



Defence Families of Australia
CP2 – 1 – 11
Campbell Park Offices
Canberra. AVT. 2600
Julie.blackburn1@defence.gov.au
0410 626103

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Reference: ADF Force Posture review

DFA considers that the relocation of ADF bases to remote localities will have a negative effect on the retention and recruitment to the ADF, thus strategic capability of the ADF.

Defence families already living in remote localities experience increased challenges in relation to employment, education, distance from extended family, dealing with extreme climate, and social isolation. Whilst the experienced may be enjoyed by many families for a 2-3year posting period, by the end of this time, many are also seeking to relocate for change of climate, easier access to their extended family, and to engage in wider social experiences beyond their commitment to the ADF.

DFA proposes that increasing the number of ADF living in remote localities will lead to an increase in the number of ADF families who will view these experiences as negative, and result in increased financial cost to the ADF to accommodate the challenges. Families will be removed extended family networks, with further limitations to employment and educational opportunities for partners and children for long periods. Therefore, greater costs will be necessary to provide Remote Locality Leave Travel for respite from the climate, in addition to potential increases that may arise in MWD(U) categorization, or departure from the ADF, due to family resistance to relocate.

The 2009 Defence White Paper acknowledges the importance of retention when it said “Attracting and retaining the future workforce will be one of the most significant challenges facing Defence”. We currently have a Defence force that is adjusting to lengthy, recurring deployments, extended time away from home, and displaying high levels of stress. DFA advises that placing additional stressors on the member’s family as a result of further change to living conditions will serve to increase this challenge.

Thus, due to the points mentioned above, DFA view is that positioning of ADF bases in remote localities will only increase recruitment and retention issues, which will ultimately have a negative impact on the strategic capability of the Defence Force due to the effect this will have on the Defence personnel and their families.

Julie Blackburn

Julie Blackburn, DFA National Convenor

