Chapter 9. Indicative VSC/ESO/YVO Responsibilities

9.1 Introduction
This Chapter outlines the ATDP position on the responsibilities of Veteran Service Centres, Ex-Service Organisations and Younger Veterans Organisations in support of professional advocacy training and service delivery.

9.2 Management System
VSC/ESO/YVO are independent of the ATDP governance, management and administration system. ATDP can only advise VSC/ESO/YVO about the role they might play in implementation of ATDP. VSC/ESO/YVO interests are, however, linked closely to ATDP as, amongst other things:

- prospective candidates must complete pre-enrolment on-the-job training and suitability assessment
- their Workplace Mentors and experienced Advocates will engage a VC/ESO’s candidates on their experiential learning pathway
- they provide the facilities and equipment candidates will use during OJT and subsequently during post-accreditation practice
- their Executives, Workplace Mentors and Advocates have a workload, professional standards and reputational interest in preparing candidates thoroughly for assessment
- their Advocates provide the advocacy services to their Members and non-Members that are their raison d’etre

In the context of its Veteran-Centric Reform (VCR) objectives, DVA has a very close interest in the quality of the advocacy services delivered by VC/ESO advocates to DVA clients and the wider Defence Family. As a DVA-funded Program, ATDP has a real stake in communicating the significance of VCR to VC/ESO Executives, Advocates and Members. It is this relationship and responsibility that provides the opportunity for ATDP to leverage the preceding VC/ESO interests.

9.3 Participants’ Responsibilities
All ATDP Members in their capacities as members of VC/ESOs, advocates, mentors and ATDP will use the attached guide to facilitate VC/ESO executives, advocates and members of their role in training and continuing professional development under 10620NAT Course in Military Advocacy.

Attachment 1: ATDP Handbook v1.4
HANDBOOK for EX-SERVICE ORGANISATIONS and VETERAN CENTRE
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OVERVIEW

The ATDP Handbook for VC and ESO is a guide for organisations providing Advocacy support to current and former ADF Servicemen, women and their dependants.

This handbook should be used as a reference guide for those unfamiliar with the ATDP or the different stakeholders involved. For ease of use, each chapter will provide an introduction, the role and responsibilities of the organisation.

The information contained is derived from the ATDP Policy and Procedures Manual, which can be accessed via the ATDP website and should be referenced for further information. If further clarification is required, please make an enquiry through the ATDP website.
CHAPTER 1: THE ATDP

Background

As a result of the 2014 Review into Veterans’ Advocacy, undertaken by the late Brig. Rolfe AO (Retd), a working party was formed from ESO, TIP and DVA nominations to progress the development and implementation of a veterans’ advocacy training model. The outcome was the development and implementation of the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP).

The ATDP now has the ‘Military Advocacy’ course accredited with the Australian Skills Quality Authority. One of the key requirements of an accredited course is that it provides appropriate competency outcomes and a satisfactory basis for assessment.

Vision

‘The vision of the ATDP is to train and develop selected practitioners to provide high quality advocacy services to current and former ADF members and their dependents, where advocacy services cover rehabilitation, compensation, appeals and welfare.’

ATDP Governance

To deliver this program the ATDP has three (3) levels of Governance:

1. Strategic Governance Board (SGB)
   a. A national governance board with approximately seven members representing ESOs, the Capability Framework Management Group, DVA and Defence. It will provide strategic oversight direction and governance.

2. Capability Framework Management Group (CFMG)
   a. A national management body with approximately 11 members representing ESOs, Regional Implementation Groups, DVA and Defence. It will develop, implement and maintain the Capability Framework.

3. Regional Implementation Group (RIG)
   a. Three Regional Implementation Groups, each of approximately 12 members, formed to carry out the day-to-day administration of delivering the framework (including trainer management) and ensuring that communities of practice are developed and maintained within their regions to support advocates.
      i. Region 1 – QLD & NT
      ii. Region 2 – NSW, ACT & WA
      iii. Region 3 – VIC, SA & TAS

Further information can be located at https://www.atdp.org.au/atdpMain.php
CHAPTER 2: VC and ESOs

Introduction

Veteran Centres (VC) and Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) have traditionally provided Pension and Welfare Officers to support their membership through training under the Training and Information Program (TIP). However due to many factors this program has been replaced by the ATDP. The ATDP requires all Advocates to become accredited under a national framework. The reasoning behind this is to establish a high-quality service which is nationally consistent. This has unfortunately been absent in recent years.

This presents a significant challenge to ESOs, requiring change of current methods of operation for their Advocates. Advocates will be required to have good computer literacy, commit not just to the formal training but also to a continuous professional development program and working collaboratively with other Advocates from different ESOs.

If advocates do not meet the requirements, they will not be accredited under the ATDP and will therefore not be eligible for insurance coverage under VITA. It is in the ESOs, advocates and clients best interest to commit to fulfilling all requirements to provide Advocacy services.

Role

The role ESOs have in the ATDP cannot be understated. Their role is to select appropriate people to become advocates; facilitate training and support to ensure high quality, nationally consistent advocacy services are provided to current and former ADF Members and their dependants. A part of supporting these advocacy services is to advocate (through their state/national body if necessary) to the government for change to address relevant community issues.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities to the ATDP

1. Select the appropriate candidates, according to the selection criteria, to become Advocates,
2. Support trainee advocates to complete the ATDP training requirements,
3. Support existing advocates to complete the recognition of prior learning requirements to become qualified under the ATDP,
4. Aid the formation and ongoing support of Communities of Practice, and
5. If applicable, adhere to the VITA requirements (letter of endorsement, CPD points attained).

Responsibilities to workplace mentors and advocates

1. Provide resources (administrative, financial and tools of the trade) the Advocate needs to provide advocacy services,
2. Facilitate training to enable trainee advocates to gain the level of qualification they are aspiring to,
3. Facilitate debriefing (wellness) support,
4. Advocate to national bodies and/or Australian Government for change to address community issues,
CHAPTER 3: ATDP WORKPLACE MENTOR

Introduction

It is important when choosing to become ATDP workplace Mentor you are fully aware of the responsibility you are taking on. Careful consideration must be made as these duties will be in addition to your Advocacy work. For a full list of these duties please refer to the ATDP Workplace Mentors Volunteers agreement, website address.

The ATDP Workplace Mentor is a crucial position within the ATDP and the Veterans Community. They are responsible for Mentoring future Advocates, allowing for a succession of consistent and effective service provided to the current and former Military Veterans Community by their peers.

This chapter is brief overview of the ATDP Workplace Mentor role, if you would like further information please refer to the ATDP Mentoring Handbook. If this does not satisfy your query, please consult your designated ATDP Regional Mentor. Link

Role

As a Mentor, you will be an experienced (competent at level 2 or higher) ATDP Compensation or Welfare Advocate with a main role to facilitate your Mentee’s learning. ATDP stipulates ‘facilitation’ of learning for sound reasons:

- Volunteers’ enthusiasm and commitment is invaluable.
- The motivation of their commitment is the desire to help their mates.
- The rewards they gain from their commitment are entirely intrinsic.
- Being intrinsic, they experience satisfaction through achievement.
- The more you are helping them learn and become competent, the greater the level of satisfaction they feel.

Mentoring in ATDP involves two inter-related sets of activity:

- **Learning Facilitation:** You, as an experienced advocate (Mentor), working with a less-experienced candidate, trainee or practicing advocate (Mentee).
- **Mentoring Support:** Teams of senior welfare and compensation advocates in the RIGs (Regional Mentors) supporting welfare and compensation mentors located in CoP and ESO/Veteran Centre (Workplace Mentors).

Attributes

For your mentoring to be effective you must:

- engage in a mutually-beneficial, supportive partnership; and
- through interaction, ensure that your Mentee and you commit to continuous professional competency.

Personal Qualities:

- **Inter-personal skills:** Empathy, ability to put clients at ease.
- **Listening skills:** Ability to perceive verbal and non-verbal cues.
• Comprehension skills: Understanding, ability to identify key issues.
• Emotional skills: Objectivity, patience, tolerance, stability.

Responsibilities

Responsibility to the Mentee

Is important that you, as Mentor, accept that you are the ‘architect and engineer’ of the Mentee’s integrating into their role and gaining competence:

• The Mentee brings his/her motivation and commitment, desire to learn and help, and embedded search for self-worth (reward) to the engagement.
• By your dedication to their learning, planning, efforts, judgements, tutoring, inter-personal skill and encouragement, you can ‘help them help their mates – quicker and better’.

As an ATDP Mentor, for each Mentee, you must:

• commit to spending at least one year in a mentoring relationship;
• negotiate a milestone plan relevant to the Level or aspired Level of practice;
• communicate weekly, preferably in person, but by telephone or email if that is not possible;
• engage for at least four hours a month in a program of mutually-agreed learning activities;
• monitor workload and role satisfaction;
• identify the learning areas where your mentoring is best directed;
• honour all commitments you make;
• be respectful of his/her time, opinions, and decision-making;
• be a positive role model of professional advocacy behaviour (e.g. active listening, patience, tolerance, attention to detail and reflective learning);
• establish appropriate boundaries (if required, with his/her family); and
• most importantly, be encouraging and supportive in all you do.

Responsibility to the ATDP

As an ATDP Mentor you must:

• not less than once a month, advise your CoP and ESO/Veteran Centre, or RIG (Regional Mentor), of your progress and challenges;
• as required and when programmed by the CFMG or your RIG, participate in continuing mentor-development training;
• ensure the probity of the assessment evidence you collect;
• ensure each Mentee’s Workplace Experience Log is correctly compiled and certified;
• monitor the quality of advocacy services delivered by your CoP and ESO/Veteran Centre’s advocates;
• reinforce with your ESO/Veteran Centre Executives your Regional Manager’s advice about ATDP policy and procedures;
• act with determination in your role as a mandated reporter and advise accurately and promptly to your RIG of all problematic issues (Manager or Regional Mentor, as appropriate); and
• be patient as adult learning and culture change take effort and time.

Responsibility to yourself

You will enhance the likelihood of successful mentoring if you:

• take care of yourself FIRST and FOREMOST;
• negotiate a structured mentoring program;
• develop and sustain a mentoring relationship;
• know where your Mentee is in the agreed mentoring program;
• plan and prepare for every mentoring session;
• during each session:
  • reflect continually on the dynamics,
  • adapt readily to emerging needs,
  • vary your approach across the full mentoring continuum (instruction at one end to discussion as peers at the other), and
• exercising tact, query why if you sense the dynamics are not good;
• after each session:
  o identify the achievements and shortfalls;
  o reflect on dynamics,
  o extract the lessons learned, and
  o enter your findings in your mentoring journal; and
  o discuss your mentoring experiences with senior or peer mentors.
CHAPTER 4: ATDP ADVOCATES

Introduction

The ATDP Compensation and Welfare Advocates are key members of their communities (ADF, ESO or community group) and as such are expected to be able to provide a quality service to those seeking their assistance. It is most likely these Advocates will fulfil a ‘first responder’ role and take the necessary steps to ensure the client receives the assistance they are seeking.

For a detailed description of the Military Compensation Advocate role, please refer to website address and for Military Welfare Advocate role, please refer to website address

Role

The role of a Military Compensation or Welfare Advocate is to provide a high-level of support to those current or former servicemen, women or their dependants who require assistance. People requiring assistance may not be a member of their ESO or veterans Centre. It is important to realise that an Advocate will often find themselves in a ‘first responder’ role helping those looking for assistance. As such the Advocate will need a very good understanding of chronic health (physical and psychological) and supporting services (ADF, DVA, Government Health, Community).

Attributes

Personal Qualities:

- Inter-personal skills: Empathy, ability to put clients at ease.
- Listening skills: Ability to perceive verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Comprehension skills: Understanding, ability to identify key issues.
- Emotional skills: Objectivity, patience, tolerance, stability.

Responsibilities

As a Military Compensation Advocate you are responsible for:

1. Give full, accurate and factual information to veterans and their dependents in relation to compensation, rehabilitation, benefits and services, and, when requested, provide an honest assessment of the prospects of success or failure of a claim based on your knowledge and experience,

2. Encourage veterans, their dependents and others to give full, accurate, factual and relevant information when applying for compensation, rehabilitation, benefits and services,

3. Act only on the veteran’s or dependent’s instructions in relation to action to be taken in respect of a claim, appeal or application for compensation, rehabilitation, or benefits, or access to services,

4. If possible ensure that, if dealing with a client in an aged care centre, the centre management and, if appropriate, the person holding Power of Attorney or other legal entitlement for the client, is involved in discussions,

5. Ensure that all contact with members of the veteran community, staff of government agencies, providers of services and the general community is conducted in a professional manner,
6. Ensure that all available relevant details and documents are submitted with claims and applications for pensions, benefits and services,

7. Only undertake work to the level at which you have been trained and have been formally assessed as competent,

8. Maintain and expand your knowledge base and practice, by seeking advice from your Mentor, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs or other service providers,

9. Keep personal information secure and not disclose such information to others without express consent,

10. Promote the interests of the veteran community by communicating openly and honestly with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Veterans Review Board, Administrative Appeals Tribunal and other service providers, and by complying with requests for information,

11. Adhere to the ATDP code of ethics,

12. Ensure all details of clients and their cases are recorded accurately,

13. Work with your mentor on a program of continuing professional development, and

14. Self-care – as you may be doing this work due to a lived experience, your well-being is paramount and if something isn’t right, advise your mentor or a staff member of your ESO.

As a Military Welfare Advocate you are responsible for:

1. Providing emergency relief or assistance to serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Forces (ADF), within the guidelines of your ATDP training,

2. Providing emergency relief or assistance to ex-serving members of Commonwealth and Allied Forces,

3. Providing emergency relief or assistance to war widows or their dependants under certain circumstances,

4. Providing bereavement assistance,

5. Providing information regarding counselling services available to veterans and their families,

6. Provide information and assistance with accessing non-liability health care for veterans,

7. Providing information regarding aged care services and assistance for carers’, both through DVA and within their community resources,

8. Facilitating home maintenance through Veteran’s Home Care, or other Aged Care service providers,

9. Conducting and or supporting home and hospital visitations, and visits to Aged Care Centre’s,

10. Work in a safe manner and at all times and where appropriate participate in occupational health and safety activities,

11. Report any accidents or incidents that involve welfare and aged care volunteers in the course of their duties or welfare clients,

12. Maintain accurate records of clients and adhere to Privacy laws,
13. Work with a mentor on a consistent and reliable basis to complete your Work Experience Logbook, and

14. Self-care – many Advocates will be doing this work due to a lived experience, your well-being is paramount and if something isn’t right, advise your mentor or a staff member of your ESO.