



# Lateral recruits family considerations

## Defence Member and Family Support



### WHO ARE LATERAL RECRUITS?

Lateral recruits are military personnel who gain entry to the Australian Defence Force based on prior experience in other defence forces.

The Australian Defence Force's lateral recruitment program addresses capability shortfalls that cannot otherwise be filled using Australian personnel.

Visit <https://www.defencejobs.gov.au/> for eligibility criteria.

### THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU GO

#### Relocating to another country

There will always be differences and adjustments to make when moving to a new country. Each country has its own culture and your lifestyle will change after the move.

There could be times when you question your decision, so keep the reasons for your move clear in your mind.

#### Reality checks all the way

It's important not to romanticise your destination—look at all aspects of your new location and not just the most exciting ones.

Do your research—consider the adjustments you and your family will have to make and realise you will need to adapt to a new kind of 'normal'.

### Problems won't vanish with a move

Personal dilemmas and relationship stressors you may experience in your home country will remain with you until you actively commit to addressing and resolving them. Moving to a new country won't magically resolve problems and many couples find if their relationship doesn't have an existing good foundation of friendship, respect and healthy attachment, life in a new country can be difficult.

### Challenges

Think about your set of circumstances and consider possible challenges for you and your family. Will those remaining in your home country (family, friends) face any challenges? Consider how you will meet your obligations and commitments to those left in your home country. Also identify your individual triggers and vulnerabilities— what action plans do you have to support these?

### Parenting

The challenges of parenting can be highlighted due to a lack of extended family and other support networks. You may also find childcare on offer is different to what you are used to. There will probably be differences in education systems and extracurricular activities. There may be additional stress if parents or children have special medical or psychological needs.



## Family readiness

Take time to plan for life in Australia as a family—everyone (including children) can identify something they would like to do, see or experience in the new location.

Talk openly about what family members are feeling and thinking and plan how you will handle particular situations you anticipate arising.

## AFTER YOU MOVE

Loneliness and isolation are the biggest challenges for many who move overseas. Have you considered what you and your family will do to manage this? Australia is a large continent—postings can be significant distances from where you initially settle.

Partners can begin to emotionally separate when one tries to integrate into a new society and the other partner stays isolated. A lateral transfer involves ALL family members—have you considered how relocation might impact on each member of your family?

## Different culture—different society

Australia's culture may not seem significantly different from your own, but consider the social changes which may come into play.

Think about the society you currently know, how your society functions, the social supports you have and your current social interactions.

There are four common stages to adapting to a new culture:

### The honeymoon stage

You may experience excitement, curiosity, novelty, anticipation of opportunities, energy and enthusiasm.

### Culture shock

Your focus turns to differences between the home culture and the new culture. Conflicts can arise with other people or internally—in terms of values, habits and preferences.

You may feel homesick while experiencing differences in language, food, religious practices, education systems, and living conditions and may sometimes feel you are

misunderstood. You may also have feelings of confusion, anxiety, homesickness, anger, irritation and being overwhelmed. This can lead to thinking you've made a mistake.

Two common reactions in the this early stage are 'fight' or 'flight'—complaining about the culture in some way or separating from the new culture by spending all of your social time with people from your own culture or by spending time alone.

### Gradual adjustment

You decide to make the most of the experience. Reactions can include emotional highs and lows as adjustment gradually takes place. You recognise that you like some parts of the new society better and question some of your earlier assumptions.

### Adaptation

You start to feel at home and feel a greater sense of confidence and tolerance.

### Tips for successful adaptation:

- Expect to experience a range of feelings— realise you will need a period of time to adjust.
- Research the new country and be prepared as it's often the unknown which causes stress.
- Establish new routines to assist in grounding you and your family in your new town or city.

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



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