

Dear Colleagues

Recent news of changes to the governance of the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) was shared with the ESO Round Table, through the ATDP governance committees, on the ATDP website, and using the extensive distribution lists for the *Advocacy News* newsletter and the *ATDP Update*.

In recognition of the maturity of the ATDP and the need to place it on a sustainable footing to meet the future requirements of advocacy, the governance and management of the ATDP program will move from the current committee structure and transition to a new model, with the administration managed by DVA. This change will expand the scope for our partner Registered Training Organisation to take on the National Training Manager responsibilities and to support the Continuing Professional Development program. The Strategic Governance Board and Capability Management Framework Group are being dissolved as part of the changes. There will be a clearer legal underpinning for this specific program as a result – an issue raised in recent reviews.

I would like to thank all of those in the veteran community who volunteer or work to provide veterans and their families the help they need.

I especially want to thank the ESO volunteers who have chosen over the years to devote their time, energy, and experience to developing a training program for advocates and then to create the ATDP. Many of these volunteers continue to provide expert industry and training advice, and time away from their families to provide training, assessment, and development activities for current and future ESO advocates.

I have heard that some people in the ESO advocacy community are concerned that these changes will affect the advocacy services delivered by ESOs, and the role of volunteer advocates. I want to be very clear that this is not the intention.

The changes to the management of the ATDP do not include any changes to the current ESO model of managing and delivering their volunteer and paid advocacy services. The changes are to governance and management of training and development specifically. We wish to see the ATDP's current volunteer trainers and assessors continue to help trainee advocates achieve their qualifications for as long as suits them.

The changes will help ATDP continue into the future and ensure that the gains made by the volunteer ATDP governance committees continue to deliver benefits for veterans and their families through ESOs' advocacy services. ATDP's role is still to design and make available nationally consistent training courses and development activities for ESO advocates with a focus on what veterans and their families need.

ESOs can continue to nominate people for advocate training through ATDP.

ESOs will still provide wellbeing and compensation advocacy services at no charge to veterans and their families. ESOs established advocacy services many years ago, and this key principle has not changed.

DVA continues to support ESOs that provide advocacy services to veterans and their families. This support is from the training organised by the ATDP and through the BEST grant program to cover some of their costs.

To help share this message about the change in how the ATDP is managed, and what is not affected by this change, I encourage you to forward this information to your advocate networks and anyone you think might be interested in what is happening with the ATDP.

DVA is working with stakeholders get their expert advice on transitioning to the new governance arrangements. Day-to-day delivery of advocacy should not be impacted.

If you have any further questions about these changes please contact Carly Partridge who is the DVA Executive responsible for the ATDP by writing to Carly.Partridge@dva.gov.au. If you have any questions about the ATDP including training opportunities please contact ATDP.Enquiries@dva.gov.au.

Regards

Liz



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