



Advocacy News

Issue 5, June 2017

Welcome to the fifth issue of *Advocacy News*.

This newsletter keeps you up-to-date with what's happening in the transition from TIP (Training and Information Program) to the ATDP – the Advocacy Training and Development Program.

In this edition we mark the passing of John Printz, an important leader in advocacy training. We see how many people are now involved in the ATDP, we learn about the recognition of prior learning process from an experienced TIP practitioner, and we address some of the myths that have been circulating about VITA insurance.

1. Message from the Chair

The Advocacy Training and Development Program recently reached a significant milestone – it has been officially accredited as a nationally-recognised training program by the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

The training company contracted to the ATDP, Major Training Services, has been working closely with the Australian Skills Quality Authority since the ATDP's inception to ensure our training programs meet the national standards. Accreditation is simply the final sign-off in this process.

We can also proudly display the 'Nationally Recognised Training' logo – shown below.



ATDP advocates who have undertaken the ATDP Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Level 2 process and met the competency standards will receive a Statement of Attainment showing that they are an ATDP Accredited Advocate at that level.

As you can appreciate, it will take a few weeks for advocates to receive their certificate as nearly 300 advocates have achieved competency for ATDP Level 2 through the RPL process.

The complete course documentation is now available on the ATDP website: www.atdp.org.au

Jenny Walker
Chair, Strategic Governance Board
Advocacy Training and Development Program

2. Vale John Printz

On 25 May this year, the Australian ex-service community lost one of its most influential advocates with the death of John Printz. 'JP' worked closely with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) on many projects to benefit veterans and their families. As well as being a driving force behind the Training and Information Program (TIP), JP was a pension officer, welfare officer and advocate for 31 years.

JP championed a national approach to advocacy as National TIP Chair, and then played a significant role in establishing the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP).

In recognition of JP's passion, dedication and commitment to the ex-service community, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1992 and the Centenary Medal in 2001.

JP had many friends at DVA and he will be sorely missed.

The following is an extract from a eulogy delivered at JP's funeral by Roger Greene, his ATDP Deputy Regional Manager:

It is my sad honour to pay tribute to a giant of a man who I first met in 1966, John having just returned from South Vietnam, and to recognise the achievements of a benevolent giant who had a deep concern for veterans and their families.

In the mid-1980s, JP and a few others began running training sessions to assist veterans in learning about veterans' compensation legislation so they could assist others in claiming for their Defence-related disabilities. This was the genesis of what was to become TIP.

JP and his close associate John Methven then tackled what they saw to be major problems with Vietnam veterans' physical and emotional welfare. In partnership with DVA, they influenced great advancements in research into PTSD, development of residential lifestyle courses which are still run today for veterans and their partners, changes in rehabilitation legislation, and the health studies into Vietnam veterans and their families.

In the early 2000s, JP and a few supporters started a centre in Sale which was an identifiable focal point where veterans could contact other veterans, and access reliable assistance in dealing with their welfare and compensation problems. This led to the Regional Veterans' Centre Project, which continues to provide support for veterans in both metropolitan and regional Victoria.

For over 30 years JP was involved, one way or another, in almost every advancement of support services and facilities available to the veteran community – both serving and ex-service and their dependants.

While JP was a big man with a big heart it was Helen, his wife, who kept his heart beating and she is also owed a great debt of gratitude by all veterans past and present and those who are yet to benefit from John's insight and devotion to veterans' welfare.

The three-year-old son of a veteran once asked JP, 'Are you a giant?' JP replied, 'Yes, but I'm a friendly one.' He might also have said, 'and a caring one'.

Haere ra, JP

Farewell Kiwi and thanks for everything.

RWG



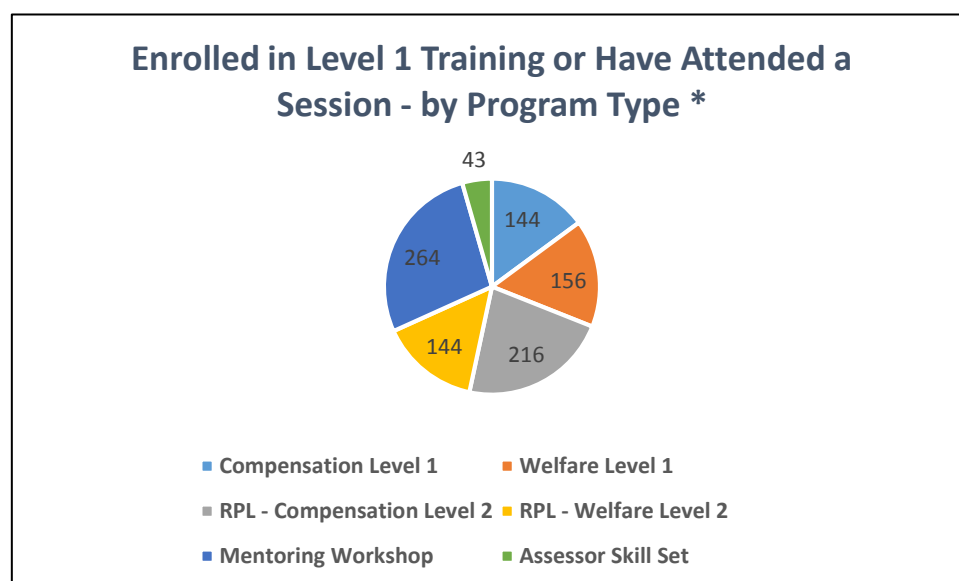
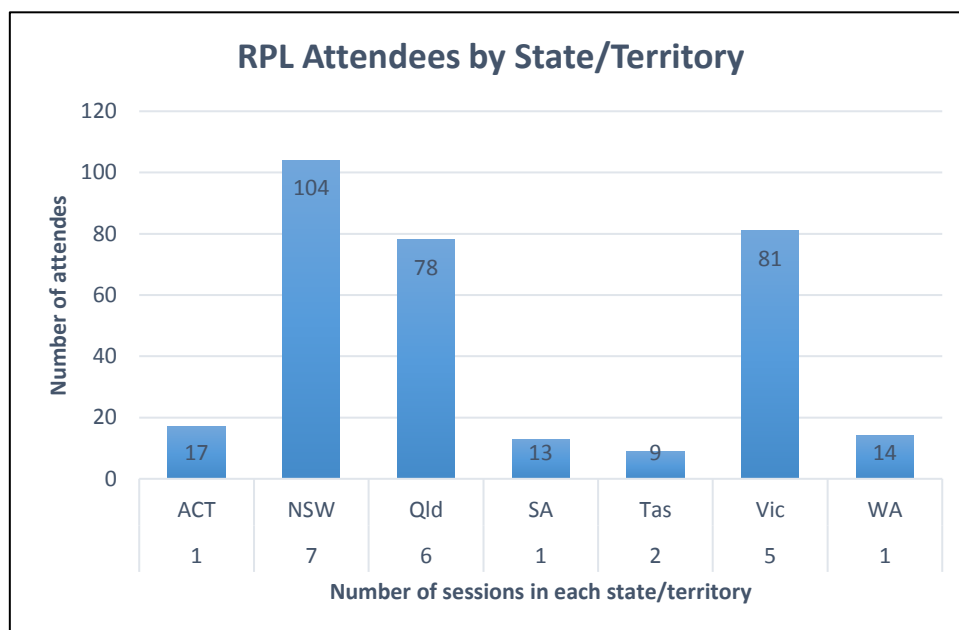
3. End of financial year statistics

The ATDP is making excellent progress in rolling out its training and recognition of prior learning programs.

By 30 June 2017, over 300 TIP-trained advocates will have undergone the ATDP Recognition of Prior Learning Level 2 process, completed an ATDP Mentoring Workshop and/or an ATDP Assessor Training Program at one of the 23 sessions that have been held around Australia over the last 12 months.

Another 300 candidates are working through their ATDP Compensation Level 1 and/or ATDP Welfare Level 1 logbooks.

Here is a breakdown of those numbers:



* The numbers do not add up to 600 because some people have done more than one program so they have been counted more than once.

4. Personal story – John Fenton

Transition from TIP to ATDP – My Experience

As a TIP3 practitioner I want to continue to provide my client base in the Penrith/Nepean/Blue Mountains area with the best pension/welfare support I can, so I was interested in finding out about the ATDP.

For the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, we were asked to provide evidence of recent activity and the level of training achieved. This was all information I had on hand, and I provided the following documents:

1. Copies of my TIP3, Welfare Refresher and Pension Officer Refresher Certificates
2. My Veterans' Practitioner Activity Database (VPAD) Summary
3. Recently completed Lifestyle Questionnaire and Lifestyle Rating forms



The RPL two-day course was divided into two parts: Compensation or Welfare RPL, and the Mentoring Workshop. For RPL, we were invited to discuss with the subject matter expert and the assessor our understanding of the tasks involved in advocacy, such as planning interviews, completing documentation and maintaining records. There were also simulated case studies to demonstrate legislative knowledge and a quiz – an open book concept allowing use of a Pension Officer Handbook or the DVA/CLIK website.

I was pleased to see that the enthusiasm and knowledge displayed by the facilitators was exceptional.

The Mentoring Workshop discussed the value of bringing a disciplined approach to mentoring and why the mentee (yes, that is the correct term) is asked to maintain a hardcopy Workplace Experience Log in which the mentor makes comments. The mentor also submits an electronic report to ATDP so that when the trainee does face-to-face training their level of competence can be confirmed.

The program was very informative, and it was satisfying to see that the skills and knowledge gained through my years of experience in assisting clients met the ATDP Advocate Level 2 requirement.

Personally, I was pleased to see that the enthusiasm and knowledge displayed by the facilitators was exceptional. Each of the facilitators had themselves been through the transition – they had all been members of the TIP Training Consultative Group NSW/ACT.

Attending RPL Level 2 was a very worthwhile step, not only in fast-tracking my accreditation at Level 3 when that is available, but also in enhancing my skills through continuous improvement and having them recognised by the Registered Training Organisation.

John Fenton JP
ATDP Advocate Level 2
Penrith RSL

5. VITA insurance – fact or fiction?

FICTION	FACT
<p>1. <i>“VITA* coverage for TIP-trained practitioners ends on 30 June 2017.”</i></p> <p>* VITA is the Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association</p>	<p>VITA insurance will continue to cover TIP-trained practitioners until everyone who wishes to undertake recognition of prior learning (RPL) has had the opportunity to attend an RPL session so as to achieve accreditation under the ATDP, and as long as their knowledge and experience remains up-to-date. (Under TIP this meant attending a refresher course at least every three years, and with ATDP it means participating in continuing professional development.)</p> <p>This means there is no set cut-off date for VITA insurance coverage of TIP-trained practitioners. However, all practitioners are encouraged to seek RPL as soon as it is offered at their level, as there will be a time beyond which cover for TIP-trained practitioners can no longer be extended.</p>
<p>2. <i>“Paid advocates are not covered by the VITA Professional Indemnity insurance policy.”</i></p>	<p>Advocates who are paid by an ex-service organisation (ESO) which is a member of VITA are covered by VITA's policy. Advocates who are paid by the client for advocacy services are not covered. (However, advocates can recover genuine expenses from their client up to a limit of \$50.)</p>
<p>3. <i>“TIP- or ATDP-trained advocates acting for an ESO which is a VITA member are automatically covered by VITA's insurance.”</i></p>	<p>It is a requirement of VITA's insurance policies that an advocate has a Letter of Authorisation from their ESO. The letter must be from a member of the ESO's executive, be dated, and state that it authorises the named advocate to act on that ESO's behalf in providing advocacy services.</p> <p>It must also state the level to which the advocate is authorised to act – that is, Level 1, 2, 3 or 4 – and that the advocate's skills and knowledge are up-to-date. (Under TIP this meant attending a refresher course at least every three years, and with ATDP it means participating in continuing professional development.)</p> <p>If the advocate does not have a Letter of Authorisation the insurer will not accept liability.</p>
<p>4. <i>“VITA's professional indemnity insurance policy covers paid employees but not volunteers.”</i></p>	<p>VITA's insurance policy document states that it insures its members (the ESOs) and 'their employees'. Further, it states that an 'employee' includes a 'volunteer worker'.</p>
<p>5. <i>“Advocates and pension officers don't need professional indemnity insurance.”</i></p>	<p>Professional indemnity cover is required when a representative of a VITA member provides another party advice in respect of welfare benefits, services and disability pensions.</p> <p>Advocates who do not provide advice do not need professional indemnity insurance. If the services being provided to veterans do not require accreditation (see the list on the last page of this newsletter) then professional indemnity insurance is not needed.</p> <p>For example, some ESOs have members who visit hospitalised veterans simply to provide support and companionship. As no advice or information about DVA benefits is involved, no liability exists which would require VITA insurance cover.</p>

FICTION	FACT
6. <i>“Level 3 and 4 TIP-trained advocates are not covered by VITA insurance if they are successful at ATDP RPL Level 2.”</i>	Whether a Level 3 and Level 4 TIP Advocate has done RPL Level 2 does not affect VITA coverage for their Level 3 and Level 4 work, so long as their ESO continues to authorise them to act on its behalf in the Level 3 or Level 4 advocacy role.
7. <i>“VITA insurance covers damages for loss of reputation or emotional harm.”</i>	<p>The VITA professional indemnity policy responds to claims by other parties in relation to the advice given by a VITA member’s representative. Subject to the policy’s terms and conditions, this policy covers VITA’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • claim investigation costs • defence costs • court attendance costs • compensatory civil penalties, and • public relations. <p>The allegation against a VITA member must be that its advice was incorrect and that has resulted in the other party sustaining a financial loss.</p>

More information about VITA is available from the ATDP website: www.atdp.org.au

6. Are TIP courses still running?

Each ATDP region decided whether it would continue to run TIP courses in the first half of 2017 so that Level 1 and Level 2 TIP practitioners could finish or refresh their training before undergoing RPL for accreditation under the ATDP system.

TIP courses have now finished. The last course was conducted by the TIP NSW-ACT team earlier this year.

Ian Thompson, Trevor Plymin and Allan Thomas (*seen at right*) presented the final Compensation

Tri-Legislation Course in Canberra in May.

For information about the next stage of your training, please see the ATDP website or contact the Administration Support Officer in your region. Their contact details are listed on the DVA website: www.dva.gov.au – search for ‘regional management groups’.



7. Contact us

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about ATDP in general or about this newsletter, please send an email to ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au

For more information about ATDP, visit the website: www.atdp.org.au

Please share this newsletter with anyone you know who may be interested, and let us know if you would like to be added or removed from the distribution list by sending an email to ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au

ATDP ACCREDITATION

ATDP accreditation is required for members of ex-service organisations who provide **information, options** and/or **advice** about accessing entitlements, benefits and services.

Any activities that do not involve providing information, options and/or advice—such as driving, hospital and home visits, social activities, domestic assistance and home maintenance—do not require ATDP accreditation.

NB. The following list is intended to provide an indication of the types of activities that require ATDP accreditation. It is not intended to show which services require additional certification, skills or qualifications such as police checks or training in counselling. This information is available from your ex-service organisation (ESO).

Which activities require ATDP accreditation?

Activity	YES	NO
Prepare and/or lodge liability, compensation and income support claims	✓	
Prepare requests for review of DVA decisions	✓	
Prepare appeals for review by the Veterans' Review Board or the Administrative Appeals Tribunal	✓	
Provide representation at hearings by the Veterans' Review Board and Administrative Appeals Tribunal	✓	
Provide information and/or referrals for health, rehabilitation, housing, transport, household assistance, education schemes, and other government or community services and benefits	✓	
Provide advice and information about government services for transitioning from the military to civilian life	✓	
Provide information and/or referrals for medical, financial, legal and police matters	✓	
Provide information and/or referrals for funeral arrangements and bereavement assistance	✓	
Visits to home, hospital and aged care facilities that do not include the provision of information or advice		✓
Personal services such as researching and delivering eulogies, driving, shopping trips, domestic assistance, child care and home maintenance		✓
Administration, such as for ESO clubs, offices and day clubs		✓
Organising and conducting social, family and sporting activities		✓
If qualified, providing professional services on behalf of an ESO that require non-ATDP qualifications, such as counselling and sports coaching		✓
Providing or administering services and support on behalf of the ESO, such as financial support, scholarships, accommodation, welfare checks and mentoring children		✓
Training or instruction on behalf of the ESO, such as cooking, craft, gardening, and home and car maintenance		✓