



ATDP Update December 2023

Message from the ATDP Delivery Team

Welcome to the Christmas Edition of the update! Christmas is just around the corner and preparations are in full swing.

On the weekend Townsville held its annual Carols by Candlelight which always seems to represent the start of Christmas for me, I thought I'd share a photo that captures RAAF airmen singing some Christmas tunes during their service in Vietnam. If you are interested in more Veteran Christmas stories/images, you can visit the [Anzac Portal](#).



Airmen of the RAAF contingent gather to sing Christmas carols at the Vung Tau Special Zone, Vietnam, 24 December 1966. AWM VN/66/0110/05

Advocacy Register (AR) Improvements:

Advocate Display:

The Advocacy Register has been improved to more accurately represent the number of advocates within each ESO.

Prior to this change, advocates were listed under every Statement of Attainment that they had achieved. As an example: One individual who is W2 and C2 qualified would be listed four times in the register:

- 1 x Compensation level 1;
- 1 x Compensation level 2;
- 1 x Wellbeing level 1;
- 1 x Wellbeing level 2;

The improvement means that an individual is now listed by their highest level of attainment in each competency. In the above example, a dual qualified advocate will only be listed twice:

- 1 x Compensation level 2
- 1 x Wellbeing level 2.

Veteran and Families Hubs:

DVA Funded Veteran and Families Hubs also can be found on the register. The search parameters are the same as searching for an ESO. They will be displayed within a 50km radius. An example of how a Veterans' and Families' Hub displays is here:

#	ESO	Address	Contact	Services
1	Veteran Wellbeing Centre	216 Daws Road Daw Park 5041 SA	Ph: 08 7117 5237 Web: Veteran Wellbeing Centre	Veterans' and Families' Hub Please contact the hub to confirm services available

'How To' Guides:

The 'How To' guide for RPL has been updated on the website (<https://web.atdp.org.au/psMsg>)

We are still refining the guides for:

What to Expect as a Trainee, C&A Process and Portfolio of Evidence requirements.

If you have any suggestions regarding additional How To Guides, please let us know at

ATDPEnquiries@dva.gov.au

In Person Program Delivery Pilots:

Both in person programs went well. The C1 C&A in Perth and the Mentoring Workshop at the Cardiff RSL in NSW.

We thank all the participants in the pilots and look forward to refining the process and offering more opportunities in 2024.

DVA Services during the holiday season:

DVA will continue to provide support to veterans and families during the holiday season. However, please be aware that some services will be impacted. More information can be found here:

[DVA services during the holiday season | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

Over the Christmas period, DVA offices, shopfronts and general enquiry services will be closed from Saturday 23 December 2023 to Monday 1 January 2024 inclusive. This includes the ATDP team. We will return on Tuesday 2 January 2024 and look forward to assisting you.

With another busy year nearly behind us, I would like to pass on our thanks for the support you provide to veterans and families. Christmas can be a challenging time and the support and care that you provide helps ease some of those challenges. The ATDP Team wish you peace, comfort and joy during this festive season!

Michelle

A/g Assistant Director – ATDP Program Delivery

From the Development Team

Social Media

The ATDP Development and DVA Social Media team have created social media advertisements and posts to encourage the veteran community to seek support through ATDP trained advocates. These posts direct the viewer to the Advocacy Register where they can search for services. Throughout the first week, we reached 8,016 individuals across Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. ATDP will continue to work with DVA Social Media to develop ongoing and relevant content.

Continuous Professional Development

DVA is currently revising the CPD program to improve currency and accessibility. As part of this process, the CPD policy is being shaped and informed by the feedback received from the ATDP advocacy community since 2018, alongside comparison reviews of various CPD across professional and volunteer organisations. An initial draft of the revised policy has been presented to a small group of stakeholders, and their feedback will be used to reshape the policy. We anticipate sharing a policy document with the greater advocacy community for feedback in due course.

Quest

Quarter two QUEST videos are now available on the QUEST Newsroom. <https://web.atdp.org.au/quest>

These videos are part of delegate training within DVA, and are provided to advocates to promote the cross-sharing of knowledge.

The new videos available are:

- Our commitment to you
- Section 5R (3) Determinations

DVA Information

Claims Lodgement Assistance Program – WA Pilot

DVA will be piloting a Claims Lodgement Assistance program in 2024 to be run in collaboration with Ex Service Organisations (ESOs) to support the lodgement of compensation claims by veterans. A small pilot will be run in Perth along with interested ESOs and through the Perth DVA Office.

Discussions are still taking place with regard to implementation from February 2024, although it has been agreed between the Australian Special Air Services Association for DVA compensation staff to be based at the Association's headquarters in Swanbourne at selected times to support veterans to lodge claims in a manner that will enable assessment of the claim following its registration with DVA.

Support will be provided jointly by the Association, in this case, and DVA Claims Lodgement Assistants (CLAs) to veterans. More ESO discussions will occur in January 2024 with the aim of having CLA's located in ESO offices, including RSLWA Sub Branches, and DVA's Office to meet with veterans and support them to lodge their claims.

Further updates will be provided as the pilot progresses.

Program Support

All statistics are correct as of 4 December 2023

Unique Active Advocates - Total Advocates: 637					
Stream	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Total
Compensation (C) advocates	4	43	167	100	314
Wellbeing (W) advocates	0	0	176	41	217
Advocates with both Compensation and Wellbeing qualifications	C4/W1	C3/W1	C2/W1	C1/W1	
	0	1	9	4	14
	C4/W2	C3/W2	C2/W2	C1/W2	
	7	27	46	12	92
Total					637

Level of Statements of Attainment Issued by State at 4-Dec-2023

Region	States	C1	C2	C3	C4	W1	W2	C1/W1	C1/W2	C2/W1	C2/W2	C3/W1	C3/W2	C4/W1	C4/W2	Total
2	ACT	3	9	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
2	NSW	22	45	10	1	4	38	0	6	2	11	0	3	0	1	143
3	VIC	21	34	4	1	9	44	1	1	0	9	0	4	0	4	132
1	QLD	38	62	17	1	22	66	2	4	6	19	1	15	0	2	255
3	SA	5	7	4	0	2	11	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	33
3	TAS	2	4	1	0	1	9	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	22
1	NT	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
2	WA	8	5	5	0	3	6	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	32
Total		100	167	43	4	41	176	4	12	9	46	1	27	0	7	637

Trainees currently undertaking Units of Competency (trainees counted more than once if undertaking more than one UoC)

Total number of unique trainees = 427

#	Name of Competency	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Total
1	Compensation Advocate Level 1	72	89	62	223
2	Compensation Advocate Level 2	40	35	18	93
3	Compensation Advocate Level 3	7	7	9	23
4	Compensation Advocate Level 4	1	0	1	2
5	Wellbeing Advocate Level 1	51	46	20	117
6	Wellbeing Advocate Level 2	17	3	3	23
7	TOTAL NUMBER OF UoCs	188	180	113	481

RPL Trainees currently undertaking Units of Competency (trainees counted more than once if undertaking more than one UoC)

Total number of unique trainees = 61

#	Name of Competency	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Total
1	Compensation Advocate Level 1	0	2	4	6
2	Compensation Advocate Level 2	4	6	4	14
3	Compensation Advocate Level 3	5	3	6	14
4	Compensation Advocate Level 4	1	1	0	2
5	Wellbeing Advocate Level 1	4	1	1	6
6	Wellbeing Advocate Level 2	3	10	8	21
7	TOTAL NUMBER OF UoCs	17	23	23	63

Completed Units of Competency (Advocates counted more than once if completed more than one UoC)

Total number of unique accredited advocates = 637

#	Name of Competency	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Total
1	Compensation Advocate Level 1	99	54	45	198
2	Compensation Advocate Level 2	129	95	80	304
3	Compensation Advocate Level 3	36	25	21	82
4	Compensation Advocate Level 4	3	3	5	11
5	Wellbeing Advocate Level 1	52	17	31	100
6	Wellbeing Advocate Level 2	106	74	88	268
7	TOTAL NUMBER OF UoCs	425	268	270	963

Trainees (Average Age by Region)

#	Name of Competency	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Average Age Total
1	Compensation Advocate Level 1	53	57	53	54
2	Compensation Advocate Level 2	57	60	58	58
3	Compensation Advocate Level 3	67	61	59	62
4	Compensation Advocate Level 4	69	78	71	72
5	Wellbeing Advocate Level 1	56	56	62	58
6	Wellbeing Advocate Level 2	61	55	57	57
7	Average Age Total	60	61	60	60.6

Accredited Advocates (Average Age by Region)

#	Name of Competency	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Average Age Total
1	Compensation Advocate Level 1	55	60	60	58
2	Compensation Advocate Level 2	64	69	67	66
3	Compensation Advocate Level 3	68	68	67	67
4	Compensation Advocate Level 4	72	76	73	73
5	Wellbeing Advocate Level 1	63	63	61	62
6	Wellbeing Advocate Level 2	67	66	68	67
7	Average Age Total	64	67	66	65.9

Gender by Training Stream (unique)

	Region 1		Region 2		Region 3		Total numbers
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	
C4	100 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	100 (1)	0 (0)	2
C3	86 (6)	14 (1)	57 (4)	43 (3)	56 (5)	44 (4)	23
C2	53 (20)	47 (18)	76 (25)	24 (8)	71 (12)	29 (5)	88
W2	57 (8)	43 (6)	67 (2)	33 (1)	33 (1)	67 (2)	20
C1	59 (39)	41 (27)	69 (56)	31 (25)	66 (38)	34 (20)	205
W1	43 (16)	57 (21)	58 (18)	42 (13)	47 (8)	53 (9)	85
Total	55 (90)	45 (73)	68 (105)	32 (50)	62 (65)	38 (40)	423

Gender by Accredited Advocates (unique)

	Region 1		Region 2		Region 3		Total numbers
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	
C4	33 (1)	67 (2)	100 (3)	0 (0)	100 (5)	0 (0)	11
C3	76 (25)	24 (8)	82 (18)	18 (4)	94 (15)	6 (1)	71
C2	74 (69)	26 (24)	76 (53)	24 (17)	85 (50)	15 (9)	222
W2	65 (45)	35 (24)	44 (24)	56 (31)	56 (36)	44 (28)	188
C1	59 (26)	41 (18)	79 (26)	21 (7)	74 (20)	26 (7)	104
W1	59 (13)	41 (9)	57 (4)	43 (3)	50 (6)	50 (6)	41
Total	68 (179)	32 (85)	67 (128)	33 (62)	72 (132)	28 (51)	637

Nominations for New Training versus RPL (By Year)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
In Training	101	374	405	386	332	328	306	244	2476
In RPL	99	482	364	227	26	27	61	53	1339
Total	200	856	769	613	358	355	367	297	3815

Mentoring Workshops - Total number of Advocates who have attended a Mentoring Workshop

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Numbers	92	248	48	28	5	43	43	30

MENTOR Statistics - Number of ATDP Active Advocates Who have been Mentor Trained by Region

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	TOTAL
146	132	125	403

MENTOR Statistics - Number of ATDP Mentors who currently have a trainee

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	TOTAL
69	61	43	173

Note: There are 160 unique mentors. Some mentors have trainees across multiple regions.

Total Number of Nominations

Year	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Total
2016	79	70	51	200
2017	356	276	224	856
2018	328	238	203	769
2019	262	194	157	613
2020	167	106	85	358
2021	146	136	73	355
2022	148	138	81	367
2023	121	90	86	297

Combined Level 1 Pilot Program

The Pilot Program that commenced on 21 July was completed with the conduct of Module 3 during the period 22 – 23 Nov 23. Several unexpected delays have meant the pilot took longer than originally planned. Of the eight trainees who started, six completed all modules, while one completed Modules 1 and 2 and one completed Modules 1 and 3 (both due to illness). Finalisation of assessment for all candidates is yet to be completed. Congratulations to those who were involved, both as trainees and as assessors.

Second Level 1 Pilot

A second pilot program is being planned for the first half of 2024. We are hoping to conduct this pilot with new starters – those that have not already commenced their Level 1 training with a WEL and mentor. The aim is to confirm that this method of training will provide the required skills and knowledge for these Advocates to progress to Level 2 training. ESOs will shortly be asked to nominate Advocates for this program. Dates will be advised as soon as confirmed.

Recruitment for Trainers/Assessors

ATDP is constantly looking for experienced Advocates to take on the role of trainer/assessor for ATDP programs. The requirements are:

- Level 2 or higher Compensation Advocate or Level 2 Wellbeing Advocate
- A minimum of 12 months experience working as a Level 2 Advocate
- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (2022 or 2016 qualification preferred, or willing to update to current qualification). Trainer and Assessor Skill Set is acceptable as a minimum.
- Available to participate in ATDP programs.

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Region 1 Update – QLD, NT



Face-to-face Workshops

DVA has approved face-to-face workshops in the Regions based on the mentoring workshop. The goal is to support groups of advocates within a local area to get together and provide refreshing of mentoring skills, qualification for mentoring and an ATDP Update. The pilot in the Hunter Region was well supported. All participants responded that they believed this form of workshop was most valuable.

There are 3 CPD points allocated to this one-day workshop. The process involves ESOs nominating suitable candidates for the Mentoring Workshop. Further locations will be decided from responses and where there are a minimum of 6 advocates.

CPD

The Draft CPD Policy document was discussed at the Regional Managers meeting in Melbourne on 17th November. Another meeting occurred on 13th December to further discuss CPD. A writing workshop is then planned to update CPD material. Unfortunately, many advocates have allowed their CPD currency to lapse. This jeopardizes both the advocate and the ESO if there is any challenge to the advice provided through VITA insurance. It is also planned that BEST grants will only be provided to ESOs for the work of CPD current advocates.

Level 1 Combined Program

The Level 1 Pilot for both Wellbeing and Compensation is due for completion in November, when a report on its value will be produced. Applications for the next course are being called from prospective advocates who have not yet commenced training. Candidates should be nominated through the PSOs and Darryl Proud at MTS or the Regional Manager. A mentor is not required for this program.

Level 4 Nominations

It is not regarded that there is a great demand for Level 4 qualified advocates and there is very limited number of qualified mentors, consequently, it is expected that there will only be a few in each Region. The process for Level 4 nominations, including the nomination criteria, is currently under consideration by ATDP, the National Training Manager and key stakeholders. If you would like to discuss further, please contact your Regional Manager.

How to Guides

These are being updated regularly and provide a simple guide for many regular operations. They are accessible at the bottom of the Home Page on the Website. Some of the topics are Authorized Person role, Demand Management, Mentor Admin, Negotiating a CPD Event, What to expect as a trainee, RPL.

Dr R G Grandin
Manager Region 1
0409 615 948

Region 2 Update – WA, ACT, NSW

Merry Christmas

I would like to wish everyone and your Families a very safe and Merry Christmas and your New Year is prosperous.



Western Australia Advocates' Seminar 21 Nov 2023

The Western Australia Advocates' Seminar (WAAS) was very successfully conducted on 21 Nov 2023 at the South of Perth Yacht Club.

I would like to thank the Seminar Presenters for their insightful and open discussion and their time. I would especially like to mention Roger Greene (RM3) for his valuable presentation on Compensation Matters and Tips and Pointers as he self-funded his travel and accommodation.

I would also like to thank DVA for their support of the Seminar.

Let's start planning for WAAS 2024...

Wellbeing

After conducting some data analysis, I have found a concerning declining number of Wellbeing Trainees in RSG 2. Wellbeing Advocates are vital in providing support to Veterans and their Families and to Compensation Advocates.

DVA's focus is firstly wellbeing and secondly providing compensation. As a Wellbeing and Compensation Advocate, I use both skills when interviewing Veterans and their Families as each discussion reveals the needs of the Veteran in both areas.

If you are a Compensation Advocate, then please consider also becoming a Wellbeing Advocate.

Information

Regional Manager visibility of Advocate and Mentor information in their location remains a point of frustration.

I would like to be able to assist you more with specific details but am unable to.

RM's continue to work with the ATDP Program Support Officers to find solutions in the interim.

Congratulations

I would like to congratulate those Trainee Advocates who have recently graduated as Advocates in the last two months. Ken, Wade and Graham, are all from NSW and all completed Compensation Level 1 training.

I wish you all the best and ask you to remember to expand your network of Advocates and Mentors and learn from them.

Quote for this Update

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." – Albert Einstein

Thank you for your dedication and support to Veterans and their Families. Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and thoughts on improvements to the ATDP.

Geoff Harrison

Regional Manager RSG2

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Region 3 Update – SA, Tas, Vic

‘Continuing Professional Development includes learning what you didn't know you didn't know’ – RM3



Well, the final edition of the Update for the year. Customarily, we tend to look back and congratulate ourselves on what has been achieved for the year. I hope that all readers can look back on the year with satisfaction. And while we all have things we had hoped to achieve during the year but didn't, let that make us more determined to achieve them in 2024.

Whither Goest ATDP ?

With the establishment of the new Veteran, Family and Stakeholder Experience Division came not only an expectation, but also a promise, of improved consultation and co-design of systems affecting veterans and their families. Implementation is apparently taking time to filter down to the working levels from the Secretary, Alison Frame and Alison McLaren, the Deputy Secretary of the Division.

In the last editing of the Update I provided some detail about the ESORT Principles and Standards Advocacy Working Group (which has had several name changes during the year). I mentioned a paper that had been presented for discussion, one of three, titled 'Grant funding to support additional paid ESO advocates'. The only background was provided in the paper. 'The grants program would provide additional funding per annum (or potential year-on-year funding) for ESOs to employ professional and appropriately-qualified advocates.' The implication, for me at least, being that there is a view within the Department that volunteers are not, or could not be, 'professional and appropriately qualified'.

While it seems that the trial of such a program is planned for WA in the New Year it was also announced recently that the Department is to upskill some delegates to assist veterans in lodging 'decision ready' claims and place them with the SAS Regiment in Perth to relieve the workload on the compensation advocates there so they can concentrate more on wellbeing. I have been advised since I wrote this that they are Client Support Officers (or similar) not Department 'compensation advocates'. Details of the arrangements may become clearer in the New Year.

In similar vein, at the request of the CPD Team, the Department produced a draft CPD policy which I understand has been circulated to the (approximately) 25 advocates or ESOs that responded to the request for submissions on CPD. Quite apart from the very poor response to the request for input, the document proposed revolutionary rather than evolutionary changes to the CPD policy that was abandoned by the Department in June 2021. The changes included dropping the mandatory requirement to undertake CPD, the adoption of an hours based, rather than points based, system and the passing of responsibility for quality and compliance management to ESOs. However, at a meeting with Regional Managers on 13th December Michael Harper advised agreement that the sentence declaring that CPD was not mandatory would be removed. A further meeting is proposed in the New Year.

Rumours start and morale suffers when there is an absence of positive leadership. It is to be hoped that as the new stakeholder engagement, consultation and co-design policies filter down to the working levels within the Department that improved understanding and cooperation will provide a new impetus to ATDP and the provision of advocacy services to our veterans and their families.

In relation to Consolidation and Assessment it needs to be said that the current assessment backlog problem is entirely of the Department's own making and that a significant number of the Trainers and Assessors under the CFMG (there were twelve or so and it was possible to run programs simultaneously rather than a maximum of one per week (perhaps)) volunteered on more than one occasion over the past three years to form an ATDP Support Group to help alleviate the Consolidation and Assessment delays; but the proposal was unacceptable to the Department because it 'looks too much like the old CFMG' as one senior manager explained. One such offer, in detail and in writing, made in January this year has not received any formal response nor has a similar submission signed by the three Regional Managers expressing concern at the management of ATDP which I am advised has been passed to the 'policy area' for comment.

The ATDP model presents an 'interesting' management challenge. RTOs normally provide both training in a particular competency and assessment to see if the requirements have been satisfactorily achieved. This enables the employment of 'full-time' trainers and assessors who spend around 80 to 90 percent of their time training and the remainder assessing. Because ATDP 'training' is conducted on the job by ESOs this aspect, training, is missing from the RTO's requirement necessitating the employment of mainly 'part-time' staff to conduct the assessment phase of the program. The Department seems not to want to recognise that the 'old' CFMG model relieved much of the assessment pressure on the RTO because the assessment was carried out by qualified, practicing, volunteer advocates and that system still has considerable merit in the opinion of senior advocates.

My concerns aside, a new advocacy policy working group seems set to be established in the New Year led by Andrew Kefford, and I feel this will give us good guidance.

Recent Activities

I have been fortunate recently to have been able to take part/attend an Advocacy Forum in Hexham, a Level 1 Compensation Consolidation and Assessment program in Perth, a meeting of the Australian Veterans' Law Advocacy Network (AVLAN) in Sydney and a second Advocate Forum in Perth. Of particular interest are the Level 1 C&A program and AVLAN.

Level 1 Compensation C&A Perth 7 – 9 November

Following the virtual abandonment of Face-to-Face programs in 2021 I must admit to being thrilled to hear that a F-2-F Level 1 Compensation program was being planned for WA. No doubt the difficulties created by the three hour time difference during daylight saving in NSW, Vic and Tas contributed to the easing of the 'embargo'. With a 'normal' on-line day being 0900 to 1600 (local time) Daylight Saving has meant that there is potentially only around a two to three hour daily 'window' that suits all States unless either WA candidates start at 0600 or East-Coast candidates finish at 1900. For many candidates dropping and picking up children at school and 'walking the dog' also impose limitations on the on-line conduct of programs not acknowledged by many.

Several aspects of the program were notable but in particular the candidate-candidate and candidate-facilitator personal interactions enabled an exchange of information/ideas that simply does not occur on-line. The value of these interchanges is priceless in my view.

Also worthy of mention was the excellent support provided by Peter King, the WA Deputy Commissioner and his staff, in whose offices the program was conducted.

AVLAN

The AVLAN forum was founded as an interest group for Level 3 and 4 advocates to be able to exchange information. As the Facebook site explains. . “We are here to help each other navigate through legislation and to achieve the best possible outcomes for all current/former serving members and their families.”

At the recent meeting one of the topics was MRCA PI calculation with an emphasis on ‘effective dates’. While I guess not many advocates check the Department’s PI calculations – partly because the methodology is not available in the publicly available CLIK offering – our veterans can be ‘short changed’ not only in the basic calculation of PI but also in the calculation of arrears which can often involve several changes of rates and applicable dates. For me it emphasised the importance of checking even successful claims thoroughly.

AVLAN meetings are conducted three times a year in Sydney and are often also available on-line. To keep in touch join the AVLAN Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1404441903165681/>

Advocacy Standards and Principles Working Group

As indicated in the last issue of the Update, the Department was to hold the last meeting of the Working Group on 23rd October prior to briefing the Minister and then the ESORT. That meeting was again postponed to 27th October and was more a discussion than a meeting designed to agree advocacy policy moving forward.

Unfortunately, over a month later and at the time of writing this, no Minutes or even notes of the meeting have yet been issued so it is possible that the Minister and the ESORT have been/will be briefed without members of the Working Group knowing the Department’s version of what was discussed.

The Working Group appears to have been established simply to 'go through the motions of consultation' and that is not just my opinion but the majority of its veteran members. That veterans can be treated in such an off-handed manner, particularly on a matter as important as advocacy support, is unworthy of a Department which, in so many ways, is a world leader in its care for our veterans and their families.

STOP PRESS. On the 30th November the Department issued Working Group Members a copy of an ESORT Paper (for the meeting on 7th December) sponsored by Veronica Hancock, the First Assistant Secretary Policy and Research Division and titled ‘Advocacy Reform’. The paper was endorsed ‘For Limited Distribution’ and it is fair to say summarised the proceedings of the four Working Group meetings in such a way that many participants, including me, wondered if they had actually been attending the same meetings.

To the great credit of Andrew Kefford PSM, the Deputy Secretary Policy and Programs who, I understand, was the Acting Secretary at the time, the paper was withdrawn after representations from some Working Group members. I now understand a new working group, likely to be led by Andrew Kefford, will be formed in the New Year and DVA will now openly state it is responsible for the governance of advocacy. It will progress in line with the Department’s new Veteran, Family and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy that I mentioned earlier in this Update.

This makes a positive change from the poor practices of the past when we were not consulted at all, or the input of experienced trainers and advocates was ignored and I hope that it signals that DVA will become a leader in its policy dealings with our veterans and their families

Regional Managers' Meeting

Regional Managers met in Melbourne on 16th November. Dot points might be the best way to summarise the information.

Business Arising

- DVA Veterans' and Families' Hubs (the Hub Project) are now being included in the Advocacy Register (AR).
- Multiple appearances of advocates in the AR (e.g. a Level 4 Advocate also appeared as a Level 3 and a Level 2) have been eliminated.

ATDP Development

- Discussion centered on the draft DVA CPD policy which incorporates policies including non-mandatory CPD, switching from a points to an hours system on an annual rather than a 'rolling three-year cycle' basis and ESOs having responsibility for supervision of CPD.
- RMs unanimously expressed concern at the major shift in policy without consultation.
- While the majority of RMs favoured amendment of the existing CPD policy document the Assistant Secretary (Michael Harper) indicated that the Department preferred to continue work on its draft version.
- A specialist from the policy area of the Department has been attached to the ATDP team to assist in the development of the new CPD policy.
- Clarification of how CPD was to be managed in the future was not available as it is matter of implementation, not policy, and was for future consideration and clarification.
- Another meeting with RMs is scheduled in December to get to a situation where the CPD team and Subject Matter Experts will agree to meet to 'rejuvenate' the CPD offerings.

ATDP Delivery

- The DVA Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/DVAAus/>) now has a publicity piece for 'free advocacy services'. However, in my view, it is quite difficult to find among all the ads for Open Arms, the Veteran Employment Program, Scams Awareness Week etc. etc.
- A trial Face-2-Face Mentoring Program was run in Newcastle (ed. with the usual observation that attendee participation and engagement was significantly improved over the on-line version).

RTO Update

- The final module of the pilot combined C1/W1 has now been conducted and is being assessed. A second trial is to be conducted with candidates starting from 'scratch' as a number of participants in the first pilot were well into their WEL (no pun intended).
- The Compensation Level 4 Course (Tribunal Advocacy Course) arrangements are still under development – including enrolment requirements. This is now likely to be some time away with the current Administrative Appeals Tribunal being abolished and replaced by a new body.
- The Wellbeing Support Officer Handbook is now outdated and may be replaced by one developed by RM2 (Geoff Harrison) and which is also to be adopted by NSW RSL.

Assessment Status Report

Since the last 'Update' the following progress has been achieved in Region 3:

12 Oct 23 - 28 Nov 23

Candidates panelled for Consolidation & Assessment	Candidates ready for Consolidation & Assessment	Advocates waiting for Recognition of Prior Learning
5x Compensation Level 1 2x Compensation Level 2 2x Compensation Level 3 1x Wellbeing Level 1	2x Compensation Level 1 1x Wellbeing Level 2	4x Compensation Level 1 4x Compensation Level 2 3x Compensation Level 3 1x Wellbeing Level 1 8x Wellbeing Level 2
Mentor Notifications (C&A)	New Enrolments	Archived
3x Compensation Level 1 1x Wellbeing Level 2	9x Compensation Level 1 2x Compensation Level 2 1x Compensation Level 2 (RPL) 1x Wellbeing Level 2 (RPL)	<u>Training</u> 3x Compensation Level 2 1x Wellbeing Level 2 1x Wellbeing Level 1 RPL
SOA Issued	Program Attendance	Workshops Completed
1x Compensation Level 1 1x Wellbeing Level 2	2x Compensation Level 1 1x Compensation Level 2	6x Mentoring Workshop

Congratulations

Congratulations to Rik, Wellbeing Level 2 (Tas) and Mike Compensation Level 1 (Vic) on achieving accreditation during the period.

Thanks for your hard work and ongoing support of our veterans and their families.

And Finally...

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the support of our veterans and their families throughout the year: DVA Staff, particularly our PSO Philip Boys and all our advocate support staff in Veteran Centres and ESOs throughout our Region without who our volunteer and paid advocates would not be nearly as effective. And of course our advocates and Support Officers on who our veterans and their families rely.

To you all and your families, I extend Best Wishes for a Happy and Safe Festive Season and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year.

Keep safe . . .




Roger W Greene OAM JP
Regional Manager
Region 3 (SA, Tas, Vic)
Phone: 0411 431 189



RPL How To Guide

ATDP have created a Recognised Prior Learning or [RPL How To Guide](#), that outlines the criteria and process for those that may be interested in completing advocacy training and potentially already have relevant skills and knowledge to undertake RPL.



Advocacy Training and Development Program

'How to' guide

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

What is Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL is a process through which your existing skills and experience are assessed to see if they align with a particular Unit of Competency within the Course in Military Advocacy.

The Units of Competency available for RPL are as below:

Advocacy Stream	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Compensation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wellbeing	Yes		

Notes:

1. RPL needs to be completed sequentially from the lowest Level to the highest level (ie: you need to start at Level 2; then Level 3 and then Level 4).
2. Wellbeing level 2 is the highest level of attainment in the Wellbeing Stream.
3. Level 1 may be considered at the discretion of the Register Training Organisation (RTO).

RPL is an evidence-based assessment of a candidate's skills and knowledge which is conducted one on one with an assessor from the Registered Training Organisation. This assessment includes:

- Demonstration of the possession of a range knowledge through the completion of an open book Underpinning Knowledge Quiz; and
- The presentation of a portfolio of evidence of your own work that demonstrates your capabilities (a checklist will be provided to assist you); and
- Interview with the assessor.

More information can be found at the ATDP website:

[What is Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)
[Course in Military Advocacy](#) – Detailed information regarding each Unit of Competency.

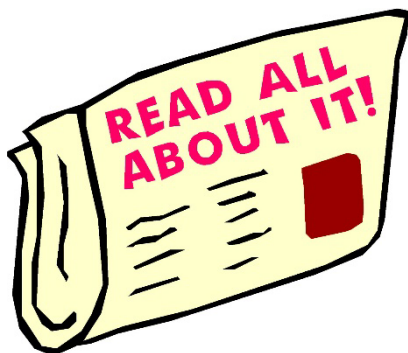
Are you eligible to apply for RPL?

Ideally you will have been exposed to the role of a compensation and/or wellbeing advocate or have transferrable skills from your profession that would enable you to perform the role.

You will also be required to submit documented evidence of your own work that demonstrates your practical skills in relation to the Unit of Competency that you are applying for and your ability to apply those skills in the Military environment.

You can contact your ESO or Program Support Officer (PSO) if you have any further questions.

Don't forget to keep up with the latest...



Visit the [ATDP Newsroom](#) and [DVA Advocacy Newsroom](#) to keep up to date with the latest ATDP articles and news that relates to advocates and wider veteran community



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