



Bereavement support

Defence Member and Family Support



When an Australian Defence Force (ADF) member dies, Defence Member and Family Support provides emotional and practical support to the family.

During this difficult time, Defence Member and Family Support is available to provide assistance to you and your family. We offer you and your family our condolences and assure you of our support.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

In the event of the death of an ADF member while in Service, Defence offers the assistance of a Bereavement Support Team to support the deceased member's next of kin. Following the death of a member, Defence Member and Family Helpline personnel will contact the next of kin to offer the services of a Bereavement Support Team, who can provide tailored practical and emotional support.

YOUR BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

The Bereavement Support Team is made up of a Defence Social Worker and an ADF Military Support Officer.

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

The Military Support Officer can provide advice on military and administrative matters, assist with practical arrangements, and liaise with the member's unit.

The Bereavement Support Team can also connect your family to agencies such as Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and other organisations such as Legacy.

FUNERALS

There are certain planning and administrative decisions which are inevitable at this time.

The Bereavement Support Team will discuss funeral options with your family, and can assist you in working with your chosen funeral director on the funeral arrangements.

Defence makes a contribution of up to \$14,000 towards an eligible deceased member's funeral costs. In most cases, this contribution is sufficient to cover all funeral costs.

Due to the pandemic, there may be some restrictions on travel and the numbers of people permitted to attend funerals. Military ceremonial support such as a firing party and other ceremonial components may be available, however Defence involvement will be strictly in accordance with State or Territory government control measures relating to the pandemic.



MEMORIAL SERVICES

Where COVID-19 control measures significantly restrict attendance at an eligible member's funeral, support for a subsequent memorial service may be available. Should families in these situations wish, once the COVID-19 restrictions ease, Defence may provide funding for travel to a memorial service.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to Defence's contribution of \$14,000 towards an eligible member's funeral costs, financial assistance may also be provided for travel costs for the member's dependants and/or parents to travel to the location of the member's funeral, if it is located outside their home location. This includes return travel expenses, two nights' accommodation and meals, within reasonable limits.

Bereavement payments may be payable to a person/persons who were financially dependent upon the member. The purpose of these payments is to provide short-term financial support. Bereavement payments consist of four fortnightly payments of the member's gross salary and are tax-exempt.

The release of funds such as outstanding leave entitlements and balance of salary depends on individual circumstances.

In certain circumstances, housing assistance may be provided to a deceased member's dependants for up to six months following the member's death. The Bereavement Support Team will arrange for a Defence Housing Australia representative to contact you to discuss the support they may be able to provide.

WILLS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

If the member's Will was stored at Defence Member and Family Support Headquarters, it will be forwarded to the appropriate representative to assist with executing the member's wishes.

The Bereavement Support Team are unable to provide legal advice in relation to a deceased member's estate. It is recommended that you seek independent legal advice as each state

and territory have different laws governing deceased estates.

In consultation with the family of the deceased member, our team will also coordinate the storage or release of any personal effects that were on located on Commonwealth property.

Defence Member and Family Support offers a wide range of support services to ADF members and their families.

For more information on this factsheet and other DMFS services visit our website or contact the all-hours Defence Member and Family Helpline.



1800 624 608



memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au



defence.gov.au/members-families



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