



HQ3BDE/OUT/2016/Q7649536

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**THE TOWNSVILLE DEFENCE COMMUNITY FORUM 04/16 MINUTES – 30 NOV 16**

**BLUF. 3 BDE hosted the fourth meeting of Townsville Defence Community Forum (TDCF) on Wed, 30 Nov 16. The Commander 3rd Brigade, BRIG Field reviewed the TDCF Principles. Updates were provided by TCC representative on the Townsville City Council Defence Accord, and lessons learnt from the Peak Performance Training at the Vasey Resilience Centre. Presentations were delivered on employment opportunity programs for Defence members transitioning, accessing mental health treatment through DVA, Defence Families Australia and ADF mental health. TDCF members were invited to provide updates and information on forthcoming activities. The next TDCF is to be held at the Mayoral Reception Room on Wed, 8 Mar 17, 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm.**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Townsville Defence Community Forum was conducted from 1.30 to 3.30 pm on Wed, 30 Nov 16 in the Mayoral Reception Room, Townsville City Council. A list of attendees is at Annex A.

**MINUTES**

2. Opening Statement.

a. Brigadier Field, Commander 3rd Brigade, opened the meeting with an update on the TDCF, reaffirming the TDCF Principles, which are:

- (1) Enable Defence personnel to realise their potential.
- (2) Facilitate open and honest discussion between TDCF members and Defence.
- (3) Welcome TDCF members' capabilities and strengths supporting ADF personnel in a manner concomitant with TDCF members' own preference.
- (4) Encourage TDCF members to support ADF personnel through 3rd Brigade's three pillars: Human Performance Framework (Geckos Family Centre, Soldier Recovery Centre and the Vasey Resilience Centre to Defence members and their families to facilitate rehabilitation and resilience.
- (5) The TDCF's information is available to Townsville-based defence personnel via an open access website. TDCF's information is available through the GECKOS website <http://www.geckostsv.net/townsville-defence-community-forum/>

3. Update on the Townsville Community Defence Accord.

a. Councilor Verena Coombe reconfirmed the Townsville City Council Defence Accord, as a statement of mutual support between the Townsville City Council and the Australian

Defence Force. The Accord has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by BRIG Field and WGCDR Matt Harvey for comment. The Accord is proposed to be a collaboration and cooperation between ADF and the local community including:

- (1) Strategic Planning and Policy.
- (2) Infrastructure Provision and Development.
- (3) Economic Development.
- (4) Community Facilities Development.
- (5) Events.

b. The Townsville City Council Defence Accord is proposed to be available for signature on 04 Feb 17 at the DCO Welcome to Townsville Expo, RSL Stadium. Once signed by respective service SADFOs it will be made available for the local community to join and sign accordingly.

4. Update on the 3rd Brigade's Vasey Resilience Centre – Peak Performance Training Program – Chaplain Dan Cassidy.

a. Chaplain Dan Cassidy provided feedback on the Peak Performance Program at the Vasey Resilience Centre. There have been two courses delivered with 20 students per course. The course is aimed to increase resilience and fitness as a prevention measure for current serving soldiers. There have been some identified amendments to be implemented prior to the next course. The students have provided some very positive feedback particularly relating to character training and the implementation of personal goals. It has been identified that support will be extended to the broader Army in FY17/18.

5. Employment opportunities for Defence members transitioning in the TSV region – Chaplain Steve Brooks.

a. Chaplain Steve Brooks provided information on a new program aimed to assist Defence members as they transition from Army into the local community. The end state is to have members transition with dignity, hope and connectivity with the local community. Approximately 300 members transition from Lavarack Barracks annually with a significant percentage remaining in Townsville. Chaplain Brooks is reaching to the community for support for employment initiatives post separation in an attempt to have families remain connected in Townsville and transferring skills to the local business community. A pilot program for transition is being developed for implementation.

6. Accessing Mental Health Treatment through DVA – MS Susie Ferguson.

a. MS Susie Ferguson provided the revised details for ADF members current and ex-serving, to access mental health treatment. The flow chart, Accessing Mental Health Treatment Through DVA Is Easy, can be located at:  
[http://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/benefits%20and%20payments/nlhc\\_flowchart.pdf](http://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/benefits%20and%20payments/nlhc_flowchart.pdf)  
 In summary, treatment is available immediately, with a diagnosis to be provided to DVA within 6 months of intervention.

7. Defence Families Australia – MS Sharon Stratton and MS Chandell Derham

a. Defence Families Australia (DFA) is an official body appointed by government to represent the views of Defence families directly to the service Chiefs and CDF. Its goal is to ensure quality of life for all Defence families by providing a recognised forum for their views. It allows reporting, making recommendations and influencing policy that directly affect families, in turn, enhancing the capability of the ADF.

b. DFA consults with Defence Community Organisation and the National Welfare Coordination Centre, acting as an advocate rather than a support provider. Further details regarding the services and contact details for DFA are at <http://dfa.org.au/>.

8. ADF Mental Health Update – MS Karen Green.

a. MS Karen Green provided a brief summary of the conduct of Veterans Health Week 2016 with a major component of that being the VOTSA Sleepout held at Jezzine Barracks. The Regional Mental Health Team NQ conducted mental health awareness activities in Townsville and Cairns during October.

b. A national standard risk assessment has been adopted for mental health assessment and the Mental Health Strategy is to be released early 2017.

9. Suicide Prevention Trial – DR Peggy Brown.

a. DR Peggy Brown, CEO National Mental Health Commission, provided details into the Suicide Prevention Trial to be conducted in Townsville with a Terms of Reference from the government raised in Aug 16.

b. The trial will consider:

- (1) The range of services available.
- (2) The effectiveness of services.
- (3) Duplication and / or gaps in service.
- (4) Barriers for those accessing services.
- (5) Balance for military understanding and communication to the community.
- (6) Reporting of incidence and comparison with broader community.

c. There have been over 3000 responses to an online survey regarding the trial and it has been identified that the model used for the trial needs to be tailored to the region. Details can be found at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarelayr2016-ley046.htm>. DCO will be used to engage with Defence families for the conduct of the trial.

Open Forum.

10. **Geckos Family Centre.** Captain Trevor Lyall summarised the year's events at GECKOS and advertised the upcoming Christmas morning tea on 05 Dec 16 and a new regular event for introduction in 2017 – a monthly family day to be held every 4th Sunday of the month at GECKOS.

11. **RSL – District.**

- a. MR Ewan Cameron advised that Steve Sergeant has stepped down as District President due to ill health and Mr Bill Whitburn has taken on that role. RSL Qld is broken down into districts with sub branches. Generally, it is the sub branches that engage with local units and organisations, acting as a ‘shop front’.
- b. RSL District is available to provide funding upon request with some examples below of previous support:
  - (1) DCO emergency funding
  - (2) 1 RAR Mascot trailer
  - (3) RSL Centenary family days and other activities
  - (4) Cadets - equipment

12. **Defence Community Organisation – Squadron Leader Michelle Murphy.**

- a. The Welcome to Townsville Expo is being held on Saturday 04 Feb 17 at the RSL Stadium, Murray.
- b. DCO has two replacement military support officers marching in Jan 17.

13. **Townsville Legacy – Mr Rob Donkin.**

- a. A thank you of support was expressed on behalf of Townsville Legacy. Mick Reilly is the President and Lieutenant General (retired) John Caligari has been appointed Patron.

14. **Total and Permanently Disabled Ex Servicepersons Association (Townsville) Inc (TPI Townsville).**

- a. Mr Trevor Mullins advised that he has been fielding questions from current serving members prior to discharge regarding transition. He recommended the introduction of a mentor program to provide more ‘hands on’ support to members transitioning.

15. **Vietnam Veterans – Townsville.**

- a. Over the past 2 years Zac’s House and Remembrance House, used for emergency housing, has experienced a 95% occupancy rate. They have provided short term accommodation for veterans from Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan during this time. The organisation provides welfare support to veterans and families, particularly homeless veterans.

16. **Womens Veterans Network Australia (WVNA) – Ms Nicky Rothwell.**

- a. There are now 22 branches nationwide providing regular social activities to support female veterans. Wing Commander (retired) Sharon Bown has been appointed as an Ambassador and has released her book One Woman’s War and Peace.
- b. Representatives from the WVNA will attend a DVA Female Veterans and Families Forum in Canberra 05-06 Dec 16.
- c. The next WVNA catch-up is scheduled for 21 Jan 17 at Seagulls, Townsville.

17. **Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO) – Mr Ray Martin.**

- a. ADSO represents members of the ADF on national advocacy and representative matters to the government and political parties. This provides a stronger voice on issues impacting conditions and wellbeing of serving and ex-serving members of the ADF and their families. More details about ADSO can be found at <http://adso.org.au/about-us/the-adso>.
- b. Cathy O’Toole, Local Member for Herbert, has initiated a Defence Forum to support mental health for serving and veterans. Initial enquiries into veteran suicide rates in the 18-24 year old age group have been found to much higher than the external community.
- c. There have been over 300 submissions presented to government in regard to the Mefloquine and Tafenoquine trial.

18. **The Townsville Private Clinic – Mr Ian Dalton**

- a. Thank you and Merry Christmas from the Townsville Private Clinic.

19. **DVA – Ms Carly Newton**

- a. The theme for Veterans Health Week 2017 is Physical Activities. DVA will continue to work closely with GECKOS, Soldier Recovery Centre, Adaptive Sports and ESOs to develop a program for the week.

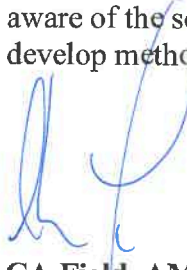
20. Closing Comments.

- a. The Community Engagement Officer with effect Jan 17 is Major Mick Gallegos:

- (1) Email: [michael.gallegos@defence.gov.au](mailto:michael.gallegos@defence.gov.au)
- (2) Phone: 07 4411 3353; Mobile: 0437 469 992

- b. The date for the next TDCF is Wednesday, 08 March 17, 1.30 to 3.30pm at the Mayoral Reception Room, 103 Walker St, TOWNSVILLE.

- c. The 3rd Brigade will work with Townsville Centre Council to further develop the Townsville Defence Community Forum for inclusion in the Townsville Community Defence Accord. It is important to ensure that current and ex-serving members and their families are aware of the services available and how to access support. The 3rd Brigade will continue to develop methods to communicate this information and support the principles of the TDCF.



CA Field, AM, CSC  
BRIG  
COMD 3 BDE

Tel: (07) 4411 7128

09 Dec 16

**Annex:**

- A. List of attendees – Townsville TDCF 04/16

**Distribution:**

COFS FORCOMD  
 SADFO HMAS Cairns  
 SADFO RAAF Townsville  
 SADFO 51 FNQR  
 DGPERS-A  
 CO CTC  
 CO LHC  
 DCOMD 3 BDE  
 Community Engagement Officer 3rd Brigade  
 OIC Geckos  
 CO 2 CAV  
 CO 4 Regt  
 CO 3 CER  
 CO 3 CSR  
 CO 1 RAR  
 CO 2 RAR  
 CO 3 RAR  
 CO 3 CSSB  
 DCO Townsville  
 Townsville RSL  
 North QLD RSL Sub Branch  
 Mates4Mates  
 DVA  
 Legacy Townsville  
 TPI NQ  
 Vietnam Veterans Association  
 Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers  
 Veterans off the Street  
 Mental Illness Fellowship North Queensland  
 Women's Veterans Network Australia - Townsville  
 Achieve Exercise Physiology  
 Overwatch Australia – Townsville  
 The Townsville City Council  
 Mates4Mates – Townsville  
 Regional Mental Health – North Queensland  
 Alliance of Defence Service Organisations  
 The Townsville Private Clinic

**For Information:**

COMD 1 BDE  
 COMD 7 BDE  
 COMD 6 CS BDE  
 COMD 11 BDE  
 COMD 13 BDE  
 COMD 16 AVN BDE  
 COMD 17 CSS BDE

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