



CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE

EC20-001395

To All Australian Defence Force Families

Dear ADF Families,

I am writing to you, during these extraordinary times, to assure you that I understand the concerns that many of you are coping with during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2020 has certainly delivered a number of challenges. From bushfires to the current health crisis, the Australian Defence Force continues to be a critical component of efforts to keep Australians safe. I want to thank you for the continuous sacrifices that you and your family make in supporting us.

Great care is being taken, as a priority, to support Australian Defence Force personnel during training and when they are deployed. If anyone shows symptoms, isolation arrangements are put into place in strict accordance with public health requirements. This reflects community standards and ensures the health and safety of our personnel and the broader community.

No doubt you have been closely watching the news and social media from around the world as the health crisis unfolds. The situation is evolving rapidly and changing our everyday way of life. The Government's current COVID-19 restrictions on non-essential travel and physical distancing requirements are difficult for everyone, particularly those who are apart, such as those families unable to reunite over Easter. This does not mean you have to feel alone, as families can reach out and contact the Defence Family Helpline. If you are experiencing difficulties and need advice or support, please contact the Helpline on 1800 624 608 or by email at defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

There is a range of information and resources available to families on the Defence Community Organisation website www.defence.gov.au/dco and regular updates for families are available from Defence Community Organisation area office e-newsletters, the ForceNet Families group and on social media. I encourage families to join ForceNet for families at www.forcenet.gov.au or download the free ForceNet App so you can stay up-to-date with the latest information.

This can be a particularly stressful time, for those who are employed in essential services like healthcare, education, and some retail sectors like pharmacies and supermarkets; or where your employment has been affected by the closure of many businesses. I have asked my command team to support, wherever possible, our family members who are in health and support roles in protecting our community.

It is important to remember the restrictions the Government has put in place are vital to help stop the spread of the virus, and the elderly and other vulnerable people in our society are relying on every one of us to do our part. Some families may experience an emergency or crisis and need additional support. In exceptional circumstances, Defence may be able to work

with the relevant state or territory to assist you. It is important you contact the Defence Family Helpline or your Australian Defence Force member's chain of command for assistance.

Our role in the Government response is critical and I thank every Australian Defence Force member, their parents, partners and children for the patience, resilience, understanding and support they continue to provide so that we can continue to serve. I know much of the strength of our Australian Defence Force is due to the support families selflessly provide – thank you for the service you too give to our nation and its defence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angus J Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Angus J Campbell, AO, DSC
General
Chief of the Defence Force

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