

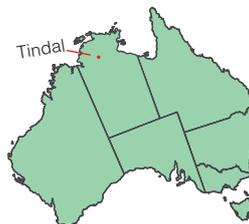
Health Service profile

322 Health Services Flight Tindal



322 Health Services Flight Tindal is probably the most isolated health service unit in the ADF, located at Tindal RAAF Base in the Katherine region of the Northern Territory, 336 km south of Darwin.

322 HSF Tindal began operations on 1 October 1988, when Tindal RAAF Base first opened. The unit is staffed by 21 medical, dental and environmental health personnel, and provides services for 600 people on base and up to 3000 people rotating through the base on exercises or deployment.



The **medical section** provides day-to-day care for the members on base, including outpatients, inpatients, pathology and physiotherapy. The section also provides an emergency response team for RAAF 75 Squadron: duty medical officer, nursing officer, medical assistant, and driver, working alongside search and rescue flight crew.

The **dental section** performs most dental procedures on the base, including implants, wisdom teeth removal under intravenous sedation, minor surgery and treatment of RAAF police dogs.

The **environmental health section** is staffed by one officer and one sergeant, responsible for direct action or expert advice on hygiene and sanitation measures to protect food and water supply, maintain safe accommodation, ensure safe disposal of wastes, control communicable diseases and promote occupational health and safety.



Life at Tindal

- ◆ Tindal is a small, tightknit community and offers a rural lifestyle to service personnel.
- ◆ There are good sporting facilities and clubs (great barra fishing and water skiing), and Tindal is relatively close to some of Australia's most spectacular remote tourist attractions.
- ◆ Remoteness can be a problem. Freight delays and expenses raise the cost of living. Retail services are limited, as are after-hours activities.
- ◆ Temperature ranges from 8° to 28°C in dry season, 25° to 40°C in wet season (high humidity).
- ◆ In the 1998 Katherine floods, Katherine District Hospital was submerged and 322 HSF Tindal became the only Level 2 medical facility in the Katherine area.
- ◆ US Air Force missions usually visit RAAF Base Tindal for a three-month period each year.
- ◆ Many ADF personnel know little about Tindal and avoid posting there because of its isolation — but Medical Assistant Robyn McEearney says, "It's a very family-oriented place and I wouldn't want to be posted anywhere else".