REPORT OF THE
ESORT WORKING PARTY ON TIP ACCREDITATION

Introduction

1. This report arises from a finding of the December 2010 “Report of the Review of DVA-Funded ESO Advocacy and Welfare Services” (the Review). At the March 2013 ESO Round Table (ESORT) meeting the Secretary, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, invited a Working Party (WP) to help the ESORT identify a preferred position on TIP accreditation.

2. The Working Party met by teleconference on 7 May, 28 June and 29 July with the support of a DVA Secretariat. Members first developed the Terms of Reference at Enclosure 1, conducted research between teleconferences, and deliberated on the relevance of its research findings. The recommendations in this report are a Working Party consensus. Terms used in are defined below.¹

3. To facilitate ESORT consideration of its position, the WP believed it essential to identify the policy and practical context before integrating relevant issues and making recommendations. This report therefore:
   a. summarises the key issues from the “Review”;
   b. outlines the legislative context and preferred approach to learning;
   c. integrates the research findings into a proposed rationale; and
   d. applies the rationale to propose learning pathways that would lead to accreditation of TIP courses and competencies that warrant certification of TIP presenters, and ESO participants, practitioners and assessors.

¹ Definition of terms:
   a. Accreditation [is the outcome of gaining] national recognition of a course so that an RTO (see Note 3) can issue a nationally-recognised qualification or statement of attainment following its completion.
   b. Certification is the outcome of being competent at the required level when a VET-accredited course is completed.
   c. A Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is a VET organisation that trains students to the level required to award a qualification or a statement of attainment that is recognised Australia-wide.
   d. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was introduced in 1995, replacing the Australian Training Quality Framework (ATQF).
   e. The current TIP term “participant” = the Review term “trainee” and “presenter” = “trainer”.
   f. Under VITA, a practitioner is a fully TIP-trained and ESO-authorised Welfare or Pension Officer or Advocate.
Caveat

4. The title, *TIP Accreditation*, is misleading. It diverts attention from the most important issue:

   *How training is provided so that competent practitioners result.*

5. The WP’s research suggests that if training assures competency, automatically:
   a. TIP courses will be accredited, and
   b. participants’ competencies will be certified.

Research Findings

6. The principal research findings are summarised next.

Summary of the Review²

7. The Review made the following observations:
   a. Accreditation/Certification:
      (i) some level of accreditation is needed, and DVA and TIP should develop an implementation timetable;
      (ii) *competency-based* training³ should be adopted and the *structure of training* should align with practitioners’ *level of practice*; and
      (iii) certification should be *merit-based*, should address *attendance and competency*, and should include:
         (a) *e-Learning*,
         (b) *exercise-based learning*, and
         (c) *assessment*.
   b. Training Process:
      (i) Participants. Participant completion of TIP courses is to be followed by on-the-job training (OJT) and mentoring by their ESOs.

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² Summarised from sections 8.2 - 8.4 and 8.6 - 8.7 (pages 22-29 and 30-33) of the Review report.

³ The ADF adopted competency-based training (CBT) in the 1980s, and most ADF courses now lead to an AQF certificate. The core concepts of the AQF are:
   a. *competency-based training* assists the acquisition of skills and knowledge to perform a specific task to a certain standard; and
   b. outcomes are clearly stated so that trainees know what they have to do, trainers know what training needs to be provided, and ESOs know the skill levels required.

Routine in-Service certification is understood to be driving contemporary veterans’ expectations that practitioners must be accredited (see DVA Discussion Paper: “The Future of Veterans’ Advocacy”, para 12).
(ii) Practitioners. ESOs’ OJT and mentoring should develop participant competency to merit VITA authorisation as a practitioner.

(iii) Presenters. The minimum [qualification] for remunerated trainers is Certificate IV in Training and Assessment4, but should not be imposed on volunteer presenters.

c. Learning Functions.

(i) Training Program and Structure:
   (a) the structure of training should align with practitioners level of practice;
   (b) brief introductory training should be used to gauge possible participants’ longer-term interest, intentions and capability;
   (c) all Practitioners should complete the Welfare Level 1 course;
   (d) ESOs should be consulted during regular National core knowledge package updates; and
   (e) DVA considered National TIP training design, development and certification processes to be sufficient.

(ii) e-Learning. There is genuine enthusiasm for e-learning and its benefits include its being a:
   (a) portable, consistent knowledge base,
   (b) means for self-paced distance learning, and
   (c) complement to face-to-face, case study, and post-training activity and support.

d. Mentoring:

   (i) ESOs should mentor all practitioners irrespective of their level of training, and mentoring should be related to practitioners’ level of practice; however,

   (ii) there are too few suitably qualified mentors, and a mentoring policy framework involving ESOs, TIP and DVA is needed.

e. Quality Assurance (QA):

   (i) DVA considered all stakeholders have a role in feedback, but consultation is required to determine the appropriate processes and tools;

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4 The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is now replaced by the TAE40110 qualification. A small number of TIP presenters hold a Certificate IV in Training and Evaluation. All they need do to have the current qualification is to upgrade to TAE40110. Because they are currently training, they should receive Recognition for Current Competency (see para 36). In FY2012-13 DVA authorised the expenditure of TIP funds to allow the National Training Manager to acquire certification under TAE40110. Some State TIP Consultative Groups are also making allowance for Certificate IV Training and Evaluation holders to upgrade to TAE40110.
(ii) DVA should review VRB and AAT decisions to identify trends, and

(iii) DVA’s existing QA system should provide feedback to ESOs about practitioners’ that consistently meet or fail to meet required standards and to TIP to inform training development and needs.

8. TIP Responses. The Review notes the following responses from TIP:

a. **TIP is moving towards** competency-based training;

b. **TIP develops courses consultatively** with ESOs, practitioners, DVA policy and legal staff, with guidance from external training and development expertise;

c. an **introductory training program** to gauge participant interest and capability would result in duplication and would be *poor value or money*

d. ESOs select must select their participants, provide on-the-job training (OJT) and mentoring, and authorise their practitioners;

e. TIP only **advises** ESOs on **how best to undertake mentoring**;

f. **QA is a matter between DVA and the ESO responsible for a practitioner**;

and

g. TIP’s responsibility is to **ensure** that QA feedback:

   (i) from ESOs and DVA is **included in refresher courses**, and

   (ii) is **provided through newsletters and emails or the post**.

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**Adult-Learning**

9. Australia’s adoption of competency-based training (CBT) was preceded by the offshore development of a distinct philosophy of adult learning twenty years earlier. In the 1960s, educators realised that adults learn differently to children. While the extent of the difference is debated, adult learning practice has replaced the didactic approach that had been used since the 5th Century.

10. Adult education involves, first, imparting *basic knowledge*, then the practical **application of learning** followed by **self-directed inquiry** to continuously expand knowledge. It encourages learners to **be responsible for their own learning**, and is most effective when individuals:

   a. learn from their accumulated experiences,

   b. apply knowledge **immediately** (rather than **delayed**), and

   c. focus on their **performance** (rather than **subject material**).

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5 A principal difference is the transition from the classroom-based ‘passivity’ of traditional teaching (pedagogy) to the “active engagement” of adult learning (andragogy). For more detail, see: “Moving from Pedagogy to Andragogy” <http://www-distance.syr.edu/andragogy.html>
11. The AQF\textsuperscript{6} identifies the three outcomes (knowledge, skills and application) and four types of skill (basic, thinking, personal and inter-personal) a person must have to be competent on completion of a training level. Expanded descriptions of the outcomes and skills types follow:

a. the three outcomes a practitioner must achieve are:
   (i) Knowledge: what must be understood and/or known, and
   (ii) Skills: what must be able to be done;
   (iii) Application: how knowledge and skills must be applied in terms of:
         (a) autonomy, responsibility and accountability; and
         (b) the nature of the situations that will be encountered (eg., predictable to unpredictable, known to unknown, and routine to non-routine); and

b. the four generic skills common to all learning outcomes are:
   (i) Fundamental skills: literacy and numeracy.
   (ii) People skills: communication and working with others.
   (iii) Thinking skills: learning to learn, problem-solving and decision-making.
   (iv) Personal skills: self-direction and acting with integrity.

12. As AQF levels increases from Level 1, the person’s knowledge is greater, the person is more skilled, and is increasingly able to apply higher levels of knowledge and skills in progressively more demanding situations that require increasing levels of autonomy and responsibility. The competency levels and descriptors relevant to each Certificate are summarised next (emphasis added):

a. Certificate 1:
   (i) Learning Outcome: The practitioner has basic knowledge and skills, and is qualified to work.
   (ii) Knowledge. The practitioner has basic fundamental knowledge and understanding in a narrow field of work.
   (iii) Skills. The practitioner:
       (a) has the basic skills to continue learning;
       (b) is able to receive, pass on and recall information in a narrow range; and
       (c) can use appropriate tools and basic technologies.

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(iv) Application. The practitioner has the knowledge and skills to:

(a) operate with **some autonomy** within **defined contexts** and **established parameters**; and

(b) participate in various **initial routine** and **predictable** work activities, including as a team member.

b. Certificate 2:

(i) Learning Outcome. The practitioner has the **knowledge and skills** to undertake **mainly routine work**.

(ii) Knowledge. The practitioner has **basic** factual, technical and procedural knowledge in a **defined** area.

(iii) Skills. The practitioner is able to:

(a) access, record and act on a **range of information** from a **range of sources**;

(b) apply and communicate **known** solutions to a **limited range** of **predictable** problems; and

(c) complete tasks involving **known** routines and procedures with a **limited range** of options.

(iv) Application. The practitioner has the knowledge and skills to operate with:

(a) **some** accountability and responsibility for the **quality** of his/her own work outputs;

(b) **limited** autonomy and judgement in completing own defined, **routine** tasks in known and **stable** contexts; and

(c) **limited** autonomy and judgement to complete routine but **variable tasks** in collaboration with others in a team environment.

c. Certificate 3:

(i) Learning Outcome. The practitioner can apply a **broad range** of knowledge and skills, and is qualified to undertake **skilled work** in **varied contexts**

(ii) Knowledge. The practitioner has factual, technical, procedural and theoretical knowledge in an **area of work**.

(iii) Skills: The practitioner is able to:

(a) interpret and act **autonomously** upon **available** information;

(b) apply and communicate **known** solutions to various, **predictable** problems and to deal with **unforeseen contingencies** using **known** solutions;

(c) provide **technical** information to specialist and non-specialist audiences; and
(d) undertake routine and non-routine tasks in a range of skilled operations.

(iv) Application: Practitioner is able to apply knowledge and skills:

(a) with discretion and judgement in a selection of services and measures;

(b) to adapt and transfer skills and knowledge within known routines, methods, procedures and time constraints; and

(c) to take responsibility for own learning and work outputs, including in a team environment, and accept limited responsibility for other’s output within established parameters.

d. Certificate 4:

(i) Learning Outcome. The practitioner has a broad range of specialised knowledge and skills, and is qualified to undertake skilled work in varied contexts

(ii) Knowledge. The practitioner has broad factual, technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialised field.

(iii) Skills. The practitioner is able to:

(a) identify, analyse, compare and take action on information from various sources;

(b) communicate non-routine technical solutions to a defined range of predictable and unpredictable problems;

(c) complete routine and non-routine tasks; and

(d) guide activities and provide advice in the area of work and learning.

(iv) Application. The practitioner has the knowledge and skills to:

(a) undertake specialised tasks in known and unknown contexts;

(b) be responsible for his/her own outputs and have limited responsibility for organising others; and

(c) have limited responsibility for the output of a team within limited parameters.

13. Comment. Although AQF criteria appear to focus on the certificate awarded, this is misleading. Rather, the knowledge and skill levels that assure a level of competence relate to AQF categories and descriptors. In other words, it is the level of competence a person demonstrates at various points in a training pathway that is recognised by the award of a certificate.
Course Accreditation

14. National Vocational Education and Training (VET) policy identifies the following key considerations:7
   
a. Ownership. A course may be government owned or owned privately by an individual or an organisation (which does not have to be an RTO).

b. Course Accreditation. To be accredited (amongst other things) a course must:
   
   (i) meet an identified community need;
   
   (ii) be consistent with the requirements of an AQF qualification or certificate of attainment;
   
   (iii) not duplicate the title or coverage of an already-endorsed training package;
   
   (iv) be based on either:
      
      (a) nationally-endorsed units of competency, or
      
      (b) units of competency developed as part of the course or module; and
   
   (v) apply units of competency developed in consultation with and validated by the relevant community group.

c. Certification. Only an RTO can deliver, assess competency, and confer a qualification or certificate of attainment. A non-RTO course owner must engage an RTO for recognition of competency with an AQF qualification.

d. Certificate of Attainment. A course may be accredited that is not of the breadth and depth required for award of a qualification, but does result in a level of competency that merits conferral of a certificate of attainment.

e. Control of Intellectual Property (IP). IP is protected legislatively by accreditation - only the owner has the right to offer the course. Once a course has been accredited, it cannot be registered by any other body. A course will not be accredited if it duplicates the title, coverage, or outcome in terms of skill set, unit of competency or qualification of a course that has already been endorsed.

f. Ubiquity. Once a course has been accredited and registered it is recognised by all states and territories.

15. Comment. Accreditation does not drive the learning process. As with the attainment of any objective, the process leads to the desired outcome, not vice

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versa. In this respect, competency is the outcome, the learning process is how competency is attained, and accreditation is the assurance that necessary competency has been attained.

**Systems Approach**

16. Although not specifically identified in any of the preceding sources, systems thinking is fundamental to this report. It is the frame within which competency development must be progressed, irrespective of whether or not a course is accredited and leads to a qualification.

17. The inputs, processing, outputs and feedback that occur (or should occur) in the TIP-DVA-ESO partnership underscore that it is (or should be) a system. More correctly, the partners are stakeholders within a “system of systems”.\(^8\)

a. in one sub-system, an ESO’s selection of a participant, the participant’s learning in TIP training, the ESO’s on the job training (OJT), mentoring and feedback to TIP by the ESO;

b. affect in another sub-system, a practitioner’s actions, claim processing in DVA, the delegate’s determination, and DVA’s feedback on practitioner performance.

18. The complexity of the veterans’ affairs system suggests that a fully competent practitioner will need to be competent in a complex and often unpredictable environment. The environment will therefore strongly influence the level of competency needed by practitioners and the training pathways.

19. Comment. Although critical, OJT mentoring and feedback, are not universal in the existing training process. Continuous improvement and quality assurance are therefore largely unrealised. Consequently, the current training process is not a system and cannot ensure that, after TIP training, OJT and mentoring by their ESO, practitioners are competent.

**Integration of Research Findings**

20. Limitations of TIP Position. The TIP position at para 8 above has the following limitations:

a. Feedback. To maximise its effectiveness, feedback from ESOs and DVA (including VRB and AAT) must influence every TIP course, not just refresher training.

b. Mentoring. The Working Party understands that, despite National TIP having encouraged ESOs to request development of a training course for mentors, no formal request has eventuated. TIP is understood to remain

\(^8\) Figure 2, a model of the ESO-DVA-TIP partnership as a learning system, illustrates the complexity of the whole system.
ready to assist. Inclusion of training for mentors in the TIP 10 Year Rolling Program would advance the rationale for TIP funding.9

21. Partnership. Currently, the partnership that DVA is promoting between itself, ESOs, and TIP is in an early stage of formation. Anachronistic attitudes and suspicion still affect interaction and information exchange is not free-flowing. The extant partnership is therefore best described as an assembly of potential partners. Figure 1 depicts the current stakeholders and their interactions. Once mature, with embedded continuous improvement and quality assurance processes, the partnership has the potential to be a comprehensive learning system. This outcome would materially advance competency development.

![Figure 1. Current Assembly of Stakeholders and Interactions](image)

22. Fit with VET and AQF. Already, TIP courses are broadly consistent with VET and AQF criteria.10 Training meets an identified community need, is developed and validated in consultation with ESOs, is aligned with participants and practitioners level of practice, is evaluated by participants, and shortcomings are rectified by a National amendment process. The lack of universal OJT and mentoring by ESOs does, however, leave the learning pathways incomplete.

23. Fit with Adult Learning. The increasing number of e-learning modules within the suite of TIP courses opens the way to training that advances competency-

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9 Effectively, the original objective is as now recorded in the BEST Guidelines: better informed ESO practitioners who can ensure [that] claims lodged with the Department are of a high standard.

10 Under TIP’s 10 Year Rolling Program all courses have a training objective, develop competency, involve some type of assessment, include an allowance for current competencies (see para 29), and align outcomes with a competency level. Competency is assessed at three levels on the Advocacy Levels 3 and 4 courses: “participant has demonstrated competency”, or “needs further OJT and mentoring”, or “is unlikely to reach the required competency with OJT and mentoring”.

development by applying adult-learning principles. TIP e-learning can transfer
knowledge, and face-to-face courses can develop competency by applying
knowledge through case studies. In more detail:

a. E-learning has a particularly important place in the future learning
system because it:

(i) is undertaken in each participant’s own location, at his/her own
pace and in his/her own time, and

(ii) includes knowledge check-points that refer the participant:
(a) back to the content which is not correctly understood, and
(b) on-line to a mentor to discuss by phone any unresolved
knowledge shortfalls.

b. face-to-face courses can be:

(i) scheduled to maximise participants' need for immediate
application of knowledge, and

(ii) structured to focus on the application of knowledge through
increasingly complex case studies that include competency
assessment and conferral of a certificate of attainment; and

c. when the parent ESO assesses that a participant has the competency to
start practicing, it will:

(i) as it currently does, issue the practitioner with a letter of
authorisation to trigger VITA indemnification; and

(ii) consistent with the descriptors for a level of competency, seek
conferral of the relevant certificate.

24. Course Ownership. TIP volunteers developed face-to-face courses in their own
time without remuneration and are the owners of TIP IP. E-learning involves
conversion of IP into modules under DVA contract. The Commonwealth is the
owner of the e-learning modules but not the embedded IP.

25. Advantages of Endorsement. DVA, ESOs and TIP have an equal interest in an
agreement with an RTO as its AQF endorsement:

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11 This training approach satisfies the Review’s concern that certification include e-learning, exercise-based learning and assessment.

12 In essence, the Review’s concern that brief introductory training precede TIP training is satisfied by practitioners’ engagement in a Level 1 e-learning module before attending a face-to-face course. Should a prospective participant find that they do not have the motivation, interest or intent to continue, he/she is free to decide to go no further. Attractively, there is no real resource or cost penalty to TIP should a prospective participant withdraw at this stage.

13 Each module remains accessible to the participant for as long as he/she maintains an e-learning account with TIP, and the embedded program enables the TIP IT Administrator to confirm the participant’s progress and stores the participant’s answers at each knowledge check point so that he/she is able to compare the immediate past level of knowledge with the new.
a. protects ownership of IP and course materials;

b. allows TIP to confer a certificate of attainment\textsuperscript{14} on satisfactory completion of an e-learning module and face-to-face course, and

c. authorisation of its practitioners under VITA allows ESOs to trigger certification under the AQF.

26. **Learning System Model.** Figure 2 is a model of the mature partnership as a learning system. Comparison with Figure 1\textsuperscript{15} shows substantial development of responsibilities or activities and feedback. The Working Group notes that:

a. development of such a complex network will take time; but, if not achieved will stymie competency enhancement; and

b. satisfies the Review concern that “all” stakeholders have a role in feedback.

![Figure 2. Partnership as Learning System](image)

27. **Additional QA Elements.** How a comprehensive and effective training system might be created is discussed next.

\textsuperscript{14} A certificate of attainment satisfies the Review’s concern that both attendance and competency be certified on the basis of merit.

\textsuperscript{15} The current situation is contrary to systems practice and inimical to continuous improvement and quality assurance The Working Group understands that:

a. feedback on practitioner performance from DVA to ESOs and State TIP Chairs is routine in some States but non-existent in others; and

b. there is no arrangement in place for the AAT feedback to the VRB or the VRB to DVA.
a. Adult Learning. Two benefits arise if adult learning principles are adopted to build learning pathways grounded in e-learning modules. Participants can consolidate basic knowledge by re-accessing modules undertaken previously, and the content of modules can be upgraded regularly to ensure basic knowledge remains current. With additional resourcing, e-learning courses could be developed for OJT and refresher training and included in the relevant learning pathway.

b. Learning Pathways. Each TIP course rolled out under the National Training Consistency Project includes a competency objective and a “competency level”. Were courses VET-accredited, successful completion would result in conferral of a certificate of attainment by TIP. If ESOs provided OJT and mentoring, they could concurrently assess competency for authorisation under VITA and AQF certification.

c. ESO Response. Given that most ESOs do not currently conduct OJT and mentoring, an additional responsibility to assess AQF competence seems problematic. It is unlikely ESOs will have executives qualified to train and assess to AQF standards. Two alternatives are suggested. Either an ESO executive be trained to TAE40110, or a body external to the ESO provide the service. Logically, this would be the RTO contracted by DVA and/or TIP. Either resolution is, however, likely to meet reluctance, at least, and probably resistance. A culture-change process will be an essential part of implementation.

d. DVA Resourcing. DVA’s capacity to implement suggestions that it review VRB and AAT decisions and provide feedback through its existing QA system must be considered. The Working Party understands DVA determined some time ago that its resources did not leave it with any reserve capacity. Additional resources will be essential to participation in a comprehensive and effective learning system. The ESORT therefore has a responsibility to advise Government that DVA’s resource constraints put at risk the effectiveness of the Commonwealth’s veterans’ affairs program.

28. Fit with Need. A systems approach is fundamental to transition existing TIP training to one acceptable to next generation veterans, ex-ADF personnel and dependents. The new learning system must:
   a. be defined by DVA (VRB and AAT) quality requirements;
   b. be responsive to ESOs’ operational needs;
   c. demonstrate development of identified competencies;
   d. involve VET accreditation;
   e. lead to AQF certification of practitioners and presenters, and
f. strengthen the DVA-ESO-TIP partnership.  

29. Active Engagement. If they are to be implemented, the partners must engage this report’s recommendations actively. Therefore, the views expressed by TIP (para 8 above) about certifying volunteers and stakeholder engagement must be considered.

a. Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC). While volunteers cannot be forced to undertake certification, they can be encouraged to do so. As presenters already have skills and knowledge relevant to TAE40110, most should qualify without undertaking a full training program.

b. Quality Assurance. To hold that TIP has no role in quality assurance is tantamount to suggesting that its training program needs no further improvement. This is inconsistent with its advice that it incorporates ESO and DVA feedback into its refresher training courses. A systems approach engages all stakeholders in all relevant activities.

30. Implementation Timeframe. To be achievable, the implementation timeframe will have to engage with (at least) the following considerations:

a. TIP 10 Year Rolling Program. The Rolling Program provides a framework and rolling timeframe for the partners’ transition towards a learning system that will assure competencies and lead to accreditation and certification. TIP’s capacity to implement will, however, be a significant determinant. Two alternatives could expedite transition:

(i) TIP seek wider involvement of its volunteer workforce in training development, and/or

(ii) DVA contract an RTO to work with TIP to develop training pathways and materials.

b. ESOs. Currently, many ESOs have a low level of awareness of the most basic of welfare, pension and advocacy operational and management issues. It, therefore, appears inevitable that their ability to acquire the competencies to train and assess their participants will strongly influence the implementation timetable. Given that TIP’s training development workforce is working to capacity, how ESO manager-assessors’ training needs can be met is a key implementation issue. Currently, TIP eschews a role any such ESO. This suggests that DVA engage a contractor to, with TIP input, train ESO manager-assessors.

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16 A comprehensive and active partnership is essential to satisfying the Review’s observation that a mentoring policy framework involving ESOs, TIP and DVA is needed.

17 RCC was previously known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

18 Together with DVA, TIP Chairs agreed in 2008 a 10 Year Rolling Program for TIP development. Continuous improvement and National Training Consistency are central in the Program.
c. DVA. DVA’s contractual issues that caused TIP to withdraw its e-learning programs, the inability of its QA system to give feedback on practitioners’ performance, and the time in excess of the benchmark taken to determine claims all seem to suggest that DVA’s staff are over-extended. While selective, these observations raise the question of DVA’s capacity to enter into the development program that this report envisages. The ESORT again has an interest in ensuring DVA is funded adequately. This interest must be translated into advocacy of increased funding for DVA.

31. Welfare Training. ESOs proposed to the Review that all practitioners should complete Welfare Level 1. The Working Party does not support this proposal. Welfare is an increasingly demanding specialisation and will become more so as the range of age groups widens and needs of people seeking welfare support accelerate. The correct action is for a compensation practitioner to refer a welfare client to an authorised welfare practitioner. Indeed, advice on the basis of incomplete knowledge would infringe the VITA insurer’s policy stipulations, leaving the practitioner and ESO open to litigation and award of damages.

32. Training Package Update. The Review proposed that TIP should consult ESOs when updating national core knowledge packages. TCG meetings are an opportunity to do so, but meeting cycles are not conducive to a responsive amendment. Delaying implementation of an amended package until ratified by the TCG would be contrary to timeliness and current knowledge. Preferably, the fastest possible dissemination of information should be used (eg., email), but ESOs must also be pro-active in distributing information internally.

Conclusions

33. The Working Party’s research suggests that:
   a. there is a widespread misperception that the desired outcome (TIP accreditation and certification) is driving or should drive change;
   b. training must not be driven by accreditation and certification, but by learning-system-wide continuous improvement that assures quality, so competencies are attained that satisfy the rationale for DVA funding of TIP;
   c. the principal challenge facing competency development is to transition the three loosely linked partners into a comprehensive and effective learning system;
   d. to the limit of its volunteer resources, TIP’s objective must be to satisfy DVA (VRB and AAT) quality requirements and ESO’s operational needs;
   e. the significant detriments to accreditation and certification are:

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19 See ESORT Meeting No 20, Agenda Item No 4, “The Face of DVA Post-Afghanistan”.
(i) ESOs’ disengagement from post-TIP training,
(ii) resource constraints within DVA (VRB and AAT) and TIP,
(iii) the partners’ incapacity to ensure comprehensive QA,
(iv) the limitations on training development of TIP’s volunteer workforce,
(v) the current lack of an RTO within the training system,
(vi) the risk to TIP ownership and control of its IP posed by the lack of accreditation, and
(vii) anachronistic attitudes held by some within each of the partners;

f. the envisaged learning system must:
(i) be defined by DVA (VRB and AAT) quality requirements,
(ii) be responsive to ESOs’ operational needs,
(iii) demonstrably develop the required competencies,
(iv) involve VET accreditation,
(v) lead to AQF certification, and
(vi) strengthen the DVA-ESO-TIP partnership;\textsuperscript{20}

g. progression of the proposed learning system will therefore necessitate:
(i) an agreed transition plan embedded into TIP’s 10 Year Rolling Plan,
(ii) a joint culture-change process,
(iii) a mature partnership with a fully embedded continuous improvement and quality assurance system,
(iv) all partners being resourced adequately,
(v) DVA contracting an RTO,\textsuperscript{21} and
(vi) the RTO offering generous RCC to facilitate early certification across the partnership;

h. training packages already developed under TIP’s 10 Year Rolling Plan:
(i) are consistent with the philosophies underpinning adult learning principles, and
(ii) should require only engagement of, and review by an RTO to gain VET accreditation;

\textsuperscript{20} A comprehensive and active partnership is essential to satisfying the Review’s observation that a mentoring policy framework involving ESOs, TIP and DVA is needed.

\textsuperscript{21} Logically, the RTO would be the entity that translates TIP IP into e-learning modules so that course materials are accredited as produced, and TIP’s IP is protected.
i. progressive addition of e-learning modules in TIP’s offerings enables transition of the learning pathways so that:
   (i) e-learning modules transfer knowledge,
   (ii) face-to-face courses apply knowledge by case study analysis,
   (iii) e-learning/face-to-face refresher courses focus on:
         (a) a sequence of increasingly more complex case studies,
         (b) enhancing practitioner’s competencies towards the next level;

j. when the ESO-DVA-TIP partnership and continuous improvement are fully mature, a robust learning framework will result within which competencies will automatically lead to AQF certification; and

k. the major differences between the current training process and the desired outcome are mainly issues of perception and emphasis.

Recommendations

34. The Working Party recommends that the ESORT:
   a. advise the Secretary it expects the DVA-ESO-TIP partnership to develop and implement a competency development transition project leading to VET accreditation and AQF certification within an agreed timeframe;
   b. jointly with DVA, request TIP to integrate the transition project into the 10-Year Rolling Program;
   c. commit ESORT members down to the Branch level to full participation in the new training system;
   d. monitor and support member ESOs’ performance and adherence to the project objectives and timetable throughout the transition;
   e. ensure the transition project includes a joint culture change process; and
   f. formally advocate to Government an increase in DVA budget provisions so that:
      (i) DVA can contract an RTO and implement the transition project;
      (ii) DVA, VRB and AAT can provide feedback on practitioner performance;
      (iii) TIP can supplement volunteer effort with contracted experts working under the National Chair’s direction; and
      (iv) ESOs can fully engage in OJT, mentoring, assessment, VITA authorisation and AQF certification.
Signed:
Ms Diane Thomas, B SocSc.
Mr Russell Pettis, FAIM.
Lieutenant Colonel David Christie, OAM (Retd).
Group Captain Richard Kelloway, OBE, MID (Retd).

Dated:  29 July 2013

Enclosure 1:  Working Party Terms of Reference
Introduction

1. The Secretary, in response to a query by the RSL Representative at the March 2013 ESO Round Table, invited formation of a Working Party to identify the Round Table’s preferred position regarding possible future accreditation arrangements for:
   a. TIP Trainers;
   b. TIP Training Programs; and
   c. TIP Trainees.

Members

2. The ESORT agreed that the working party comprise the following members (a brief resume for each member is found at Attachment 1):
   a. Ms Diane Thomas, BSocSc.
   b. Mr Russell Pettis, MAppSc, FAIM.
   c. Lieutenant Colonel David Christie, OAM (Retd).
   d. Group Captain Richard Kelloway, OBE, MID, BA, MPolSc, MBA (Retd).

3. The Department of Veterans’ Affairs appointed the following officers to the Working Party Secretariat:
   a. Ms Danielle Cunningham, Director, Grants, TIP and Bursaries.
   b. Mr Bill Bowe, Assistant Director, Grants, TIP and Bursaries.

Reporting

4. The Working Party is to report in writing to the ESO Round Table in August 2013. The DVA Representative will give progress briefings to the ESORT and the TIP Chairs’ Conference as required. ICT will be used to facilitate progress.

Working Party’s Starting Position

6. At its initial meeting on 7 May 2013, the Representatives noted that:
a. contemporary veterans, ADF and ex-ADF members, and their dependents expect ESO practitioners and TIP presenters to be well-trained and professionally competent; and

b. with respect to the findings of the December 2010 Review of DVA-Funded ESO Advocacy and Welfare Services at section 8.2 that:
   (i) the (then) predominant ESO view that “it was unnecessary to move to a formal accreditation system for TIP” has been superseded; and
   (ii) it is time to progress the “competency-based training framework” that was the Review Team’s suggestion, the TIP Chairs’ path, and the DVA-endorsed position.

**Terms of Reference**

7. The Working Party will recommend to the ESORT:
   a. the ultimate outcome the TIP training system is to achieve;
   b. the competency standards that might be applied;
   c. how stakeholders’ rights, expectations, responsibilities, objectives, and activities might be linked in a competency-based training framework;
   d. what are the stakeholders’ individual and combined roles in a competency-based training system;
   e. how the existing TIP training elements might be adapted and new elements introduced to transform the current process into a fully competency-based training system; and
   f. how implementation of a competency-based TIP training system might be engaged to strengthen the ESO-DVA-TIP partnership.

**Attachment A:** Working Party Members’ Resumes
RESUME: WORKING PARTY MEMBERS

**Dianne Thomas** has been employed within the field of Community Work since 1993 and has a Bachelor of Social Science. Her area of employment within the welfare sector commenced as a ‘front end’ community worker advocate, initially for those who were over 65 years of age who required: information to empower the person to make their own choices and options on service access; assist where requested to link to services; interface with other service providers and other ESO’s; to work with and assist volunteers; to advocate for those who are unable to access or link to required services and to work with volunteers. A further three and half years’ experience assisting people with disabilities both as carer then as a manager of staff and running a Life Skill Centre for people with disabilities. This required train-the-trainer programs, enhancement and or maintenance of skills to enable the person to enter the work force or to become an active participant in their local community with equal access and rights. At this time assisted with the service gaining its standard for ISO and other funded compliance and quality assurance systems. Diane is currently employed (since 2000) by Sydney Legacy as the Manager Family Welfare with the following brief view of role: continual reviewing of external policy changes that may impact on the client, volunteers, staff and governance issues and note changes and making recommendations as to how to adjust the welfare organisations policy to consider those changes; keep informed of and compliant with other Commonwealth and State legislative changes and any implications are passed to CEO; to keep knowledge and awareness of industrial awards and industrial relations legislation up to date for herself, the organisation and staff; manage and mentor staff and raise awareness of the veterans’ community; to draft internal welfare policy and department staff policy; assist and work with the Legatees (volunteers); responsible for the Family Welfare Department and the staff included in that Department which consists of administrative support, Juniors and Education staff support, Intake Manager/Community Service Worker Team Leader, 8 community service workers; to manage a departments budget; to provide operational plans etc.

**Russell Pettis** is currently the National President of the Naval Association of Australia. His naval service was with the Royal Australian Navy Reserve. He was a Seaman Officer operationally serving with Patrol Boats and later in mine warfare. He served in 1990 for a brief period with the Royal Navy after winning the Prince of Wales Award for Reserve Officers. Whilst serving in the Reserve, he also pursued a civilian career in Materials Science and later Manufacturing Management, initially
with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, subsequently with the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation and finally as Director and later CEO of DENSO Automotive Systems Australia (Toyota Group Company). During his extensive career, he was engaged in company based training and development for all employees, particularly focusing on workplace learning and skills enhancement for unskilled workers. His most satisfying achievement was the development, accreditation and introduction of the Vehicle Industry Certificate, later Certificate in Automotive Manufacturing, into DENSO Australia to provide a structured learning approach for unskilled workers to up skill and gain accredited recognition for their efforts in their workplace. Russell is was recognised for his efforts in management and staff training by being admitted as a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management. He holds a Master of Applied Science from Swinburne Institute of Technology and is a Board Member of the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority.

David Christie has been involved in the training and development field in both his ADF and civilian careers. Within the ADF he was responsible as the Training Advisor for all diving activities in the ADF and as the Individual Training Staff Officer responsible for the co-ordination of all Individual Training activities in the then Field Force element of the Army. Following his 23 year career in the ADF, David was the Manager responsible for the co-ordination of all training and development within the International Division of the ANZ Banking Group, with particular responsibility for the Bank Schools in the USA, UK, Zimbabwe, India Fiji and Hong Kong. He has been a practicing Level 4 Advocate, authorised by the Australian SAS Association and the RSL (NSW) for the past 10 years. His TIP training has been in the VEA and SRCA as well as Refresher courses conducted under TIP auspices and Veterans Law courses developed and conducted by Staff of the Southern Cross University. He has represented clients at the Primary Claims Level for VEA, SRCA and MRCA; at the Veterans’ Review Board for VEA and MRCA clients, and at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for VEA and SRCA clients. He holds a Post Graduate Degree in Human Resources Management.

Richard Kelloway has been engaged formally as a trainer and educator since 1971 while a pilot and staff officer in the RAAF. He has now accrued six years’ experience as an Advocate, is TIP-trained in VEA, SRCA and MRCA, has undertaken the Welfare and War/Defence Widows courses, and is authorised by the RAFA, RSL(NSW) and APPVA to practice up to Level 4. During his 27 years’ service in the RAAF he was dux of his flying instructor course, instructed on three different aircraft types, completed RAAF Staff College, commanded the RAAF basic flying training school, was dux of USAF Air War College, and served as Director of Studies/Deputy Commandant at the Joint Services Staff College. His ADF service was followed by 8 years in the Australian
Public Service at Director-level in policy and project development and program management positions. On resignation from the APS, he completed a Masters degree in Business Administration in 1995 followed by twelve years’ experience as a Certified Management Consultant with a specific focus on strategic planning and implementation, change facilitation, and organisation and human resource development. Richard is committed to continuous learning and cumulative competency enhancement.