Advocacy Training and Development Program

ATDP Update   November 2020

Roger's view

Hullo again,

Only 32 shopping days to Christmas (in the 'old' calculation)!

Some better news at last. In response to at least two enquiries that I know of, as to why ATDP programs were not proposed to resume until January when Veterans' Health Week face to face gatherings were being sponsored by the Department in November, I received advice last week that face to face programs may resume. The advice included a request to include the message from the DVA Senior Leadership team, which is on the following page, in Update.

The Training Team have been working on program options but, as you would realise from the "Message to Advocates", apart from checking availability and suitability of venues and Presenters/Assessors, we also need to confirm availability of candidates and ensure our COVIDSafe plans are in order. So, if you are contacted by the Support Team regarding attendance at a Consolidation and Assessment Program would you please respond as quickly as possible after making sure that you have all the necessary documentation available to support the entries in your Workplace Experience log. We are aiming to run the first programs in early December and following the eight month 'break' will be looking at only a short Christmas/New Year break if possible.

As I write this the availability of DVA meeting rooms is unclear due to COVIDSafe policies so we are investigating the use of suitable ESO premises, particularly in the Eastern States while travel by assessors to WA is problematic. Many of you reading this will have undertaken RPL or C&A and will be familiar with the meeting room needs and how they might be met within your local COVIDSafe rules. So, if you think your ESO could help out by hosting a program we would appreciate knowing.

Anyway … it is so good to think that we might be able to make some progress at last.

The training team look forward to catching up soon so stay safe – and keep your distance,

Roger

Roger W Greene OAM JP
Chair
Capability Framework Management Group
ADVOCACY TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM   Phone: 0411 431 189

Message to ATDP Advocates from Don Spinks AM, Repatriation Commissioner

As a result of the lifting of the majority of state border restrictions and at the request of some from the veteran community, DVA has undertaken a review of the current suspension of face to face training for ATDP and agreed to lift the suspension and is planning for face to face training to recommence soon. When the decision was made in August to extend the suspension until 1 January 2021, it was in the context of the health situation at the time – and it is great to see the situation has improved significantly since then. To ensure the wellbeing of those individuals undertaking the training there will need to be careful planning to ensure that program resumption is done in line with State restrictions and careful program scheduling will need to be done so that COVID plans are in place before any training can resume.
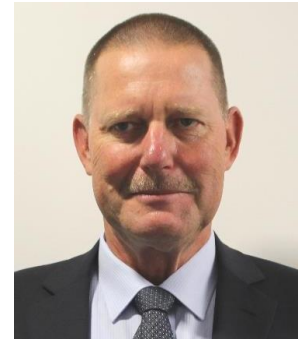
There have been important learnings from the period that we now anticipate emerging from in terms of how we connect and communicate. This has been the case within the Program, DVA more broadly and of course within the wider community. Despite the easing of restrictions, DVA has received feedback from a number of ESOs that they have appreciated the opportunity the suspension has provided to look at more flexible ways to deliver the training and assessment functions. We want to take this time to acknowledge the work of our ex-service organisations and particularly the advocate community, for their on-going patience and perseverance during what has been a particularly challenging year and their commitment to providing support to our veteran community

Don Spinks AM
Repariation Commissioner
Department of Veterans' Affairs
3rd November 2020

Advocate Survey

In order to ensure that a programme is producing the outcomes that are required accurate statistical records must be kept. Since the beginning of ATDP, the most accurate records for advocacy training have been maintained and consistently analysed.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has recently commissioned a study to be conducted by the University of New South Wales into the provision of advocacy services by ESOs. At no stage has anyone conducted or contacted ATDP for any information regarding the statistics we hold. We consider these statistics to be vital in the planning for where advocacy services are provided and who provides them.

A number of studies in the past have indicated that the volunteer advocate numbers are decreasing and those who remain have an increasing average age. This study is founded on such a theory but the enrolments in ATDP do not support this theory.

What may be of concern though is the attrition rate of those enrolees. At this stage the four year average of attrition is a little over at 30% and I think we need to be able to reduce this to a figure more like 20% to be able to maintain advocate levels and advocate experience over a longer period of time.

Covid-19 restrictions

Many states are now altering their cross-border requirements and relaxing requirements for venues. In the light of those changes we have begun to assess where we may be able to schedule assessment programs. The factors which will affect the recommencement includes the locations of greatest need from the point of view of advocacy provision, the location of our assessors and how they are able to get to the programs.

ATDP programs

There has allegedly been representation to the department about the way ATDP operates with respect to programs and an urging for more to be done online. As I have mentioned in previous issues, we have trialled this form of assessment and found it to be wanting in some regards.

DVA is now pushing for ATDP to do more online training however, ALL ATDP training is done either online or in the workplace by actually doing the job. Our face to face programs are for assessment purposes only and we do it that way because it is the cheapest option which is also likely to produce a reliable outcome.

Let's take the scenario of an apprentice. They learn almost all their trade on the job. They attend TAFE or another RTO for approximately 120 days in their apprenticeship period and they are assessed on a number of occasions by an assessor meeting them on the job and watching them perform a task. If ATDP were to attend each candidate, on a number of occasions in their workplace, the cost of assessment would be far too high. For that reason, the WEL and the evidence which supports the WEL entries, is of significance in the assessment process where we meet the candidates at one program, for revision of the knowledge elements and overall assessment.

Until next month.

Regards,

National Training Manager

Region 1 Update – Qld, NT

The distance learning Mentor Course is being trialled with a dozen Mentors for evaluation of the content and process. Initial feedback indicates that it is an appropriate course for Lead Mentors – eg. Regional Mentors, Trainers and Assessors plus CoP senior mentors. An abridged set of modules is being considered, to be placed upon the CPD activity site for all mentors to access and work through as time permits. Training will include the use of IT strategies and equipment by advocates, which it is argued will be the way of the future. Current pressure from DVA is to make training into online learning modes.

As I have been saying, pressure within the advocacy world has again highlighted the need for improved communication networks between communities of practice (CoPs) within the Region as ESOs, especially those that are remote, require support with the mentoring of new potential advocates. Mental health issues are creating frustration and anxiety about "what is happening?" I have been in contact with Brisbane West as the need for support has arisen and will be travelling to Townsville to meet with the CoP members. As we approach a significant turning point with the pandemic, it is hoped that support-based activity can be generated and we all regain the sense of working together.

Regards,
Dr Bob Grandin
A/g Manager, Regional Implementation Group 1

Region 2 Update – NSW, ACT, WA

Training

No formal training activities have been undertaken in RIG 2 during the reporting period.

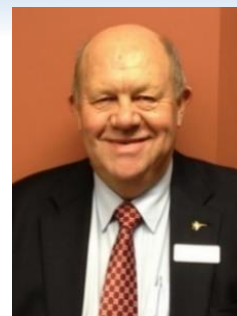Training Pathway progress (all Levels) in Region Two for the reporting period, is as follows:

TABLE 1

	Compensation	Well being
Candidates	33	34
Ready for Assessment	0	0
No Entry since Enrollment	10 (30 %)	7 (21%)
No Entry Last 6 Months	23 (70 %)	10 (29 %)

Close examination of the figures in the Table 1, adequately reveal the hiatus in Advocate training activities across Region 2; in particular, the percentages in brackets clearly showing the level of stagnation of training within the Compensation stream (Line 4). The impact of State lockdown and social restrictions imposed by Government are primarily to blame for this situation (I hope) and with the gradual easing of restrictions and the reopening of ESOs etc ATDP will see a revival in training activities.

Over an extended period over the past few months the ATDP Training Team has been working behind the scenes to progress training assessments, but so far with mixed success. CFMG Chair has reported an update to progress separately in this Newsletter. Notwithstanding the outcomes to resume face-to face assessments, we in Region 2 have no candidates ready for assessment anyway. I urge all candidates to resume progress in their respective roles so that when face-to-face assessments become a reality, Region 2 can provide people for assessment.

Regards,

Ian Thompson OAM
Manager, Regional Implementation Group 2

Region 3 Update – Vic, SA,TAS

ATDP is largely made up of volunteer Advocates. Without them Veterans and their dependants would not have the support of professional advocacy for Wellbeing and Compensation matters. Some ESOs (eg RSL, Legacy) have employee Advocates. Many Advocates also take on the role of Mentors for candidates who are undertaking ATDP Advocate courses across both streams at all levels. Your continuing efforts are appreciated by me and the Regional mentors.

I offer to you as Mentors a few points that may make your task easier:

- Schedule how often you check on WEL entries.
- Establish an agreed method and timings of communication.
- Ensure that WEL entries address the milestone requirement.
- Milestone entries must address what has been learnt and any difficulties encountered.
- If the entries do not address the milestone nor indicate what has been learnt then, you as the Mentor need to discuss the shortcoming with the Candidate ASAP. If the comment needs removal please, contact me by email.

I appreciate and understand that local and individual situations will play a part in how you go about your task as a Mentor.

Auditing of WELs by myself and Regional Mentors continues. If we see a shortfall that requires some guidance or assistance, we contact the Mentor to discuss a way forward.

The next Region 3 meeting is scheduled for 13 November 2020 via WEBEX.

Candidates waiting for Consolidation & Assessment
- Wellbeing level 1 X 4
- Wellbeing level 2 X 1
- Compensation level 1 X 4
- Compensation level 2 x 5
- Compensation level 3 x 1

Advocates waiting for Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment
- Wellbeing level 1 x 1
- Wellbeing level 2 x 3
- Compensation level 2 x 2
- Compensation level 3 x 4

Mentor requests
- eLearning via DVATrain x 9

- Consolidation & Assessment x 2
-

New enrolments
Compensation level 1 x 1

Remain wise, safe and well.

Brian Milner

Manager, Regional Implementation Group 3

Continuing Professional Development

Dear Advocates, hope you are all well and looking forward to the relaxation of pandemic restrictions as the year progresses, and especially as we get close to Xmas and want to reconnect with our families and friends.

I'm going to start this month's message by talking about the Accredited Advocate Register, the AAR. As ESO Authorising Officers would now know, the CPD team sent an email to authorising officers requesting that they update ESO Secretaries details in the AAR and also to let ESOmanagement know that the AAR now includes the CPD status of advocates attached to their ESO. As a follow up, In mid-November the ATDP will also be contacting ESO management committees advising them that their authorised officers have access to their advocates CPD information in order to identify those advocates that may require assistance in meeting their CPD obligations before 30 June 2021.

Some ESOs will need to consider the CPD status of their advocates in respect to any implications for their professional indemnity arrangements or other matters specific to the operation or rules of their individual organisations. Don't forget that advocates can also login directly to their personal CPD page at any time to view their own progress.

I was also looking back this week at what I had talked about in the Update in 2019 and it looks like what was relevant in 2019 is still relevant today. My article in 2019 talked about a different way of looking at CPD, which includes breaking it down into achievable parts instead of looking at it as one big project where you start thinking, 'how am I ever going to do that', it's a bit of a sinking feeling, 'I'll never have time to get that project done'. And then, how many times after the project is completed do we have that great feeling of achievement, at looking back at the project and seeing how well its turned out, and remember thinking 'I thought I'd never have the time to get that done'!

So, back to CPD, it's a bit like that "where will I get the time to do that?"

Heres a tip, and you would have used this countless times over your working career - break it down into achieveble chunks, work out a plan for how you will get this done. Let's say that we break down CPD into three (3) chunks of four (4) months each year. That would mean you could focus on achieving five (5) points within each of those four (4) months giving you the required 15 points for the year. For example, (if you have already done your compulsory Update Modules, which are worth five (5) points each, you could do an Online Quiz and attend a CoP in the first block of four (4) months. The next block of four (4) months you could do an online PowerPoint tutorial and view a Webinar or do a Case Study. In the third block you could attend a First Aid course' which will stand you in good stead, whether it's CPD or not, by learning a valuable new skill. It's up to you how you frame this. The points will add up fairly quickly and it probably won't look as overwhelming as you first thought!

'We are always on the lookout for new CPD material and would like to hear from anybody who has ideas about what they would like to see in the CPD space. This is your chance to have input into the learning elements of CPD and to help this very small team of volunteers to come up with new material. If you have any suggestions please contact us at cpd@atdp.org.au '.

Further help? If you are having problems in meeting your CPD obligations or you have any general questions relating to CPD, please contact the CPD Team at cpd@atdp.org.au

Regards,
Brett Warner
CPD Team Leader

A Research Project on Military to Civilian Transition

Dear members of the ATDP Update, my name is Megan Fry and I am ex-serving Army (RACT and AAPSYCH) and a current Clinical Psychologist. I own and operate my own private practice in Brisbane and I have spent my psychology career working with serving and ex-serving military personnel. I am conducting a research project at Griffith University in relation to the Military to Civilian Transition, incorporating an online survey study exploring the beliefs and values that soldiers develop during service and how this may impact on individuals' transition experiences. At this time, I am focussing on ex-serving Army personnel, who have deployed on operations and transitioned from the military in the last 5 years. However, I hope in the long-

term that this research will extend to all arms of the Defence Force and all ex-serving military personnel.

I am writing to you today to please consider sharing information about this research project with potential participants who meet the criteria for this online survey study. If participants live in Brisbane, at the end of the survey they will have the opportunity to elect to be informed about possibly participating in further research, involving a face to face intervention program. Further information can be found at: https://youtu.be/4so8i3QINgs (a short You Tube video), my flyer, or by contacting me at megan.fry@griffithuni.edu.au. The study can be found at: https://is.gd/lostsoldier.

I will be presenting a workshop on The Psychological Effects of Service in the Veteran Well-being Summit at 10am on 31 Oct 2020, which is ATDP CPD endorsed. These details are at: https://www.veteranwellbeingsummit.com.au/2020/08/22/the-psychological-effects-of-service-2/

Thank you for your time and consideration for this research project.

Megan Fry

Letter to the Editor

Do you have a 'Letter to the Editor' about advocacy? The Update and Advocacy News are wanting your stories to tell..

If you would like to submit a letter or article please send it to:
ATDP.COMMUNICATIONS@dva.gov.au

Program Support Update

The Program Support team now has the go ahead to resume "face to face" programs again. That means a lot of preparation to ensure they are both COVID safe and run smoothly and to time.

The slow-down in nominations over the past 6 months has allowed the Program Support Officers to perform housekeeping duties. We have had a number of Mentor Notifications with mentors putting forward their candidates for C&A. The Program Support team are working with Regional Mentors, Managers and the Training Team to fulfil a range of duties.

With many people being at home, now is the perfect time to work on your Workplace Experience Logbooks or do the E-Learning modules. If you have any problems, please contact our Program Support Officers who are here to help you.

As you can see from the number of nominations for new training which has come through in the past 6 months, there has been a significant slow-down.

Nominations (as of 28 October)

Month	2017	2018	2019	2020
January - October	702	463	419	199

If you would like any assistance from the Program Support Officers during this period, please feel free to contact us. It's business as usual!

Elizabeth Owen
Program Support Team Leader

IT Projects Update

Blessen Babu is the resident ATDP IT specialist and provides support to the National Training Manager, the CPD team and the Program Manager on multiple IT projects including the ATDP website, AAR, Online Management System and the CPD online portal.

My ATDP priorities for the past month have been:

- The CPD start date calculation has changed. The CPD start date for all advocates is now the date of their first Statement of Attainment for Recognition of Prior Learning candidates, and the date of the most recent Statement of Attainment for training candidates.

- The ATDP mail box is upgraded to its new and stable version. (Roundcube 1.4.8)

- I organised for Group emails to be sent regarding CPD updates.

- Fixed some reported issues in the CPD event application forms where the user switches entries between description and facilities information.

- An age and state statistics report is generated and added in the admin panel of the website.

- I assisted security testing for the ATDP website and am currently waiting on final report.

- Analysis and testing done to upgrade the current version of the script of ATDP website. (PHP 7.1 to PHP 7.4)

- Continued to develop processes to improve the upcoming Orderly Room Blog functionalities for the ATDP website.

- Working on implementing a new CPD Activity and Mentor eLearning facility .
- Continued to develop processes to improve the upcoming Orderly Room Blog functionalities for the ATDP website.

Wayne's Words of Wisdom

This month's **Words of Wisdom** come from **Julius Henry "Groucho" Marx** who was an American comedian, actor, writer, stage, film, radio, and television star. He is generally considered to have been a master of quick wit and one of America's greatest comedians.

"There's only two things you can start without a plan: a riot and a family, for everything else you need a plan".

ATDP Contacts

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Regional Manager 2 NSW/WA/ACT	Ian Thompson	rm2@atdp.org.au
Regional Manager 3 Vic/SA/Tas	Brian Milner	rm3@atdp.org.au
Program Support Team Leader	Elizabeth Owen	psomanager@atdp.org.au 08 8290 0499 **or** 0484 093 016
Region 1 Program Support Officer SA time, 8.30-4.00 Mon-Fri	Amanda Williams	pso1@atdp.org.au 08 8290 0283 **or** 0484 820 620
Region 2 Program Support Officer SA time, 8.30-4.00 Mon-Fri	Elizabeth Owen	pso2@atdp.org.au 08 8290 0499 **or** 0484 093 016
Region 3 Program Support Officer SA time, 8.30-4.00 Mon-Fri	Phil Boys	pso3@atdp.org.au 08 8290 0273 **or** 0484 594 791

ATDP Contacts Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAR	Accredited Advocate Register
AP	Authorised Person *(within the AAR)*
ATDP	Advocacy Training and Development Program
C&A	Consolidation and Assessment Program
C1	Compensation Advocate Level 1
C2	Compensation Advocate Level 2
C3	Compensation Advocate Level 3
C4	Compensation Advocate Level 4
W1	Wellbeing Advocate Level 1
W2	Wellbeing Advocate Level 2
W3	Wellbeing Advocate Level 3
CoP	Community of Practice
ESO	Ex-Service Organisation
MTS	Major Training Services *(ATDP's RTO)*
PSO	Program Support Officer
RIG	Regional Implementation Group
RM1, 2 and 3	Regional Managers for the 3 ATDP Regional Implementation Groups
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SoA	Statement of Attainment
TIP	Training and Information Program
UoC	Unit of Competency
VITA	Veterans Indemnity and Training Association https://web.atdp.org.au/docs/vita/VITABrochure2019.pdf
WEL	Workplace Experience Log