



VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

VICTORIAN BRANCH (INCORPORATED)

ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTION NUMBER 3

CODE OF PRACTICE

Introduction

1. The purpose of this AI is to provide details of the Code of Practice which provides a standard of service for service provision by the State Branch. The code also provides credibility to and legitimises the processes and procedures adopted by the Association

Detail

Aim of the Code of Practice

2. The aim of a Code of Practice (including standards of ethics) is to provide principles that State Branch volunteers should maintain for the ethical provision of welfare services for all veterans, their dependents and descendants

Objectives of the Code of Practice

3. The objectives of a Code of Practice need to be achievable. The objectives of this Code of Practice are to ensure best practice:
 - Welfare support is provided to all veterans, their dependents and descendants, who are eligible under the Veteran's Entitlements Act 1986 and/or Department of Defence Compensation Legislation.
 - Volunteer support is available to veterans in the form of TIP trained pension officers, case officers, advocates who will endeavour to the best of their ability to expedite claims, reviews and appeals before the DVA, VRB and VCAT, provide advice on income support issues involving DVA & DSS.
 - Volunteer training to back up the welfare and volunteer support provided by the Association. This includes TIP training for welfare and service pension officers who will endeavour to the best of their ability to assist veterans and their dependants with any issues they may have.
 - Management of State and Sub-branch Welfare administration and financial responsibilities through elected representation.
 - Provision of a high level of confidentiality and security in verbal and documentary fields.
 - Maintenance of a high level of ethical reputation through lawful and moral representation at all times.
 - Maintenance of an open and honest approach in any contact with veterans, their families and departmental officers, so as to build good working relationships.
 - Maintain a "FREE" service to veterans and their families (notwithstanding that unsolicited donations can be accepted by the organisation but not individuals).
 - Indemnity cover that the Association can obtain or afford for all VVAA members working in a voluntary capacity.

Ethics

4. Volunteers are the "shop front" of the Association and have an obligation to act with honesty, accuracy and fairness at all times:
 - When dealing with veterans, their families, carers, government departments, ex-service organisations, politicians and the general public-either written or verbally-those actions must be relevant, accurate and truthful to the best knowledge of the volunteer.
 - Provide legitimate and credible responses to all welfare compensation and health issues in support of veterans, their families and carers whilst demonstrating a very high level of confidentiality.
 - Provide veterans their families and carers with access to TIP trained Volunteers who have an understanding of the different legislation that may cover all aspects of welfare.
 - Volunteers acting on behalf of the association are NOT to offer advice, but are to table all the options, including the strengths and their weakness of those options, so that the veteran may make an informed decision.

Authority.

5. The Association's operations are based on the National Constitution and within Victoria are guided by the Administration Instruction as approved by the State Council.

Funding

6. From time to time there are funding opportunities from government and both the State Executive and Sub-Branches may be able to apply for a grant. Any monies received must be credited to a Welfare Account. It is important that all applications are submitted with credibility and in a professional manner as they reflect on the Association. Other aspects to consider are:
 - The State Office should be consulted about any funding application in writing. If the State Executive makes an application, Sub-Branches should be informed at the next State Council meeting.
 - Funding through the Victorian Veterans Council must be in accordance with the relevant legislation
 - The credibility of both the State Branch and Sub-Branches relies on proper financial controls and auditing procedures of those funds received.

Secretarial and Administrative Support

7. Sound management practice protects the operational, administrative and ethical reputation of the Association through providing:
 - Minutes of all meetings
 - A correspondence register
 - A secure filing system
 - Office security (building office, desk etc)
 - Administrative advice and set standards (including supervision)
 - A property register
 - Supervision and audit of information technology systems.

Financial

8. The State Branch and Sub-Branches have a responsibility through the Treasurer to provide a credible financial and audit management practice which includes:
 - Provide an annual audited financial statement (usually with AGM minutes)
 - Provide any external audited financial statements as required (grants etc)
 - All monies, cheques or other negotiable documents are to be banked within seven days.

- All payments are to be paid by cheque authorised by any two of the approved signatories.
 - A petty cash book system should be provided with a maximum of spending approved and a receipt keeping policy established.
 - A set of accounts should be kept either as a computer record (remember back up) or a manual system.
9. The following books of accounts must be maintained by the State and Sub-Branch Treasurers:
- Receipt book - Cheque book - Income and expenditure sheets - Trading balance sheet,
 - Invoice book for sales - Order book for purchases and Property Register.

Welfare Management

10. The provision of welfare services includes varying outcomes and methods of implementation and the Association expects that they are carried out under the following:
- Any general relevant legislation and resulting legislative requirements.
 - Any Specific relevant legislation and resulting legislative requirements (e.g. Veterans Entitlement Act 1986 etc)
 - Occupational Health and Safety legislation
 - Association (or similar group) rules of ethics.
 - With sincerity, openness and integrity.

Constitution

11. A Sub-Branch may have a constitution that is based on the State Constitution which in turn is based on the National Constitution. The National Constitution takes precedence over the State and Sub-Branch Constitutions.

Governance

12. The Victorian Branch is directed by the State Council which meets quarterly and is comprised of all Sub-Branch Presidents (or their delegate). The State Council sets the policy, administrative and financial rules for the State Association.
13. The State Council elects a State Executive at each AGM that meets regularly to manage the Association's day-to-day commitments.

Conclusion

14. The ability of the State Association and its Sub-Branches to operate over a long term relies on the ethical and moral stance of its office bearers and volunteers. The method of administration and financial accountability must be above reproach and those assisted must be satisfied that confidentiality will be maintained.