



1. A message from the Chair



It is with great pleasure that I put pen to paper for Issue 11 – May 2019 of Advocacy News.

I am amazed at what has already been achieved by our team of enthusiastic volunteers in the first few months of this year.

On January 24 this year the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP) was very pleased to be able to release the Accredited Advocate Register (AAR) providing on-line access to contact details for clients seeking to contact Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) who authorise and manage accredited advocates. The AAR replaces the former Directory of Advocates (DoA) which was developed as an interim measure in late 2017. The newsletter contains more information about the AAR, including how it also assists ESOs to manage their contact with clients and their accredited advocate pool.

The ATDP has also continued development of the Level 3 pathway curriculum, including consolidation training and assessment tools and have scheduled Subject Matter Expert (SME) workshops in coming months to commence work on the Level 4 pathway. If you are an accredited Compensation Level 2 advocate you can now access the Level 3 Workplace Experience Logs (WELs) to commence on the training pathway to Level 3 accreditation.

As many Advocacy News recipients would be aware the ATDP Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program was launched 1 July 2018. It is in essence a contemporary response to the former Training and Information Program (TIP) refresher training which was required to ensure the currency of training of advocates for professional indemnity purposes. Work is now well underway on the CPD activities to be made available on 1 July 2019. The ATDP is committed to continue to develop new and innovative activities to offer to ATDP accredited advocates to complete their CPD obligations. The take-up rate for CPD to date has been extremely encouraging. Should you need more information about CPD I would encourage you to contact cpd@atdp.org.au for assistance.

Since the release of the on-line ATDP Rehabilitation and Compensation Handbook last year there has been considerable interest in the progress of the updated ATDP Wellbeing Handbook and Welfare Support Officers handbook. I am pleased to report that this major piece of work is almost complete and we expect it to be released in May 2019 at which time it will be added to the documents located at the following link.

<https://www.dva.gov.au/consultation-and-grants/advocacy-training/advocacy-handbooks>

The report of the Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study, conducted by Mr Robert Cornall AO, was publicly released by the Minister on 13 March 2019 and is now available on the DVA website www.dva.gov.au/advocacystudy.

You can also contact the Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study team by sending an email to advocacy.study@dva.gov.au.

Finally I would offer my congratulations all those advocates and ESO volunteers whose efforts in service of the veteran and ex-service community were acknowledged in the Australia Day Honours earlier this year. Without their tireless work and those of the many thousands of other volunteers who give up their time to help their mates, the delivery of advocacy and other wellbeing services would not be possible.

Jenny Walker

Chair, Strategic Governance Board (SGB)
Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP)

2. Four ATDP advocates recognised in Australia Day honours

Four members of the ATDP family were recognised in this year's Australia Day Honours. Ian Thompson from Palmerston ACT, Graeme Watts from Drouin VIC, Raymond Kuscher from Welby NSW, and the late Reverend Dr Alan Stubbs formerly of Thornlie WA were awarded with Medals of the Order of Australia (OAMs) in the General Division.



Mr Ian Raymond Thompson OAM

Ian was awarded an OAM for his voluntary work with veterans and their families. Ian is currently the ATDP Regional Manager, Region 2 (NSW / ACT / WA), is an ATDP Military Compensation Advocate Level 2, ATDP Mentor, Presenter and Assessor and is a long-standing member of the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of the ACT and president of the Veterans

Support Centre in Belconnen ACT.

Ian has had a long and varied career in the RAAF. Ian flew a helicopter/gunship in South Vietnam and was subsequently posted to RAAF Williamtown to fly the F-86 Sabre. At the completion of training he was posted to Williamtown as a squadron pilot and Forward Air Controller and in 1974 was assigned as Aide-de-Camp to the Commander of the Five-Power Integrated Air Defence System of Singapore and Malaysia. From 1976 to 1983 Ian instructed at RAAF Williamtown on the Mirage, Macchi and Winjeel aircrafts.

In 1983, Ian was posted to Canberra as a Staff Officer, followed by a tour in Washington DC on the F/A-18 Acquisition Program as the Tactical Fighter Project Office Operations Specialist and Negotiator. At the conclusion of his US duty, he returned to Canberra as the Tactical Fighter Force Project Definition Manager until September 1989, at which time he retired from the Australian Defence Force.

Shortly after, Ian joined Qantas and commenced a new role flying the Boeing 747 throughout the Qantas world-wide network retiring from Qantas in February 2012 following a 49-year aviation career.



Since 2012, Ian has undertaken volunteer work as a Veteran's Advocate/Pension Officer at the Vietnam Veterans' and Veterans' Federation (VV&VF ACT) ACT and was Senior Vice President 2012 to 2015 and president from 2015 to 2018.

He was a representative for VV&VF ACT and NSW/ACT Training and Information Program (TIP) on the ACT Kindred Organising Committee (KOC), the NSW/ACT State Pension Officer Training Coordinator, State Training Manager and Chairman of the Organising Committee for the ACT Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Ian's volunteer work continues and he is currently the Manager, Regional Implementation Group 2 (NSW/ACT/WA) of the Advocacy Training and Development Program (ATDP). In this role Ian is responsible for the training, mentoring and competency of practitioners and Advocates in the Region. Ian is also a nationally accredited Facilitator/Assessor for ATDP Military Advocacy. Congratulations Ian on a well-deserved OAM.



Mr Graeme Eric Watts OAM

Graeme was awarded an OAM for his voluntary work with veterans and their families. Graeme is an ATDP Military Compensation Advocate Level 2 and is currently the Welfare Centre Manager and Chairman of the West Gippsland Veterans Centre.

Graeme is a foundation member of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA) West Gippsland, prior to that he was a member of VVAA Latrobe Valley. Graeme took an active role in the formation of VVAA West Gippsland. He was its Vice President for eleven years and for many years led the fundraising efforts for the branch in Drouin. In 2017 Graeme was the recipient of the Leslie Farren award which was for his services to the Veteran community, in the main, Vietnam Veterans.

Graeme was instrumental in the establishment of the West Gippsland Veterans Welfare Centre which is staffed solely by volunteers who are trained to provide expertise to those wanting to make Compensation claims. For the past fifteen years he has also been the Centre Manager and Chairman of the Management Committee. Graeme is tireless in his efforts to ensure that the Centre succeeds in its quest to assist veterans and their families in gaining entitlements that are rightfully theirs.

Aside from Veterans' advocacy and ESO involvement Graeme has since 1989 been an active member of Drouin Rotary. Graeme is involved with many Rotary charity events and in 2012 for his services to Rotary and the Veteran community Graeme was the recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow award.

Graeme has also been a Legatee for over twenty five years and is the main link to both the Veterans Welfare Centre and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) for the local Legacy Group, in particular relating to pension claims. His foresight is the driving force behind the West Gippsland Veterans Welfare Centre which has benefited many Veterans and their families and will continue to do so. What makes Graeme so special is that he lives with chronic untreatable back pain that makes the simple task of sitting a task in itself. Congratulations Graeme on a well-deserved OAM.

Mr Raymond Kuschert OAM

Raymond was awarded an OAM for his voluntary work with veterans and their families. Raymond is an ATDP Military Advocate Level 2 and has been a member of the Mittagong Sub-branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia since 1995 as a senior vice-president, Welfare officer and Mentor. Raymond is also a former president of the Macarthur Sub-branch, Vietnams Veterans Association and a former president of Tahmoor Lions. Congratulations Raymond on a very well deserved OAM.

The late The Reverend Dr Alan Stubbs OAM

The Reverend Dr Stubbs was awarded an OAM for his voluntary work with veterans and their families. Alan was an ATDP Military Compensation Advocate Level 2, Advocate coordinator for the Bull Creek Veterans Support Centre, a State Chairman for the Training and Information Programme and a former member of the ATDP Capability Framework Management Group.

3. Veteran Related Government Reviews (Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study - VASSSS)

The report on the Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study was released by Veterans' Affairs Minister Darren Chester on 13 March 2019.

Mr Robert Cornall AO, the study lead, made a number of recommendations in the report to improve services for veterans and their families.

The advocacy study began in April 2018 and received 227 submissions. Over a period of eight months Mr Cornall consulted with hundreds of individuals and organisations across Australia, and in Canada and the United Kingdom.

Advocates, Ex-Service Organisations and representatives of the legal, health, disability and community sectors provided useful information and feedback. Of particular importance were the personal experiences generously shared by veterans and their family members.

Officers from the Veterans' Review Board, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, DVA and other government agencies also contributed to the study.

The findings, advice and recommendations in the report, and collected in the submissions and at consultation sessions, will continue to inform the DVA reforms putting veterans and their families first.

The DVA are consulting with the defence and veteran communities on Mr Cornall's report. No decisions have been taken on the recommendations of the study.

The report can be found on the DVA website – www.dva.gov.au/advocacystudy.

4. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – Breaking News



The CPD Team is pleased to announce that the 5 CPD update modules launched on 1 July 2018 are now accessible by all ATDP accredited advocates regardless of whether they have a CPD obligation or not. To access these update modules, log in as normal via the ATDP home page, go to the CPD Home page, and then click on the CPD Workspace Tab. A download file tab, soon to be inserted, will also mean that each Update Module can be saved and printed off as and when needed.

The CPD Team is also pleased to advise that when the new ATDP website front page is released in coming months, only a single log-in will be required for both the ATDP On-line Management System (OMS) and the CPD module - if you're working in one space, there'll be seamless access to the other i.e. you won't need to enter multiple user names and passwords to move between the two.

The first year of CPD (1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019) is fast drawing to a close. It is pleasing to note that as of the 25th March - almost half of all accredited advocates who have a CPD obligation have already met the minimum CPD requirement, and that others are well on the way to achieving this milestone as well. It is important that advocates continually strive to update their knowledge and skill in order to keep up with the changing nature of advocacy, and CPD is one of the best ways of doing this. With the above in mind, the CPD Team has recently emailed reminders to the following two groups of advocates:

- Those who have a CPD obligation, and who have completed some update modules and other CPD activities, but who have not yet met their CPD minimum requirement,
- Those who have a CPD obligation but who have not yet recorded any type of CPD activity.

These reminders are to help clarify CPD obligations and to promote the value of this work-related learning and development opportunity, one that incidentally, continues throughout an advocate's period of practice. With less than 3 months to go before the end of the first CPD year, both advocates and their ESOs will need to work closely together to maintain ATDP's high standards of professional practice through active participation in CPD.

The CPD Team would like to congratulate those advocates who have met their first CPD milestone. We also offer strong words of encouragement those who are not quite there yet - to keep going, and we also ask those who have not yet started to make a conscientious effort to do so.

The CPD team is also working on new CPD offerings. Case studies dealing with compensation and wellbeing are in the process of being developed with the aim of having them available as from the 1st July 2019. Webinars and attendance at pre-approved CPD programs such as ASIST, Mental Health First Aid, and safeTALK are also available, as of now, for Advocates to earn CPD points. These two CPD options can be accessed via the CPD workspace tab. It is also pleasing to note that attendance at approved CPD activities and CoP workshops continues to be a popular option for advocates to earn CPD points.

Advocacy is continuing to evolve and change. CPD is a proven way by which accredited advocates can maintain and grow their skills and knowledge. The CPD team is working hard

to ensure that each CPD experience is an enjoyable and worthwhile learning opportunity. The team is also keen to assist all accredited advocates to get to the point where they are CPD current.

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

5. ATDP Training Update – The RPL Process

Whilst the ATDP have now conducted well in excess of 700 RPL assessments not everyone may be aware of the process involved. Recognition of Prior Learning is exactly that. It is an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate knowledge and skills obtained by whatever means in order to meet the requirements of an ATDP Unit of Competency.

Implicit in the process is that the candidate is able to present evidence of relevant experience; for example, in relation to Compensation, evidence of claims and decisions under the three Acts or for Wellbeing, having a diary available which records the actions taken or advice given in particular cases.

In addition to reviewing your “Portfolio of Evidence” you will also be interviewed by qualified assessors who are themselves experienced advocates, and be required to undertake an open-book Underpinning Knowledge Quiz in order to complete the requirements of RPL process.

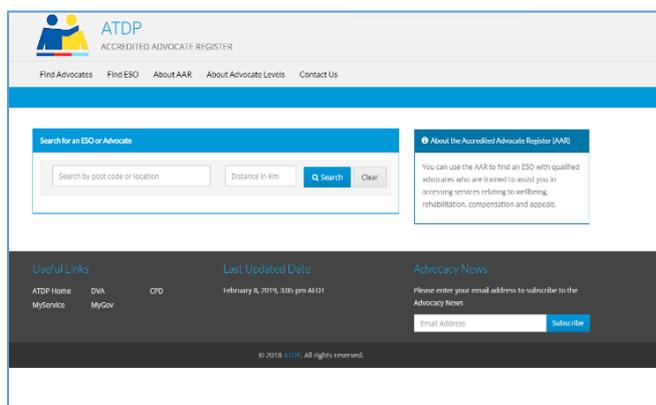
More information

You can find more information about Recognition of Prior Learning and the RPL self-assessment tools on the ATDP website: www.atdp.org.au.

If you have any other questions or concerns about what’s involved in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) contact ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au.

6. Accredited Advocate Register

Since the last issue of *Advocacy News* ATDP has released an Accredited Advocate Register (AAR) which replaced the Directory of Advocates (DoA) on 24 January 2019 and is located on the [ATDP website](http://www.atdp.org.au). The register aims to make it easier for veterans and their families to locate an ATDP accredited advocacy service which can assist them with compensation, pension and wellbeing matters.



The Accredited Advocate Register is available at www.advocateregister.org.au or via the ATDP website: www.atdp.org.au

The AAR lists each ESO that has ATDP accredited advocates, the ESO’s contact details, and whether they have welfare or compensation advocates or both.

Some of the benefits of the AAR include:

- It provides the flexibility of a number of search methods to locate advocates including by postcode, physical location and organisation
- As an on-line search tool it allows veterans and their families a convenient way to find local Ex-Service Organisation details quickly and easily
- It enables ESOs to self-manage their listings of ATDP accredited advocates and ESO contact details in an efficient, accurate and secure way; and it
- Supports ESOs and advocates to ensure advocates' knowledge remains current by monitoring their status in respect to the ATDP's Continuing Professional Development program.

The AAR is available at www.advocateregister.org.au and on the [ATDP website www.atdp.org.au](http://www.atdp.org.au). If you have any questions about the AAR please contact info@advocateregister.org.au

If you would like your ESO listed on the AAR please call (08) 8290 0499 during Adelaide SA office hours.

7. What are the differences between the DVA Veteran Cards?

The Veteran Card is a redesigned DVA Health Card and is being issued to any new client from March 2019. All existing DVA Health Card holders will receive their new Veteran Card when their current health card expires.

All current and former members of the Australian Defence Force are eligible to receive treatment for any medical condition caused by their service. Depending on the type of service, their service status or the extent of disability, veterans may be eligible to receive treatment at DVA expense through DVA Veteran cards.

DVA Veteran Card – All Conditions (Gold Card)



The Gold Card provides treatment for all medical conditions at Government expense.

Veterans may become eligible for the Gold Card in a number of different ways. Eligibility may arise from having a certain type of service, including:

- being aged 70 or older and having qualifying service, which is essentially service in a conflict;
- being a former Prisoner of War; or
- having served in Japan as part of BCOF or being a participant in the British Nuclear Test Program in Australia.

Eligibility for the Gold Card may also arise from having a high level of disability or defined levels of disability plus service pension eligibility, or in relation to certain defined disabilities such as blindness or amputations under the VEA, as well as high levels of disability resulting from service-related conditions under the MRCA.

Some members of Commonwealth or allied forces may be eligible for the Gold Card if they have qualifying service. This may occur if the veteran served with a Commonwealth or allied force during the Second World War or in specified operations since this war and they were

domiciled in Australia immediately prior to their enlistment in the Commonwealth or allied force (note, domicile has certain specific requirements). The Gold Card may also be available to a mariner who served on a Commonwealth or allied ship during the Second World War and they or their dependents were residing in Australia for at least 12 months prior to their commencement of service on that ship.

A Gold Card holder is eligible to receive clinically-required treatment for all conditions at DVA expense, whether or not the medical condition is related to their service. Details of what treatment is available is at [Factsheet HSV01 - Health Services Available to the Veteran Community](#). The treatment must be medically necessary, and there are some limits on what can be covered. For instance medical services are subject to the requirements of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). Therefore, DVA does not fund alternative therapies. Some treatments require prior approval from DVA. In relation to prescriptions, Gold Card holder need to pay a patient contribution charge (co-payment) for each prescription.

The Gold Card can be used anywhere within Australia, but veterans should check whether their health provider will accept the Gold Card. Most health providers will accept the Card. The Gold Card does not cover treatment overseas.

DVA will not pay for treatment if compensation or damages have been paid by another party in relation to the injury or illness.

Members whose only service was under the DRCA, or predecessor Acts are not eligible to receive the Gold Card as there is no provision in this legislation enabling the Gold Card to be provided.

DVA Veteran Card – Specified Conditions (White Card)



A White Card provides treatment for specified medical conditions. Usually, these conditions are those that have been accepted as service-related by DVA, but a White Card may also be issued for non-liability health care.

A White Card is issued to Australian veterans or mariners under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) with an accepted war or service-caused injury or disease. They are also issued to former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) with an accepted condition and ongoing treatment needs. A White Card may be issued to former members of the ADF, current part-time Reservists, and cadets and, in limited circumstances, to full-time members under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA) with a medical condition accepted as service related under the MRCA.

A White Card may be provided for non-liability health care treatment. Veterans may be eligible for Non-Liability Health Care treatment, whether war caused or not, for any mental health condition if the veteran has a day of continuous full time service, or served as a reserve on border protection and disaster relief operations or was involved in a serious training accident. Veterans with war, operational, hazardous or peacekeeping service under the VEA, certain peacetime service under the VEA or warlike or non-warlike service under the MRCA may also be eligible to receive non-liability health care for malignant cancer (neoplasia) and pulmonary tuberculosis.

White Cards are also issued to eligible transitioning members of the ADF for the purposes of accessing mental health treatment under Non-Liability Health Care.

A White Card may be issued to former British and Commonwealth ex-service personnel who are eligible for treatment of disabilities accepted as war caused by their country of enlistment under reciprocal agreements between the Australian Government and the New Zealand, Canadian, South African and United Kingdom Governments.

If the treatment that is being sought is related to an accepted war or service-caused injury or disease, or if the treatment is for a specific condition under Non-liability Health Care as described above, veterans should present their White Card when visiting any health care professional who provides health services under DVA arrangements, including General Practitioners (GPs), dentists, and medical specialists and allied health professionals, e.g. physiotherapists, to whom you are referred for treatment, or a hospital or day procedure facility.

If a veteran has received a White Card after transitioning from the ADF, they are eligible to receive treatment for any mental health condition immediately.

It is important to check with the health provider prior to the consultation or receiving treatment that the provider accepts DVA Veteran Card arrangements.

Holders of a White Card are entitled to be treated at DVA's expense, including subsidised pharmaceuticals, only for their accepted service-related disabilities or illnesses.

Use of the White Card is like that of the Gold Card, but for treatment of the specified conditions only. Like the Gold Card, it may not be used overseas. In some cases, prior approvals of treatment may be required.

DVA Veteran Card – Pharmaceuticals (*Orange Card*)



The Orange Card is for pharmaceuticals only and cannot be used for any medical or other health care treatment. It provides access to the subsidised pharmaceuticals and medicines under the Repatriation Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme (RPBS).

An Orange Card is issued to Commonwealth and allied veterans and mariners who have qualifying service from World War II, are aged 70 years or over; and have been resident in Australia for 10 years or more.

An Orange Card provides access to subsidised pharmaceuticals and medicines under the Repatriation Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme (RPBS). The RPBS contains all items available to the general public under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), and also an additional list contained in the Repatriation Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits (RSPB) which is exclusive to veterans. Therefore the range of subsidised pharmaceutical items available with an Orange Card is wider than that for the general public.

An Orange Card identifies a veteran as being eligible for pharmaceutical benefits for most conditions. Holders should inform their doctor of this entitlement, and present the Orange Card to the pharmacy whenever they have a prescription dispensed, otherwise they may be charged the full price for your prescriptions.

More information on all of these cards and other benefits can be found through the website: <https://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/veterans-health-cards>

Information on the [Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant](https://www.dva.gov.au/benefits-and-payments/australian-defence-veterans-covenant) can be found through the website: <https://www.dva.gov.au/benefits-and-payments/australian-defence-veterans-covenant>

8. How many Accredited Advocates are there?

As at 9 May 2019 the ATDP has 632 accredited advocates that are available to help veterans and their families across a range of disciplines. In total 832 individual Units of Competency (UoC) in the Course in Military Advocacy have been issued to these advocates with many qualified to assist with a range of client advocacy needs.

Units of Competency (UoC) issued in the Course in Military Advocacy	
Type of Advocate	Number
Military Compensation Advocate Level 1	72
Military Wellbeing Advocate Level 1	51
Total number of Military Advocates at Level 1	123
Military Compensation Advocate Level 2	361
Military Wellbeing Advocate Level 2	309
Total number of Military Advocates at Level 2	670
Military Compensation Advocate Level 3	62
Military Compensation Advocate Level 4	8
Total number of UoCs issued to ATDP accredited advocates	863

9. Computer Training – Be Connected

Training news

Much of the resource material that advocates need to access at all levels is subject to change – both legislative and policy. Government is moving to an electronic service delivery model, and ATDP's training and professional development programs rely heavily on on-line delivery.

These factors provide irrefutable evidence that advocates must develop or maintain strong computer skills if they are to provide excellence in advocacy. Utilising electronic devices in ATDP's face-to-face learning activities has the potential to provide cost savings and an opportunity to reinforce computer literacy standards amongst advocates.

But not everyone is computer savvy. 'Be Connected' is an Australia wide initiative empowering all Australians to thrive in a digital world.

The 'Be Connected' site has online learning resources as well as a Network of community partners - the Be Connected Network - who offer in-person support so you can develop your

digital skills and confidence. Find a local place for friendly help and advice, or join the Network to help others.

If you would like to access this online initiative there is further information and course material at 'Be connected': <http://www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au>

10. OPEN ARMS - Group Programs



Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (*formerly VVCS*) is well known for providing free and confidential counselling services to veterans, and their families. Open Arms also offers a variety of evidence based group treatment programs and educational workshops that could be extremely beneficial for your clientele. These group programs are free and are delivered to small groups of people, face-to-face, by highly skilled facilitators with military awareness.

Topics range from addressing trauma, to building better relationships with loved ones, new parenting skills and relaxation.

Some of the benefits that participants have reported from attending group programs, while in counselling or not, include:

- Understanding that they are not alone and that others may be going through similar issues
- Learning about issues that can have an impact on mental health and wellbeing
- Being equipped with simple and effective tools to help build confidence and resilience
- Gaining a wider range of perspectives on issues, and
- Receiving encouragement through hearing other participants' successes in overcoming their challenges.

Group programs are a great opportunity for people with all different experiences of military service, and the families who support them, to come together and directly address their mental health concerns.

“Group programs allow people in the veteran community to seek advice and start to build a better future, without fear of judgement”, said a 2018 program attendee.

In order to be responsive to the needs of clients, Open Arms has recently redeveloped four new group programs; ***Doing Anger Differently, Managing Pain, Understanding Anxiety*** and ***Recovery from Trauma***. These programs now include access to online information that helps support participants in practicing skills at their own pace, in the comfort of their own home, and allows them to share what they have learnt with their families.

“Open Arms is very excited to be able to offer these programs. As I have travelled around Australia, these are the treatment areas that the veteran community have been requesting.” – Dr Stephanie Hodson, National Manager of Open Arms.

Your clients can visit [OpenArms.gov.au](https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/group-programs) (<https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/group-programs>) or call **1800 011 046** to find out more and express interest in group programs that are being delivered in the area.

11. AT-Ease puts new focus on families



The Department of Veterans' Affairs mental health and wellbeing website, AT-Ease, has launched a new Families channel with advice and support to meet the needs of veteran families.

AT-Ease.dva.gov.au provides health and mental wellbeing support and advice for Australian veterans, serving personnel, health professionals and now families. AT-Ease aims to empower visitors to take pre-emptive action to maintain higher levels of wellness. AT-Ease has a number of Channels outlined below.

The Veterans channel focuses on helping the veteran understand what they are experiencing so they can develop and deploy self-help strategies to move forward on their own. Information on DVA programs is also provided, along with links to apps to use on the go.

The Health Professionals channel is designed to help the medical community work with veterans. Veterans are more likely to engage with health care practitioners who understand their health issues, particularly mental health problems, within the context of their military service.

The Health Professionals channel is designed to help clinicians make that connection to enhance the therapeutic alliance and delivery of effective treatment. The new Families channel is designed to help families recognise issues in the family unit before they become major problems, such as:

- The changing dynamics and circumstances within a family around deployment;
- Reintegration of a veteran into the family unit after an absence (such as deployment); and
- Adjusting to family life after a serving member transitions from the ADF.

The Families channel recognises and deals with a variety of mental health conditions including the early warning signs of a potential suicide, post-traumatic stress and addiction, all of which can make life harder for families.

The specific focus on families reflects DVA's better understanding of the veteran community and the dynamics of veteran families.

According to DVA research, around 60 per cent of veterans who seek mental health and wellbeing support do so after encouragement from a family member. Traffic to the AT-Ease website also reflects the role of families in veteran welfare.

Currently, around two-thirds of visitors to the [AT-Ease.dva.gov.au](https://at-ease.dva.gov.au) website are women, and almost half are women under 45. Targeting information and support directly to family members through AT-Ease Families is an important way to improve the wellbeing of the overall veteran community.

The new Families channel augments the existing Veteran and Health Professionals channels of the website.

To learn more, visit [AT-Ease.dva.gov.au](https://at-ease.dva.gov.au)

12. ATDP contact details

ATDP Regional Managers (RMs) and Program Support Officers (PSOs)

Region 1 (Qld & NT)	Region 2 (NSW, ACT & WA)	Region 3 (Vic, Tas & SA)
Bob Grandin Regional Manager rm1@atdp.org.au	Ian Thompson Regional Manager rm2@atdp.org.au	John Methven Regional Manager rm3@atdp.org.au
Elizabeth Owen Program Support Officer 1 ps01@atdp.org.au (08) 8290 0283	Karolyn Traise Program Support Officer 2 ps02@atdp.org.au (08) 8290 0279	Philip Boys Program Support Officer 3 ps03@atdp.org.au (08) 8290 0273

General enquiries: ATDPenquiries@dva.gov.au

Websites:

- Advocacy Training and Development Program – www.atdp.org.au
- Department of Veterans' Affairs – www.dva.gov.au

13. Subscribe or Unsubscribe

Please share this newsletter with anyone you know who may be interested.

Let us know if you would like to be added or removed from the distribution list by sending an email to ATDP.communications@dva.gov.au

14. Feedback

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

