Financial Services Consumer Centre to continually improve program delivery.	M	Ongoing
6.30 Advocate for equitable distribution of retention bonuses, measured and achieved based on balanced work (e.g. low leave balance) and performance. Request this be backdated to the end of the former retention bonus program to re-attract transitioned veterans.	L	Underway

Flexible Work Options		
6.31 Support the Defence review and planning to increase flexible and remote work options.	S	Ongoing
6.32 Consult with Defence stakeholders to understand demand and prime locations for Flexible Working Hubs.	M	Underway
Pets		
6.33 Raise awareness of the impacts (stress, financial and capability) on single members and URF when no family remains in location during a deployment to care for pets.	S	Underway
Transition		
6.34 Advocate for Defence Transition meetings with a transitioning member to factor in the whole family's transition.	M	Underway
Family Engagement, Social Support and Connection		
6.35 Collaborate with DMFS to ensure Family Liaison Officer recruitment delays are communicated to families, and contingencies are established to continue their support functions.	S	Underway
6.36 Advise on the establishment, development and operation of Veteran Wellbeing Centres to ensure Defence families' needs are considered.	L	Ongoing
6.37 Engage stakeholders to support increased community connection services in regions where Defence Community Centres are absent or facing difficult operating conditions.	L	Underway
Family Research		
6.38 Contribute to research advisory boards to shape research related to Defence families including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Institute of Family Studies Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESHA) Phoenix Australia at University of Melbourne Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation Open Door Australian Catholic University Other universities include UNSW, the Australian National University, University of South Australia, Flinders University, Central Queensland University and the University of New England. 	M	Ongoing
6.39 Connect stakeholders with research opportunities i.e. research institutions and experts to investigate under-researched areas, families to participate, and stakeholders to implement the findings for meaningful change.	M	Ongoing
6.40 Inform the review of the Defence Family Survey.	M	Ongoing
6.41 Establish a 'Mind the Gap' family research workshop to bring together researchers to synergise their work and highlight priority gaps in current knowledge.	M	Underway
6.42 Inform the Defence Census questions relating to families.	M	Ongoing



Acknowledgements

The DFA team wish to acknowledge and thank the thousands of Defence families who contribute and provide feedback on this resource, and to our advocacy work.

We thank the Minister for Defence Personnel, the Hon. Matt Keogh MP, and the Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell AO DSC. As the official advisors to these leaders, DFA are grateful for their ongoing support and focus on families.

There are a range of stakeholders who collaborate with DFA and draw on our insights and advice to shape their services and programs.

We thank all of these stakeholders in the Department of Defence, Defence Housing Australia, Toll Group, the Veteran Family Advocate, Open Arms, and the many ex-service organisations and corporate entities who liaise with DFA to drive ongoing improvement in the support and services available to families.

Despite operating under caretaker arrangements for a number of months while awaiting the appointment of a new Defence Family Advocate, our team are proud to have continued our work with the support of our collaborators in the Defence community.

This is the fifth iteration of the DFA Advocacy Map. The document helps us start conversations and drives transparency, progress, and accountability.

We will never remove all potential hurdles faced by Defence families. But through our advocacy, we can reduce the height and frequency of these hurdles, prepare families to overcome them, and in some instances, remove them completely.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of DFA.



For any questions or to provide feedback on any information in this document, please contact advocacy@dfa.org.au

Published November 2023.