



VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH INCORPORATED

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION 03/2011

CODE OF PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

1. In most business firms and government departments there are industry regulations or Acts of Parliament that promulgate the rules guiding that industry or the involvement of government departments.
2. Volunteer organisations usually have constitutions, and sometimes written procedures, but not a code of practice. There is a need to have rules documented for credibility and guidance to all our volunteers. This AI provides a Code of Practice required of volunteers.

Detail

3. The South Australian Branch has a State constitution and is directed by the State Council. This meets monthly and is comprised of all sub-branch Presidents (or their delegate) and sets the policy, administrative and financial rules.
4. The Association Members elect a State Executive at each AGM that meets at least quarterly to manage the Association's day-to-day commitments.
5. Where there is dispute between constitutions, the sub-branch constitution shall be over ruled by the State and National constitutions and, where there is dispute between the State and the National Constitutions, the National constitution shall overrule the State constitution.

Aim

6. 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

7. To achieve the aim the following objectives should be used.
 - (a) Provide welfare support to all veterans, their dependents and descendants, who are eligible under the Veteran's Entitlements Act 1986 and/or Department of Defence Compensation Legislation.
 - (b) Provide volunteer, TIP trained pension officers, case officers, and advocates who will endeavor, to the best of their ability to expedite claims, reviews and appeals before the DVA, VRB and AAT.

- (c) Provide volunteer TIP trained welfare officers and service pension officers who will endeavor to the best of their ability to assist with welfare and income support issues involving DVA & DSS.
- (d) Provide management of State and sub-branch welfare administration and financial responsibilities through elected representation.
- (e) Provide a very high level of confidentiality and security in verbal and documentary arenas.
- (f) Maintain a very high level of ethical reputation through lawful and moral representation at all times.
- (g) Maintain an open and honest approach in any contact with veterans, their families and departmental officers, so as to build good working relationships.
- (h) Maintain a "FREE" service to veterans and their families (notwithstanding that unsolicited donations can be accepted by the organisation but not by individuals).
- (i) Provide the best indemnity cover that the Association can obtain or afford for all VVAA members working in a voluntary capacity.

General Practice

8. **Ethics.**

Volunteers are the "shop front" of the Association and there is a need for them to have clear guidance regarding the standard of ethics required. The following recommendations should be observed:

- (a) 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.
- (b) Provide a credible response to all welfare compensation and health issues in support of veterans, their families and carers whilst demonstrating a very high level of confidentiality.
- (c) Provide veterans their families and carers with volunteers who are at least TIP trained and have an understanding of the different legislation that may cover all aspects of welfare as per the Association constitution.
- (d) Volunteers acting on behalf of the association are NOT to offer advice, but are to table all the options, their strengths and their weakness, so that the veteran may make an informed decision.

9. **Authority.**

The Association's operations are based on the constitution guided by the AI's and aligned with this code of practice.

10. **Funding.**

From time to time there are funding opportunities from government and both the State Committee and sub-branches may be able to apply for a grant. Any monies received must be credited to a specific grant fund. 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:

- (a) The State Office should be consulted about any funding application by a letter. If the State Committee makes an application, sub-branches should be informed at the next State Committee meeting.
- (b) Funding through the Patriotic Funds Council is covered in another AI.
- (c) The credibility of both the State Branch and sub-branches relies on proper financial controls and auditing procedures.

11. **Secretarial.**

Sound management practice protects the operational, administrative and ethical reputation of the Association. Listed below are guide lines for that sound management:

- (a) Provide minutes of all meetings
- (b) Provide a correspondence register
- (c) Provide a secure filing system
- (d) Provide office security (building office, desk etc)
- (e) Provide administrative advice and set standards (including supervision)
- (f) Provide a property register
- (g) Provide supervision and audit of information technology systems.

12. **Financial.**

The State Branch and sub-branches have a responsibility through the Treasurer to provide a creditable financial and audit management practice which includes:

- (a) Provide an annual audited financial statement (usually with AGM minutes)
- (b) Provide any external audited financial statements as required (grants etc)
- (c) All monies, cheques or other negotiable documents are to be banked within seven days.
- (d) All payments are to be paid by cheque authorised by any two of the approved signatories.
- (e) A petty cash book system should be provided with a maximum of spending approved and a receipt keeping policy established.
- (f) A set of accounts should be kept either as a computer record (remember back up) or a manual system.
- (g) The following books of accounts should be kept:
Receipt book - Chequebook - Income and expenditure sheets - Trading balance sheet,
Invoice book for sales - Order book for purchases and Property Register.

13. **Welfare Management**

The provision of welfare services includes varying outcomes and methods of implementation and the Association expects that they are carried out under the following:

- (a) The law of the land
- (b) Any special legislation (i.e. VEA 1986 etc)
- (c) Occupational Health and Safety legislation
- (d) Association (or similar group) rules of ethics.

Conclusion

- 14. The ability of an association or sub-branch 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.

Authority. **State Council Meeting: 20th February 2011**