



Wellbeing Tips

Social connection in Winter



Social connection in winter

Winter can be challenging depending on where you live in Australia, with some regions experiencing bitter cold, grey skies, and shorter days that can weigh heavily on mental health. The drop in temperature and reduced daylight can often lead to feelings of loneliness and withdrawal, as people are less likely to venture outdoors or engage in social activities. For defence and veteran families, these challenges can be even more pronounced. The impacts of frequent relocations, isolation from extended support networks, or adjusting to civilian life after service may feel more intense during winter, when the emotional weight of colder, quieter days is harder to ignore.

However, staying socially connected can significantly ease these seasonal pressures. Making the effort to connect with others, whether through a phone call, community event, or shared activity, can improve your mood, provide a sense of belonging, and help combat isolation. Research consistently shows that strong social ties are not only beneficial for mental wellbeing but also contribute to better physical health, enhanced immune response, and increased longevity. For Defence and Veteran families, building and maintaining these connections can be a vital support, especially during the more isolating winter months.

Ways to stay connected this winter

Here are few ways to find warmth and connection and make it a priority during winter.

- Attending Families of Veterans Guild wellbeing activities in Sydney, Canberra or online
- Connecting with your local Families of Veterans Guild War Widows social club located throughout NSW
- Attending local events for Defence families with your local DMFS
- Open Arms provides tips on how to build your social network and list a number of tailored programs and activities developed for veteran families
- While not specific to the Defence and Veteran community, ChattyCafé is available in major Australian cities to meet up with others and make connections.
- Check out what is available at your local community centre or library, as they often offer events for all ages