

## **NEW STUDY TO RESEARCH FAMILIES OF TIMOR VETERANS**

Australian Defence Force families are set to benefit from the results of a benchmark study into the effects of military service in Timor-Leste on the families of service personnel, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, announced today.

The \$2 million Timor-Leste Family Study is underway and will provide evidence of the health impacts of deployment on a service member's family, helping guide future policy on Government support for the families of service personnel.

"This is the first time the intergenerational impacts of service from a recent deployment have been examined and will provide invaluable data on any differences in the physical, mental and social health of the families of ADF members who served in East Timor," Mr Griffin said.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs' (DVA) Family Study Program already includes a study into the intergenerational effects of Vietnam service. By researching more recent experiences and younger children, the Timor-Leste Family Study will provide valid and useful results generally applicable to the effects of other recent deployments.

The Study will help establish risks and protective factors associated with any identified health impacts. Most critically, it will establish if a direct association can be made between any identified distinctive health characteristics and active East Timor service. To be completed by 30 June 2011, the Study will help inform DVA and ADF service delivery and support for families.

The Centre for Military and Veterans' Health (CMVH) has been appointed to conduct the Study. CMVH has already developed a database of some 20,000 ADF personnel who served in East Timor from 1999 to 2005 as part of its work for the Deployment Health Surveillance Program. It is hoped a number of the families of these veterans will participate when recruitment for the Timor-Leste Family Study begins in 2010.

The Study will be supported by a Scientific Advisory Committee and an Independent Scientific Adviser, as well as a Consultative Forum to provide a participant perspective on the study.

Mr Griffin said 20 September will mark 10 years since Australians deployed to East Timor and with Australian Military personnel still there it is important to understand the consequences of deployment on the families of military personnel.

"With Australia's current high level of involvement in peace operations, this study will provide valuable information to help us understand the impact of operational service on families."