



Joint Media Release

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Health Study of ADF Personnel Deployed to the Solomon Islands

A random selection of current and former ADF men and women have been invited to participate in the Solomon Islands Health Study, a research project to examine the long-term health issues of deployed military personnel.

The Centre for Military and Veterans' Health (CMVH) is conducting the study for Defence as part of its Deployment Health Surveillance Program (DHSP).

Invitation packs containing information about the study and registration forms have been mailed to current and former personnel across Navy, Army and Air Force.

Once registered, participants will respond to a questionnaire covering aspects of their physical and psychological health, which they can choose to complete by hand, online, over the phone or face to face with a researcher.

During the study, the CMVH will compare the health of current and former ADF members deployed to the Solomon Islands as part of the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands between July 2003 and December 2005 with a study sample of ADF members who did not deploy during that period.

CMVH is a consortium of the University of Queensland, University of Adelaide and Charles Darwin University, which is dedicated to innovatively seeking solutions to military and veterans' health issues through research, education, e-Health and public debate.

The ADF-funded Solomon Islands Health Study is the first in a series of DHSP projects, which will be followed by research into the health of veterans deployed to East Timor, Bougainville and the Middle East Area of Operations.

Head of Defence Health Services Air Vice-Marshal Tony Austin said the ADF strongly supported the DHSP studies.

“The DHSP studies will allow us to adopt better methods to prevent ill health and to manage health issues before, during and after deployment,” AVM Austin said.

“This research reflects Defence Health Services' ongoing commitment to the health and wellbeing of current and former deployed ADF members.”

CMVH Professor Annette Dobson, head of the DHSP's Scientific Research Team, said the studies would potentially enhance the health services and standards for deployed personnel and veterans, and encouraged those approached to participate.

“By reviewing the experiences of those posted to the Solomon Islands, we aim to better understand and deal with the health issues uniquely faced by deployed personnel and veterans,” Prof Dobson said.

“Ultimately, DHSP is trying to determine if the long-term health of deployed veterans is worse than their peers in the Australian community.

“The research aims to make a real difference to the health and well-being of those who are serving and have served their nation on active duty as well as benefit veterans and their families in the medium-to-long term,” Prof Dobson said.

Prof Dobson said confidentiality was a major priority of the research program which means information gathered from ADF personnel will not be passed on to Defence or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and will in no way adversely affect members’ careers or their access to health care or compensation.

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