



Advocacy Training and Development Program

Advocacy News

December 2021 - Issue 18

This update will be short and sweet. December has come up fast this year, hasn't it? I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped with the program over the year, especially considering the impact of the disruptions we faced again in 2021. I want to particularly thank everyone involved with the delivery of courses and assessment online to help advocates finalise their training. Since August, the ATDP has provided access to online assessment for 105 advocates over 12 assessment activities, which helps ex-service organisations to deliver advocacy services to veterans and their families. While it might seem that circumstances forced this change on us, some ESOs are telling us that they are finding this option easier and less costly, so I expect it will remain a feature of course delivery in the years to come.

While we thought 2020 was tough, 2021 presented us with new challenges. Together we have managed the change of governance for the program from the previous volunteer-led committees to management by DVA. I am well aware that the ability of the ATDP to keep delivering high quality training throughout this period was primarily due to the support of our dedicated volunteers, and I want to thank you all for your untiring commitment to serving the best interest of veterans and their families.

I also want to advise you about an issue affecting the ATDP website. As you may be aware, there is an increasing focus on cybersecurity globally, with some very real threats that governments and the community need to monitor and guard against. There is personal data held on the ATDP database, so we have been working with an external ICT company to confirm the integrity of the systems that underpin the website. On its advice, we have removed access to the ATDP website until we can ensure that the data is protected. In the meantime, we have created a PDF version of the Advocacy Register, which is available through a latest news item on DVA's web page (www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news-veterans/accredited-advocate-register-down-maintenance) so that veterans, their families and their representatives can find an ESO that provides advocacy service. Please contact ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au if you have any questions.

I know that working in a COVID-19 environment has not been easy but it has been wonderful to see your continued support for the ATDP. The Department is deeply appreciative of the role you play to assist ESOs in giving our veterans and their families the quality advocacy support they need.

As we enter the holiday season this year, I extend my thanks to you all and wish you a happy, safe, and fun holiday and new year.

Merry Christmas

Alison Hale

Assistant Secretary, Community Policy

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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