



Lateral Recruits

Defence Community Organisation

Frequently asked questions

How does Australia's education system work?

Each state government manages the primary and high school systems within their state, providing funding and regulation. Public, private and religious education schools exist in each state, and while the curriculum taught in each state or school may vary slightly the overall learning areas remain nationally consistent.

You can find out more about children's schooling by reading our [one-look state and territory education sheet](#). You can also visit state-based education department websites for detailed information.

[Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training](#)

[New South Wales Department of Education and Communities](#)

[Northern Territory Department of Education and Training](#)

[Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment](#)

[South Australian Department for Education and Child Development](#)

[Tasmanian Department of Education](#)

[Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development](#)

[Western Australian Department of Education](#)

Discuss your child's admission into a school with the school's principal in order to assess their appropriate entry level.

There are universities in each state, funded by the national government and governed independently. Entry into specific courses is determined by set criteria outlined by the institution

Each state also hosts vocational education and training (VET) or technical and further education (TAFE) systems, to prepare older children and adults for work in a career that does not need a university degree.

People who are educated overseas can gain recognition of their training and education to help them gain employment—detailed information about how to do this can be found on the australia.gov.au website.

How can I help my child settle into a new school and country?

For personal assistance with helping your child settle into a new school and country, call the all-hours [Defence Family Helpline](#) on 1800 624 608.

[Defence Community Organisation](#) provides information, resources and programs to help children settle into new schools.

Regional Education Liaison Officers, or REDLOs, are experienced teachers who can assist children make the transition from foreign education systems to the Australian education system. Additionally, school based Aides and Mentors support Defence children through the process of changing schools and times of parental absence.

Visit the [Supporting Defence children](#) section of Defence Community Organisation's website for more information.





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Is childcare available in Australia?

Children of mobile Defence families can receive priority of access to Defence childcare centres around Australia. Visit the [Childcare assistance](#) section of Defence Community Organisation's website for more information.

I'd like to know more about Australia's health system

Medicare is Australia's publicly funded health care system. Medicare funds affordable primary health care treatment for all Australian citizens and permanent residents. Detailed information and advice is found on the [Department of Human Services](#) website.

What do I need to know about immunisation in Australia?

The [Immunise Australia](#) website provides detailed information about Australia's immunisation program, and the [Australian Childhood Immunisation Register](#) is a national register that records vaccinations given to children under seven years of age. When you do move to Australia, be sure to bring your own and your child's detailed vaccination records.

What do I need to know about customs and quarantine?

The [Australian Customs and Border Protection Service](#) website provides information for migrants and arriving travellers, including information about importing motor, recreational and other types of vehicles.

It is important to be aware that Australia has restrictions that apply to each state and territory in addition to national customs and quarantine restrictions.

Can I bring our family pet to Australia?

The [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry](#) provides information regarding bringing pets into Australia. Note that different criteria apply to disability assistance dogs.

What do I need to know about a driver's licence?

In Australia, laws and driving regulations differ from state to state. Some states require you to carry an international licence with your current foreign licence. Other states request you carry your current foreign driver's licence together with a formal translation of your licence into English.

As a general rule, you are able to drive in Australia, as a visitor, on a valid overseas driver's licence that covers the same vehicle class for a maximum of three months after arriving in Australia.

To find out more about the driving licence laws in each state, click on the relevant authorities below:

[Australian Capital Territory Rego ACT](#)

[New South Wales Transport, Roads and Maritime Services](#)

[Northern Territory Department of Transport](#)

[Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads](#)

[South Australia Transport, Travel and Motoring](#)

[Tasmania Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources](#)

[Victoria VicRoads](#)

[Western Australia Department of Transport](#)

What do I need to know about civilian employment, skills and qualifications?





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Partners of Australian Defence Force members can access funding for education and employment services to enhance their career options and to help them to secure employment when posted with their partner, subject to certain ADF rules and policy.

Visit the [Supporting Defence partners](#) section of the Defence Community Organisation website for detailed information.

Partners of lateral recruits can apply once they arrive in Australia and their eligibility will be assessed against all the criteria set out in the guidelines.

From 1 January 2013, amendments to the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* allowed for exemption of the usual residence requirement for certain family members of overseas lateral recruits. [Read more detail about this on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website.](#)

People who are educated overseas can gain recognition of their training and education to help them gain employment—detailed information about how to do this can be found on the australia.gov.au website.

What do I need to know about housing in Australia?

[Defence Housing Australia](#) provides Australian Defence Force personnel with Defence related information.

The [Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme](#) assists current and former Australian Defence Force members and their families to achieve home ownership.

Where can I find out about mortgages and banking?

There is a range of banking institutions in Australia—an internet search will help you

find out the best option for you. There are also some Defence-specific banking options available:

[Defence Bank](#)

[Australian Defence Credit Union](#)

How will my pension/retirement planning be effected by a move to Australia?

Discuss this with your current employer and retirement fund and seek professional advice from a financial planner before you commit to a move to Australia.

What's the weather like in Australia?

Australian weather is varied and our climate ranges from tropical in the far north, to dry deserts in the centre of the country, mild coastal and mountain regions, to snow in the southern alps.

The [Bureau of Meteorology](#) provides weather forecasts, warnings and observations for all states of Australia. There is also information about climate, hydrology and other weather services.

What are the time zones in Australia?

Australia has three different time zones and daylight savings time. Details can be found at Australia.gov.au

What is the exchange rate?

Current Exchange rates as listed by the [Reserve Bank of Australia](#).

What about my personal commitments in my home country?

All personal commitments are solely the member's responsibility and will not be fulfilled by the Australian Defence Force. For specific ADF military entitlement information





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visit the [Department of Defence's pay and conditions website](#).

Some examples of commitments the member is responsible for include:

- a decision to return home in the event of family member's death or illness,
- a relationship breakdown, or
- a need for family members to return to complete education or employment commitments.

What support is available for families of lateral recruits?

[Defence Community Organisation](#), or DCO, offers a broad range of programs and services to all Defence families, which includes families of members recruited from outside of Australia.

Services provided by DCO include support from a social worker, assistance for partners' education and employment, help with childcare, assistance for dependants with special needs, support for Defence community groups, help for families during crisis and emergency, education support for children, and assistance for members leaving the ADF.

In particular, we provide extensive support for families experiencing [deployment and time apart](#) and [relocation due to posting](#). The Defence Community Organisation website at www.defence.gov.au/dco provides information on these support services and programs.

The best way to access any of the services provided by DCO is to contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline at DefenceFamilyHelpline@defence.gov.au or on 1800 624 608.

The Defence Family Helpline operates 24-7 and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists. If you need support, help, or advice at any time contact or email the Defence Family Helpline. The Helpline also makes referrals to Defence Social Workers based in the regional offices.

Defence Families of Australia

Defence Families of Australia, or DFA, is a ministerially appointed advocacy group.

DFA provides access to a wealth of practical information and guidance to support and advocate for Defence families. The DFA website at www.dfa.org.au is host to a range of topics including citizenship, Defence entitlements, policy changes, pay and conditions, relocation and housing and many more areas of interest to lateral recruit members and families.

Membership to Defence Families of Australia is free and provides members with information updates, contacts and links to relevant resources.