NO 3: WHITHER? OR WITHER, TIP?

INTRODUCTION

1. After 12 months “under new management”, NSW-ACT TCG is reviewing its operational, organisational and training experiences to identify issues and development options. This paper summarises the key lessons and questions that are emerging from that review.

2. The paper is grounded in a framework of questions:
   - What are the vectors in public administration that determine the future of TIP?
   - Are our experiences, rooted in military certainty and conformity, relevant in future?
   - Are the assumptions that shape our decisions applicable to the future TIP?
   - Are the structures and processes of the past relevant to the future TIP?
   - Does volunteering confer a particular entitlement¹?
   - What are the features of the future that are irreversibly reshaping TIP?
   - Are the teaching practices and learning expectations of the past applicable to the future?

3. This paper has no formal status and is, simply, a “think piece”. While it may, or may not, have relevance to other States or to TIP nationally, this paper is circulated to promote reflection and discussion. It is not a blueprint for TIP’s development.

¹ There are over 6 million active volunteers in Australia, contributing more than 730 million hours of unpaid work contributing an estimated $16 billion of unpaid work annually to the Australian economy.
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

4. Key environmental issues that will influence the development of TIP follow.

ESO Client Base

5. The characteristics of practitioners’ client base will remain in transition over the next ten years.

6. Accepting that there is a “cross-over” cohort subject to all three Acts, two broad groupings of need are evident:
   - aging ex-service members and their families, subject to VEA and SRCA; and
   - contemporary veterans, younger ex-ADF personnel and their dependants subject mainly to SRCA and MRCA.

Vietnam Era and Before

7. Clients of the Vietnam-era and earlier times are mostly beyond 65 years of age. Practitioners’ load over the next ten years will therefore be:
   - VEA: primary claims for conditions related to aging, AFI and EDA; and
   - SRCA: claims for injury that probably occurred many years before.

8. Para 7 suggests for the future that:
   - VEA. TIP training must increasingly focus on:
     - case studies that emphasise sequelae,
     - an increasing emphasis on SOP and GARP, and
     - an increasing reliance on case studies.
   - SRCA. Access to the wider range of homecare benefits available under SRCA makes TIP training in SRCA obligatory for all practitioners.

Contemporary Veterans

9. The key issues that contemporary veterans will bring to practitioners over the next ten years are expected to include:
   - already 23% of Afghanistan veterans’ claims are for mental health and 24% for auditory conditions,”2 and 3

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2 “The Face of DVA Post-Afghanistan” tabled by DVA at the ESORT, 9 Nov 12.
• SAS experience underscores the complexity of contemporary veterans’ claims; and
• female veterans will become a much higher proportion of claims and will have needs that male practitioners are ill-prepared to provide.

10. Para 9 suggest that:
• for the future, practitioners will need:
  − a high level of understanding of mental health conditions;
  − coping skills to support empathetically clients with mental illnesses;
  − to be prepared to spend significantly more time researching and preparing claims, reviews and appeals; and
• a higher proportion of practitioners will need to be female.

Governance

11. The TIP Governance Report notes “the lack of a formal funding arrangement or accountability mechanism” (p10) and, amongst other things:
• identifies DVA’s overarching expectation that TIP will strengthen its “performance and conformance”;
• requires the specific characteristics of “transparency”, “accountability”, “integrity”, “leadership”, “efficiency” and “effectiveness” to be enhanced;
• specifies that TIP’s “performance” must be “measured and reported” so that DVA has an “appropriate level of assurance” about TIP’s “conformance”;
• stipulates “documentation of policy, practice and procedures” as the highest priority;

3 As 36.9% of respondents would re-deploy despite mental health issues “the rate of mental health claims may increase once deployment opportunities cease”, “ADF Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study”, 2010.
5 “The health and wellbeing of female Vietnam and Contemporary Veterans”, June 2012. Specific shortcomings for female veterans include significant:
  • barriers to accessing existing support services,
  • gaps in information, resources and DVA policies; and
  • gaps in female veterans’ knowledge impacting health and wellbeing and service provision.
6 “Training and Information Program Governance Improvement Project”, 8 December 2011.
• recommends clarification and strengthening of the DVA-TIP-ESO “partnership”; and
• proposes incorporation of TIP.

12. **Incorporation.** Incorporation, in and of itself, creates the “features, accountabilities and reporting lines of a formal entity”. Enhanced governance is an automatic result. Other advantages are:

- TIP chairs and TIP presenters’ liability is clarified;
- the unique DVA-TIP funding relationship is immediately sustainable in a political environment demanding heightened transparency and accountability;
- a management and administration structure results that enables TIP to present compliance with required characteristics from a position of legal strength;
- compliance under the *Associated Incorporations Act* as a Stream 1 entity while additional to reporting to DVA, is no more onerous; and
- TIP gains a higher level of financial management autonomy.\(^7\)

13. **Partnership:**

- The characteristics of “partnership” (p10) may be summarised as “the parties working closely together to achieve mutually agreed outcomes”.
- This suggests the strategic development of TIP, business planning and annual resource allocation are a mutual responsibility.
- The notion of “partnership” suggests that the TIP 10-Year Plan, National Consistency Project, TIP Protocols and the annual V1 and V2 allocation process are joint processes.
- Currently:
  - DVA formally consults ESOs through the ESO Round Table (ESORT), and
  - ESOs can input to TIP through the TCGs,\(^8\) but
  - no formal tri-partite forum exists.

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*\(^7\)* Some may see this advantage as being a two-edged sword. While it increases autonomy, it also confers a financial management workload that is undertaken by DVA Accounts Payable. The countervailing reality is that every not-for-profit organisation that utilises volunteers has the same high-level fiduciary obligation to the Government to manage public funds assiduously. Frequently, the treasurer is a volunteer. This begs the question: Why should TIP be different?

*\(^8\)* The influence of ESOs through the TCG necessitates a much more active role by representatives. Appropriate influence will only occur if ESO State-level executives canvass their branch/sub-branches’ opinions on TIP issues and brief their representatives fully on agenda items, and representatives present their ESO’s brief cogently and debrief their ESO’s Executive after the TCG.
• Three measures to strengthen the DVA-TIP-ESO partnership are:
  − joint review of the Ten Year Strategic Plan that:
    : identifies the mutually agreed objectives and capabilities,
    : programs the TIP development path and milestones, and
    : specifies the resources to be applied and achievement indicators.
  − joint preparation of annual Business Plans that:
    : link the 10 Year Strategic Plan with annual activities,
    : specify TIP actions required to meet DVA expectations and ESO needs,
    : identifies the resources needed to achieve agreed annual outcomes;
    : stipulates responsibility for action, milestones and achievement indicators.
  − implementation of the “performance enhancement system” tabled at the 2012 Annual Committee of TIP Chairs would:
    : advance a key “good governance” principle,
    : foster a client-focused (rather than product-centered) approach,
    : link TIP training and ESO participant capabilities to the quality of claims, applications, and requests for review and appeal,
    : in other words, turn three loosely-linked organisations into a system focused on the original rationale for which TIP was created.

14. Documentation, Performance Measurement and Reporting:
• Good documentation is the foundation of performance measurement.
• As TIP is administered by DVA, DVA should identify the policies, practices and procedures, and performance measures needed to assure it of TIP’s conformance.
• Once it is aware of the criteria and metrics, TIP can devise the data collection and reporting protocols that provide DVA the assurance it requires.
• As foreshadowed at para 13:
  − a systems approach\(^9\) is essential, and
  − tri-partite interaction is an essential performance monitoring and remediation characteristic.

\(^9\) The essential elements of a “systems approach” are the measurement of the quality of training output by TIP and ESO practitioners’ achievement by DVA, feedback loops linking TIP-ESO-DVA, and coordinated remediation activities by each party to correct system shortcomings.
Accreditation

15. The 2010 Review\textsuperscript{10} conclusions on certification were as follows:

- **TIP Presenters:**
  - Certificate IV TAE “should not be imposed” on volunteer presenters, but
  - all presenters “should attend a basic train-the-trainer course to enable exposure to best practice training practices”;\textsuperscript{11}

- **Courses:**
  - DVA considers the current TIP training module design and development and certification processes to be adequate, but
  - there is anecdotal evidence that younger veterans and members:
    - expect practitioners to have undertaken accredited training courses, and
    - are not satisfied that practitioners’ can provide expert advice without formal AQTF\textsuperscript{12} accreditation.

- **Course Participants’:**
  - understanding of the relevant core knowledge should be assessed;
  - level of understanding could be indicated on the certificate of attendance;\textsuperscript{13}
  - should receive mentoring and on-the-job training by their ESO; and
  - should not be formally accredited as a practitioner until the ESO is satisfied the participant is competent.

- DVA engage expert advice to determine, in consultation with TIP and ESOs, the levels of certification.\textsuperscript{14}

16. In the last 12 months:

- TIP NSW-ACT has received five requests from five different major ESOs for TIP materials so they can conduct internal training courses;


\textsuperscript{11} National Roll-out activities are preceded by a half-day train-the-trainer program. As I have yet to undertake the program I am unaware of the content or underlying pedagogy.

\textsuperscript{12} For relevant guidelines see: <http://www.nssc.natese.gov.au/training_packages>

\textsuperscript{13} TIP NSW-ACT is annotating on the reverse of all certificates of attendance the core models the participant has completed. Any absences from training are noted - in the future, inadequacies in understanding may also be noted.

\textsuperscript{14} In essence this recommendation is currently being operationalised. See Note 16.
TIP NSW- ACT refused the requests, advising that: 

- the VITA insurer stipulates that: Cover under [the indemnification policy] is restricted to advice given by full trained Training and Information Program (TIP) Practitioners ONLY (Insurer’s emphasis); 
- all TIP course must be listed on the State TIP training schedule (to provide transparency of ESO demand, TIP courses, and V2 expenditure; 
- TIP training must: 
  : be presented by an authorised TIP-Presenter, and 
  : use TIP National Consistency core knowledge packages; 
- participants must satisfy the Lead Presenter they have met the course objectives; 
- the State Training Manager (STM) must have trained and authorised each presenter to present a specific course(s) using specified material; and 
- the National Training Manager (NTM) must ensure each STM has the requisite knowledge, presenter development and performance monitoring skills; and 
- the NTM must satisfy the TIP Chairs he/she has the knowledge, skills and experience to manage TIP training nationally.

Three of the five ESOs remonstrated, stating that:
- their trainers were adequately knowledgeable and experienced to train, and 
- they intended to have their trainers gain Cert IV TAE accreditation.

In parallel:
- three major ESOs queried the accreditation status quo at the ESORT in March 2013, 
- DVA has established a working party16 to: “identify the ESO Round Table’s preferred position [on] possible future accreditation arrangements for:
  : TIP trainers, 
  : TIP programs, and 
  : TIP trainees.”

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15 A draft National Policy has been prepared for consideration by the Committee of TIP Chairs.

16 The DVA Working Party comprises ESO representatives of Legacy, the Naval Association of Australia, Australian SAS Association and RAAF Association. Its first meeting was on 7 May.
TIP Scope of Engagement

17. The TIP chairs’ ongoing stance is that TIP trains participants, and has no wider responsibilities. This stance seems in the twilight of its usefulness. Two examples underscore this observation:

- changes to veterans’ legislation with a view to its being passed in the Budget Session of Parliament;¹⁷ and
- proceedings of a range of DVA consultative forums.

Legislation Changes

18. Over the last 12 months, the review of:

- MRCA has been progressed to tabling the draft legislation, and
- SRCA has progressed towards pre-legislative drafting consultation.

19. MRCA:

- Following the Government’s response to the 2011 Review of Military Compensation Arrangements,¹⁸ four ESO expert practitioners participated in a DVA-led working party to prepare drafting instructions.
- On 7 March DVA convened a workshop attended by all major ESOs to review the draft legislation¹⁹ before it was passed to Parliament for tabling.
- Although the workshop used Draft-in-Confidence materials that were not to be released, it provided invaluable insight into the amendments.
- Had TIP attended, this knowledge would have facilitated early preparation of new course materials for MRCA courses for use as soon as the legislation is passed.²⁰

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¹⁷ Earlier passage had been hoped for; however, the Bill was referred by the Senate to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 14 May 2013.


²⁰ In his Victorian TIP Chair’s report, JP expresses concern about the delayed preparation of MRCA materials until the legislation is passed. These concerns would be ameliorated by representation in ESORT activities, albeit that the amended materials could not be used until the legislation had been passed.
20. **SRCA:**

- On 18 April DVA conducted a teleconference attended by major ESOs to receive a briefing on the February 2013, SRCA Review Report.\(^\text{21}\)
- The report will now undergo an extensive consultation process before draft legislation is prepared.
- TIP has substantive knowledge of SRCA that could usefully be engaged in the consultation and drafting process, allowing materials to be prepared in advance awaiting use on passage of the legislation.

*Membership of DVA Forums*

21. I understand that:

- currently, TIP has no direct representation on any of DVA’s major Consultative Forums; but
- through ESO obligations, two TIP executives are involved as follows:
  - the National Training Manager attends the Operational Working Party\(^\text{22}\) (OWP), and
  - the NSW-ACT Training Manager attends the Emerging Issues Forum\(^\text{23}\) (EIF);
- no feedback is being received in TIP from these Forums; and
- information that is central to TIP course materials and to the future development of TIP is not seeing the light of day.

22. Two other Forums that the evidence shows address issues that are critical to the future development of TIP and content of TIP courses are:

- **ESO Roundtable.** The focus of the ESO Roundtable is issues of strategic importance to the ex-service and defence communities. It is the main consultative body on the development of the VEA, SRCA and MRCA.
- **National Mental Health Forum (NMHF).** The NMHF comprises ESOs, health providers, Defence and DVA. The forum advises national mental health programs, services and initiatives.

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\(^{22}\) The OWP focuses on DVA service delivery and recommends improvements in quality and accountability in service delivery.

\(^{23}\) The EIF identifies and prioritises emerging issues that affect, and considers how DVA can engage with, younger ADF members and their families.
Organisational Structure

23. As with the TIP scope of engagement, the organisational structure of TIP is well into its twilight. Structural transition is needed and, indeed, has started:24

- Every TIP Chair and almost every TCG Member:
  - has extensive ADF experience,
  - is most comfortable in a highly structured environment,
  - thinks reflexively in terms of hierarchical relationships, and
  - accepts uncritically that the rate of progress of an issue is determined by:
    : the time taken for it to be considered at each successive organisational level up to the decision-making level, and
    : then to filter back down to the operational level.

- On the other hand, the contemporary ADF:
  - no longer is characterised by highly structured formal relationships;
  - is populated by personnel who:
    : think in network terms,
    : enjoy very high levels of delegation,
    : are trusted to self-manage and self-correct,
    : self-organise in response to emerging issues,
    : prioritise reflexively, and
    : expect instantaneous “gratification” of needs and wants.

- As ESOs must respond to the needs of the younger veteran, member and dependant, TIP must:
  - train participants to meet the characteristics and expectations of the growing client base,
  - prepare TIP organizationally and operationally to integrate as seamlessly as possible the cohort that will replace current TIP members.

- The structure of TIP must therefore transition from hierarchy to network.

- The operational features of a network organisation include:
  - each person knowing the tasks they are being relied on to undertake,

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24 In his National President’s Report, JP reflects an inadequacy of the current structure: “It is imperative that the NTMG have the permission to implement outcomes without having to wait for Committee of TIP Chairs meeting, the policy permission needs to have had realistic, national awareness, support between the State Training manager and his TCG.”
completing those tasks in entirety and on time without supervision,
observing the outcomes achieved,
self-correcting unwanted outcomes, and
seeking help only if the task is beyond their skills or the resources inadequate for the task.

- The organisational features of a network structure, which are essential to effective self-management and self-regulation, are:
  - clear strategic objectives,
  - accurate job descriptions,
  - assured resources, and
  - detailed annual business plans.

Financial Management

24. Currently:
- TIP appears to be in a reactive, rather than predictive, mode of budgeting.
- Financial allocations appear to be made on past utilisation, without understanding of envisaged need.

25. Good governance requirement:
- accepting that the aggregate annual TIP V1 and V2 allocation, while informally assured on a four-year rolling cycle, will always be tightly constrained,
- good governance necessitates a close relationship between agreed outcomes, the associated resource requirements, and annual allocations.

26. Future financial management to meet good governance requirements:
- Identification of the resources needed to achieve agreed outcomes is an essential element of the annual planning process.
- The existing DVA monthly expenditure reports are readily adapted by each State TCG to present an annual budget that is:
  - disaggregated into a month-by-month anticipated pattern of expenditure,
  - coded using Codes E36 and H32 to H41,
  - collated into a National aggregate V1+V2 bid; and
  - used as the benchmark for:
    - comparison with monthly actual expenditure,
progressive analysis of under or over-expenditure,

identification of errors in underlying budget or expenditure assumptions, and

regular financial reporting to National and DVA.

- To meet the Government’s annual budgetary cycle, each State TCG would need to ratify in December for the following financial year its:
  - business plan, and
  - budget bid.

- If the eventual allocation did not match a State’s bid, the activities that could not be undertaken because the resources were not available would be agreed jointly by DVA, TIP and ESOs.

**IMPLICATIONS**

27. In essence all of the preceding discussion can be sheeted home to either governance enhancement or course development.

**Governance**

28. The next steps in transition to good governance practices include:

- incorporate TIP as an incorporated association;
- engage actively in tightening all three links in the tri-partite relationship;
- progress a tri-partite performance enhancement scheme focused on the quality of practitioners’ claims, applications, reviews, and appeals;
- seek National TIP membership of the ESORT, NMHF, EIF, OWP, and each legislation and TIP-related working party;
- prompt tri-partite engagement on the 10 Year Rolling Plan and TIP Protocols;
- introduce at State-level annual business plans and annual budget proposals;
- encourage DVA to identify its policy, practice and procedure expectations of TIP;
- transition to the National-level, State-level TIP documentation, performance data collection and reporting processes;
- allocate funds for, and encourage presenters to voluntarily gain accreditation to Cert IV TAE 40110; and
- transition TIP structure from hierarchy to network.
Course Development

29. For TIP training to attain and maintain maximum effectiveness, TIP must:
   • seek input from ESOs and tailor content course-by-course to the participants or practitioners’ specific needs;
   • transition its approach to training from content-centred to client-focused;
   • reconstruct TIP training courses by:
     − adopting adult learning principles 25;
     − focusing learning on:
       : how to identify the specific needs of the client bases for each Act, and
       : how to locate the authoritative information needed in each case;
     − changing the mode of teaching from printed materials based to web-accessed information based by adoption of the “electronic classroom”;
     − changing the conduct of courses from knowledge transfer to information identification and analysis;
     − reducing lecture content and increasing the number of case studies during primary courses; and
     − reducing lecture content and relying heavily on increasingly complex case studies during refresher courses;
   • include awareness of DVA mental health materials26 in compensation courses;
   • encourage practitioners to undertake Men’s Peer Health Education courses;27
   • actively encourage ESOs to:
     − nominate more young, and many more female course participants;
     − monitor the performance of their practitioners; and
     − require experienced practitioners to actively mentor less experienced practitioners;

25 Almost all TIP Executives and Presenters learning and teaching experiences are grounded in learning and teaching “drills”. The underlying pedagogy is the skill lesson. Drills are practiced until they “can be performed blind-folded”. Adult learning is becoming increasingly relevant as contemporary cases become more complex. Awareness of where and how to find information, how to link disparate sources, how to interpret and apply them, and self-directed inquiry are the future learning modality. See: “andragogy”:<http://www.instructionaldesign.org/theories/andragogy.html>

26 See: <http://at-ease.dva.gov.au/>

• create a mentoring and on-the-job training course for ESOs’ experienced practitioners;
• seek feedback on claims, applications, requests for review and appeals quality from all stakeholders, and use that information to inform amendment of course content, teaching methods and learning expectations; and
• introduce electronic submission and automatic central registration of participants’ course evaluation.

CONCLUSION

30. The objective of this think piece is to prompt reflection and discussion. It is not a blueprint for the future development of TIP.

NSW-ACT Training Consultative Group