

ATDP Update – February 2024

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How To Guides

We are continuing our work with improving and developing [ATDP - How To Guides](#).

Make sure you check them out!

Did you know that the Authorised Person Guide includes a detailed Step by Step instruction on how to use the Advocacy Register? This includes instructions on:

- How to request a mentor and manage mentor requests
- How to nominate someone for training and RPL
- How to update your ESO advocates/trainees.

Message from the ATDP Delivery Team

Happy New Year! Can you believe that we're already at the end of February! We've certainly all hit the ground running!

A quick summary of 2024 so far:



You can find more information about the Combined Course Pilots throughout this newsletter. Three perspectives are provided: The RTO Perspective (within MTS update), the Assessor Perspective (Roger Greene – RM3 Update p11) and the Trainee Perspective (within the article entitled *Advancing Advocacy: Pioneering Face-to-Face Training for Veterans' Welfare*).

A big thanks to all involved for such a great start to the year!

Disclaimer: The ATDP Monthly Update Newsletter incorporates or summarises the opinion of individuals. Such material is assembled in good faith, but does not necessarily reflect the considered views of the Commonwealth, or indicate a commitment to a particular course of action.

What do you want to see in this newsletter?

We want to ensure that the ATDP Update contains the information you want to know about the program. We've changed the format this year and added some additional information.

If you have any suggestions for content or any questions about ATDP – we want to know!

We're also interested in any positive stories or processes that are working well in your region. We'd love to hear about:

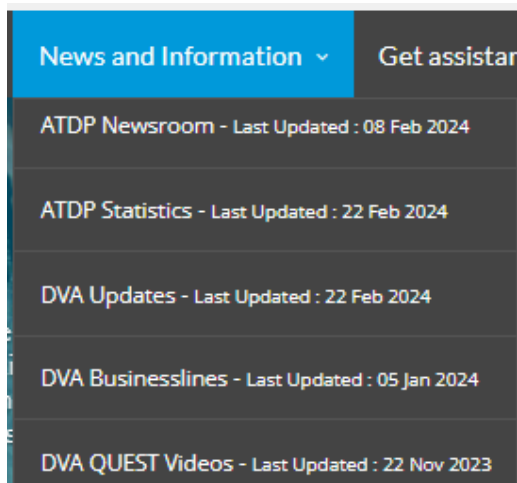
- Your Community of Practice
- Engaging training activities happening in your location
- Anything else that you'd like to share with the Advocate community that may help others.

You can contact us at ATDPEnquiries@dva.gov.au to discuss further.



ATDP Statistics

Whilst we might love numbers, we appreciate that they're not for everyone. ATDP Statistics will no longer be provided in this newsletter. If you have a love for numbers please go visit our website. You can find the statistics by looking under the **News and Information** Tab and selecting ATDP Statistics.



Or you can use this shortcut:

[ATDP Statistics](#)

Name Change: The **ATDP Community News** tab has had a name change. It's now the **News and Information** tab to reflect the information you can find here.

♥ ♥ ♥

February is known as the month of love! Valentine's Day - marriage proposals, romantic dinners, flowers and chocolates. In the spirit of the month of love, I thought I'd share with you a link from the Australian War Memorial. The AWM has put together a collection inspired by Valentine's Day entitled [Love and War | Australian War Memorial \(awm.gov.au\)](https://www.awm.gov.au/love-and-war/). I hope you enjoy ♥!

With thanks,

Michelle

On behalf of the ATDP Delivery Team

From the Development Team

Businesslines

As of 5th January 2024, there have been an additional 11 Businesslines uploaded to the ATDP website. These releases are provided to share information to the advocacy community regarding changes and updates to DVA legislation, policies and programs.

Please note: These are internal DVA documents, therefore any links contained will not work on external computer networks.

The 11 new Businesslines you can access at [DVA Businessline Newsroom](#) are:

Expansion of catalogue of updates medical impairment assessment (MIA) forms for assessing compensation claims under the MRCA and VEA	Evidence to support pay-related allowances included in normal earnings under the MRCA	Establishing Commonwealth-funded superannuation amounts from non CSC funds
Work bonus bank	New prescribed cancers for DRCA (firefighters)	Increases to rent assistance and education scheme allowances
Compensation claims communication standards policy	Insertion of updates MIAs for compensation claims under the MRCA and VEA	Rent assistance portability and employment program income
Acute support package – expanded eligibility	Update to DRCA ADF Firefighter scheme	

Continuing Professional Development

ATDP are continuing work in the CPD space, to refresh the current program offerings based on feedback received from the advocacy community.

Updates regarding work in this area will be available via the ATDP newsroom as we move through the process.

Social Media and DVA Website

Further work has occurred in the social media and online visibility areas.

You may see a short article on the DVA website, and further social media posts that encourage veterans and their families to seek support from ESOs who have affiliated advocates trained through ATDP available to assist. The posts also highlight that services are provided free of charge, or with a small administration fee.

These posts direct veterans and their families to the Advocacy Register to search for ESOs who can assist with their needs.

RTO Update

Combined Level 1 Pilots

A pilot program for Combined Level 1 using face-to-face delivery was conducted in Canberra during the period 6-8 Feb (Modules 1 and 2). Module 3 will be delivered in Canberra 16-18 Apr 24. Seven ACT-based Advocates are participating in this program.

A third pilot program for Combined Level 1 is being planned to be conducted during the period February to April 2024. The program will be conducted via the Zoom platform. Dates will be:

- 15 Feb 24 – Introduction
- 5-7 Mar 24 – Modules 1 and 2
- 30 Apr - 2 May 24 – Module 3

Trainees will be required to complete several eLearning packages during the gaps in the program.

Six new starters – those that have not already commenced (or have just 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.

ATDP Compensation Advocate's Handbook

An amended version of the ATDP Compensation Advocate's Handbook has been released and uploaded to the DVA website. Changes include:

- Information of catastrophic injuries and diseases added to Chapter 4.B.16 and 4.C.8.8.3
- Information on oaths and affirmations added to Chapter 2.E.6
- Information on onus of proof added at Chapter 2.E.2

Note that the current version of the Handbook is Amendment 19 (amendments are listed on Page 4). Advocates should ensure that they are always referring to the latest version. The Handbook is available through the DVA Homepage at Get Support > For advocates and organisations > Advocacy handbooks.

<https://www.dva.gov.au/get-support/advocates-organisations/advocacy-handbooks>

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

If you are interested in this role, please contact atdpenquiries@dva.gov.au.

Darryl Proud, National Training Manager
Major Training Services



**Major Training
Services**

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 refreshment 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.

It is hoped to have one in Townsville in February and there will be one on the 26th March in Bundaberg, then Brisbane West in June and Darwin in July. Those able to attend these mentoring workshops should nominate through their nominated person at their ESO or notify PSO1 or the Regional Manager.

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. There are still online workshops available.

CPD

The CPD Policy document was discussed at the Regional Managers meeting in Melbourne and should be finalized early in the New Year. 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 first Level 1 Pilot for both Wellbeing and Compensation has been completed. Future candidates can express interest by contacting their PSO or the Regional Manager. A mentor is not required for this program.

Level 4 Nominations

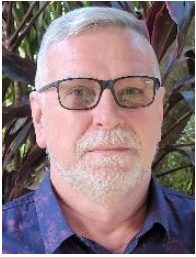
It is not regarded that there is a great demand for Level 4 qualified advocates and there is a very limited number of qualified mentors, consequently, it is expected that there will only be a few in each Region. Those wishing to nominate need to contact their Regional Manager.

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 ATDP Website. Some of the topics are Authorised Person role, Demand Management, Mentor Admin, Negotiating a CPD Event, What to expect as a trainee, RPL.

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Region 2 Update (NSW/ACT/WA)



2024 – A New Start

This year will see the continuation of the DVA [Veterans' Legislation Reform](#) process. As Advocates we will need to be cognisant of the implications for current recipients of DVA support and we should be preparing the Veteran Community for the implications from the legislation reform.

[Case Study examples](#) are provided to assist Veterans and their Families understand the possible implications from the new legislation. Also provided by DVA is a [PowerPoint presentation](#) of the Case Studies. While the Case Studies are sketchy at the moment, they may start the conversation and make Veterans aware of the legislation change.

As more details are provided by DVA in the coming months Advocates will be able to better inform the Veteran Community.

Veteran population statistics

As a follow for Advocates, DVA provides a web page on [Statistics about the veteran population | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#). The statistics provided include:

- Treatment population;
- Top 20 accepted conditions;
- Local Government Area (LGA) profile;
- Federal electorate profile; and
- Others.

Combined Level 1 Program

This year sees another pilot of the Combined Level 1 Program. The first pilot program identified improvement to training materials and methods and also the Candidates invited to participate. The second pilot program focuses on new starters (that is, they have not completed any eLearning and have not completed any WEL Milestones).

Claims processing time

I am regularly asked by Advocates and Veterans on how long it will take to process a compensation claim. My best response is to direct them to the DVA website page on [Claim processing times | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#). This provides not only a regularly updated list of types of claims and their number, but it also provides an indication of the average time for processing.

The web page also explains key terms and provides a glimpse into the DVA Workforce FTE.

Congratulations

I would like to congratulate Ricky Compensation L2, Melissa Compensation L1, David Compensation L1, and Richard Compensation L1 on achieving accreditation during the period.

Thanks for your dedication and hard work in supporting our Veteran Community. 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

"There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer." - Jimmy Doolittle
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Doolittle)

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 (Region 2)
rm2@atdp.org.au
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Region 3 Update (SA/VIC/TAS)



"Those who ignore mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them. Unfortunately, those of us who learn from them are doomed to watch everyone else repeat them." Anon.

A very Happy and Healthy 2024 to you all and to your families and loved ones.

Like most of us, I guess, I hope that the bumps in the road that was 2023 were just that. We all take stock at the start of the New Year and reset our goals to something realistically achievable. Of course that is not to say we should lower our sights just so we can achieve something less than satisfactory.

Australia Day Honours

Sincere congratulations to our fellow advocates on recognition of their service to veterans over many years with the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia in the recent Australia Day list.

Mr. Graeme Leonard Bland, Bull Creek WA 6149
Mr. David John Chalk, Gordonvale QLD 4865

ATDP Communication

If you are reading this you are very likely a practicing advocate, or have been one and retain an interest in the provision of Wellbeing and Compensation advocacy support to our veterans and their families. One of the cornerstones on which ATDP was established was communication. In 2016, apart from the Strategic Governance Board (SGB) and the Capability Framework Management Group (CFMG), one of the first working groups established was the Engagement Panel.

A key member of the DVA support team was the Communications Manager, Caroline, who assisted the Engagement Panel in establishing the (then) weekly ATDP Update which quickly became monthly when it was realised that the editorial workload was unsustainable given all the other activities that members of the CFMG had to undertake such as establishing Regional Management Groups, sowing the seeds of CoPs, assessing on RPL programs and presenting the 'Roadshows' throughout the country to quickly make ESOs aware of the new training opportunities and to persuade TIP trained advocates to 'get onboard' the new ATDP qualification.

The ATDP Update quickly became the ‘heartbeat’ of the program. It was the key to ensuring that anyone with an interest in veteran advocacy knew exactly what was planned or in progress, how the various parts of the program were going – training, assessment, RPL, CPD (for advocates and for trainers and assessors) and key issues in the Regions. There are back copies of the ATDP Update on the ATDP website but, unfortunately, they only go back to July 2020 at which time the program was coping with the initial problems associated with adjusting to COVID travel and meeting restrictions. Following the Department assuming responsibility for the management and administration of ATDP in June 2021, production of the ATDP Update ceased with the October 2021 edition.

In July 2022 transfer of responsibility for ATDP from the Veteran and Family Policy Group (Community Policy) to the Veteran and Family Services Group under Michael Harper, the Victorian Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Secretary VEA Compensation and Support, occurred. This transfer of responsibilities saw acknowledgement of the need for revitalisation of the program and the ATDP Update was resurrected in February 2023. This positive signalling of re-engagement saw a readership of over 1,600 of the new issue. Unfortunately, readership of the two-monthly ATDP Update has fallen by around 70 percent over the course of the six issues since it was re-introduced. The other ‘advocacy’ publication, Advocacy News, was previously jointly edited by the ATDP Project Manager, Wayne and the CFMG Chair and commenced in late 2016. It, too, has suffered a significant decline in readership (of over 30 percent) in the past year.

Q. Can you put your finger on why advocates have significantly reduced interest the two publications?

A. What a great question! And thanks for asking. I think the reason is pretty clear when I think about it.

Basically, I think ATDP management have lost sight of the original objectives of the program. Personally, I don’t think the ATDP ‘Blueprint’ was DVA management’s preferred option back in 2015 when the ESORT and the Minister approved the program. Since early 2020 when COVID ‘struck’ the Department’s support of the program as it existed then and was, arguably, going very successfully, has been significantly reduced in almost every aspect. Volunteer involvement in program management and administration is minimal as is the encouragement of any face-to-face activity including assessment. Both of these aspects were key elements in the program’s ongoing success.

The publications, Advocacy News and ATDP Update, are no longer reflective of the interests of the roughly 1000 volunteers involved as either advocates, support officers or mentees. The publications have become all about DVA and what the Department is doing – this is particularly true of the Advocacy News but just about all the content in the ATDP Update, apart from the Regional Managers’ Reports, is also about DVA and the program management. Few are interested in page after page of statistics (often of dubious reliability) or update after update on items such as a Level 3 Wellbeing Unit of Competency or the Level 4 Compensation Unit which have both been talked about since 2017. Seven years on and little progress is visible.

Given past experience demonstrates that effective, regular and reliable communication is one of the most important aspects of successful management of ATDP (in fact of any program or enterprise) and a fairly reliable indicator of the ‘health’ of the program, it is to be hoped that this alarming loss of interest in advocacy in general and ATDP publications in particular, will quickly be reversed.

Continuing Professional Development

I am aware of concerns in respect of the recording of CPD points for some activities – particularly those requiring assessment by the CPD Team such as seminars and other activities not pre-approved like First Aid and Mentor e-learning refresher activities.

With well over 100 advocates ‘not current’ or who have not undertaken any CPD for between three and five years and a Department moratorium in place on corrective action, I understand that the CPD Team has put assessments ‘on hold’ until the new CPD policy is determined and approved and such matters as how CPD is to be managed and whether it is to be a points-based or an hours-based system are clear.

External event applications and attendance sheets, as well as professional papers, should continue to be submitted and assessments will be made and appropriate records updated as soon as the CPD policy and administrative system is clear.

In the meantime points for pre-approved activities continue to be processed by the Support Team.

Recent Activity

As the New Year gets underway the C & A schedule has been quickly off and running with a couple of key programs already run or under way.

A Level 3 (Compensation) Consolidation and Assessment program was run over the period 30th January to 1st February with seven candidates. With the recent significant increase in new delegates and ongoing pressure to reduce the dreaded claims 'backlog', word on the street is that there is a corresponding increase in demand for Level 3 advocates to engage in appeals to the Veterans' Review Board and seek redress of decisions that may incorporate errors.

If your ESO or CoP does not have a Level 3 advocate I urge you to consider taking up a leadership role and gaining your Level 3 Unit of Competency.

Another big step forward was taken when the first module of the second pilot program of the combined Wellbeing/Compensation Level 1 UoC was conducted in Canberra from 6th – 8th February. The first module has covered Wellbeing and candidates now complete the eLearning associated with the three Acts covering compensation before attending Module 2 from 16th to 18th April. A key outcome from the pilot will be determining the optimum time between modules which gives students enough time to do the eLearning but not so long that all the learning is forgotten by the time they get to Module 2.

A complete listing of programs planned through to the end of March is available on the ATDP website at the foot of the homepage.

Assessment Status Report

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

29 Nov 23 - 05 Feb 24

Candidates paneled for Consolidation & Assessment	Candidates ready for Consolidation & Assessment	Advocates waiting for Recognition of Prior Learning
3x Compensation Level 1 1x Compensation Level 2	1x Compensation Level 1 1x Wellbeing Level 1 1x Wellbeing Level 2	2x Compensation Level 1 3x Compensation Level 2 2x Compensation Level 3 7x Wellbeing Level 2
Mentor Notifications (C&A)	New Enrolments	Archived
1x Compensation Level 1 1x Compensation Level 2 1x Wellbeing Level 1	1x Compensation Level 1 2x Wellbeing Level 1	1x Wellbeing Level 2
SOA Issued	Program Attendance	Workshops Completed
2x Compensation Level 1 1x Compensation Level 2	4x Compensation Level 1 2x Compensation Level 2 3x Compensation Level 3	1x Mentoring Workshop

Congratulations

Congratulations to Paul, Compensation Level 2 (Vic), together with Wayne and Jeff, both 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

Clearly, the Department is considering the whole structure of ATDP at the moment with last year's Advocacy Working Party to be reconvened and the CPD policy to be finalised. It is important that while we are vigilant in respect of changes that would threaten the quality of the program and therefore the standards of service to our veterans and their families, we continue to focus on the provision of a professional standard of wellbeing and compensation services.

In regard to the former, if you have any concerns or suggestions regarding any aspect of the ATDP please let your Regional Manager know and drop an information copy of your email to your PSO so the management team are aware of your thoughts. Perhaps your correspondence might even be included as a 'Letter to the Editor' in the Update so that practicing advocates can consider and discuss ATDP issues.

Until April . . .

Keep safe. Roger



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

Advancing Advocacy: Pioneering Face-to-Face Training for Veterans' Welfare

Empowering Advocates, Enhancing Veteran Support Through Collaborative Learning in Canberra

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) through the Advocacy Training and Development Program has recently concluded an innovative face-to-face training program, marking a significant milestone in advocacy training and development. Held from February 6th to 8th, 2024, in Canberra, this course brought together participants for a comprehensive learning experience focused on Military Welfare advocacy. Unique in its approach, this session represented only the second instance of a combined compensation and welfare course being offered. However, it was the first of its kind to be conducted in a face-to-face setting, highlighting the DVA's commitment to enhancing the support network for veterans through direct engagement and practical training.

The course covered essential aspects of advocacy within the military community, equipping attendees with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the complexities of compensation claims and welfare support. By bringing participants together in person, the program fostered a collaborative learning environment where individuals could share experiences, discuss challenges, and develop strategies for effective advocacy. The inclusion of Military Wellbeing advocacy in the curriculum underscored the growing recognition of the diverse needs within the veteran community and the importance of a holistic approach to support.

This pioneering program not only signifies a step forward in the professional development of veterans' advocates but also reinforces the DVA's dedication to improving the welfare and compensation processes for Australia's veteran community. With its successful completion, the course sets a new standard for future training initiatives, promising further advancements in the support and advocacy for those who have served.

Very many thanks to Darryl Proud, Ian Thompson and Roger Greene for imparting their many years of advocacy knowledge to the 7 course participants.

Do you know someone that would like to become a Military Compensation Advocate? Please contact your ESO to talk about your suitability.

Lucinda Casey
Trainee Advocate
Veterans' Support Centre Page, ACT



Back Row (L to R): Stephen Petersen, Noel Kirk, Lucy Casey, Aaron Pickering, Ward Gainey.
Seated: Shane Norenbergs – all from the Veteran Support Centre in Page, ACT, Roger Greene – ATDP Trainer/Assessor, Darryl Proud ATDP National Training Manager, Ian Thompson – ATDP Trainer/Assessor and Anthony Barnett – Braidwood RSL NSW

ATDP Assessment Programs and Workshops

Note: Attendance is by invitation only

C&A and Mentoring Programs are updated regularly. For those new to the program you can keep up to date with program information by visiting the [ATDP - Home Page](#) and scrolling to the bottom of the page.



Wellbeing L1 C&A (WA Online)
5-Mar-2024 (Online)



Wellbeing L2 C&A (WA online)
12-Mar-2024 (Online)



Compensation L2 C&A
19-Mar-2024 (Online)



Compensation L1 C&A
26-Mar-2024 (Online)

ATDP News and Information

The News and Information tab will help you keep up to date with the latest articles and news that relate to advocates and the wider veteran community. There are currently five categories:

[ATDP Newsroom](#)

Provides information about ATDP specific activities and other important information relevant to the provision of the Course in Military Advocacy.

[ATDP Statistics](#)

Statistics on advocate and trainee demographics as well as mentor number breakdowns. These are updated monthly.

[DVA Updates](#)

DVA news and information relevant to supporting veterans and families. This may include information that can be found on the DVA website, e-news and VetAffairs.

[DVA Businesslines](#)

Contains DVA businesslines which provide information about changes and updates in DVA legislation, policies and programs which may be of interest to the advocacy community.

[DVA QUEST Videos](#)

Contains DVA QUEST training videos which provide information about changes and updates in DVA legislation, policies and programs which may be of interest to the advocacy community.

How to Guides

Please go to [ATDP - How To Guides](#) to view our current list of How to Guides.

ATDP Contact Details

For all ATDP **General Enquiries** please email ATDPEnquiries@dva.gov.au. To contact your **Program Support Officers** (PSO) and Regional Manager (RM):

State	PSO	PSO Contact	RM	RM Contact
Qld - NT	William	ATDP.PSO1@dva.gov.au 0472 704 592	Dr Bob Grandin	rm1@atdp.org.au 0409 615 948
NSW - ACT - WA	Samone	ATDP.PSO2@dva.gov.au 0472 674 665	Geoff Harrison	rm2@atdp.org.au 0499 799 351
VIC – SA - TAS	Phil	ATDP.PSO3@dva.gov.au 0472 704 948	Roger Greene	rm3@atdp.org.au 0411 431 189
All	Radhe Team Leader	ATDPEnquiries@dva.gov.au 0499 982 381		