



# VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION of AUSTRALIA

## (QUEENSLAND BRANCH)

*"Honour the dead, but fight like hell for the living"*

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The VVCS Service Mix/Model Review  
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Dear Review Team

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this review. Please be advised that we fully support and endorse the submission put in by our national body but we do feel that it would be advantageous for us to place on record some of the problems we have in Qld. At the onset we would like to inform you that we are very happy with the VVCS here in Brisbane, especially the staff interaction with the ESO community, however we believe that there may be some areas that could be improved.

The first area of concern is the lack of shop fronts within Qld. We are a very large state and we believe that if there could be more offices set up, especially in rural and remote localities, it would give better service to those veterans in these areas. We agree that the focus of the VVCS has to change and try and envelop the veterans of today and, in consequence, we consider it would be an advantage to have offices in close proximity to all current military bases and all areas with a large veteran population.

If more offices were to be considered, there would be a need for extra funding which follows that there is a requirement to employ more experienced counselors and, if possible, those with a military background. The obvious reason for this is that the military family is unique in that it is different from all others as they have to be both Military and Civilian in everyday life. To successfully treat and/or counsel these people requires a very special knowledge of their problems which, we feel, can only be gained by those with a military background and/or a vast amount of experience in dealing with veterans.

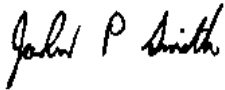
We know that in the early days of the Suicide ASIST program the presenters had problems relating to veterans and it took them some time to get to understand the unique position of veterans and their families. Another problem experienced here in Qld was the situation of the VVCS employing people on three month contracts. It was felt by the veteran community that this only attracted those straight out of university and was used as a fill in whilst looking for more permanent employment but was not attracting the more experienced counselors as they have suitable employment.

We strongly suggest that the VVCS has to develop more mental health programs that deal with the veteran's family and not concentrate solely on the veteran and VVCS should have more group meetings but not on base for obvious personal and eligibility for future deployment reasons, but they definitely need to be held in close proximity to such Bases. We suggest there is a need to change the focus more to service related family problems and/or in service related crisis. An emerging major

problem of today's servicemen and women is multi deployments and both parents being deployed, sometimes together.

Some time ago the VVCS produced an excellent book, "And the Pine trees seemed greener after that – Reflections by Sons and daughters of Vietnam Veterans" for children of Vietnam Vets. This book should be reproduced with a focus on dealing with the wives, partners and children of the current serving members. We take this opportunity to thank you for allowing us to participate in this review and emphasise that we fully support and endorse the Submission by the VVAA

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John P Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'S'.

John P Smith, OAM, JP (Qual)  
President  
Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia  
Queensland Branch Inc.