



OPEN
Veterans & Families
Counselling
ARMS

PROSPECTUS

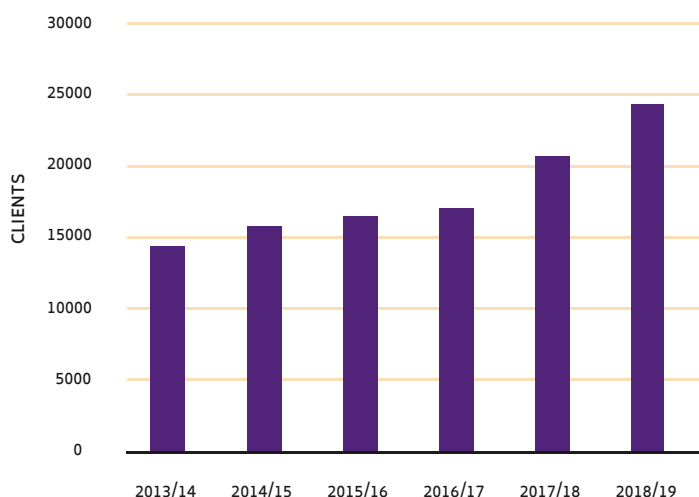
**Support for current and ex-serving
ADF personnel and their families**

OpenArms.gov.au



"The help they gave me early on probably saved my life – now they're keeping me stable"

Growth in Counselling client numbers from 2014-2019



155K

Number of sessions
with clients in
2018/19

25K

Clients who
received Open Arms
Services in 2018/19

94%

of clients highly
satisfied with Open
Arms' service



WELCOME



Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling Service is Australia's leading provider of mental health and wellbeing support to veterans and their families. We have provided more than 1.6 million counselling sessions to more than 300,000 veterans and family members since being established as the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service in 1982.

In the last year, we have increased the number of staff available to provide case management and assertive reach-out to vulnerable individuals, introduced refreshed and new group treatment programs in the areas of trauma, anger, pain and anxiety, and increased our capacity to provide mental health training.

As a recognised leader in veteran's mental health and wellbeing, we regularly partner with other agencies in groundbreaking research into veteran issues. We are currently working with Defence and Phoenix Australia in three innovative clinical research programs: the Rapid Exposure Supporting Trauma Recovery (RESTORE) Trial, focused on testing a more efficient approach for PTSD treatment; the Stepping Out: Attention Reset (SOAR) Trial, exploring whether a brief attention training computer task improves wellbeing and adjustment to civilian life for transitioning military personnel; and international research to determine if it is possible to develop a measure of moral injury to be utilised in clinical settings.

We have also recently evaluated the effectiveness of the Community and Peer Program pilot completed in Townsville as part of Operation Compass - Townsville Veteran Community Suicide Prevention Trial. The key objective of this trial was to enhance the management and support of vulnerable veterans, especially veterans who are at risk of suicide. The teams included people with lived experience of both the military and of mental health issues, who are employed as Mental Health Peer Workers. The evaluation showed that the model reduced barriers to care for clients and improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes for clients and their families. This was a great result and has led to a national roll-out of the Community and Peer Program.

It is an important time to be working in the field of veteran's health and we are now recruiting psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and nurses.

People interested in working with us have three pathways to choose from - via the Australian Public Service, as a contractor or as an Outreach Provider.

For those who have not worked with veterans before, they are a very rewarding client group and we provide training in military culture for anyone who is unsure.

This Prospectus outlines our service, our community and the benefits you'll experience if you decide to join our team.

Dr Stephanie Hodson
National Manager
October 2019

OUR SERVICE

OUR STORY

The Vietnam War was a difficult chapter in Australia's history. For those who served, the experience forged strong bonds and a commitment to look out for each other. This deep sense of mateship led Vietnam veterans to lobby for a specialised counselling and support service for veterans and their families – the result was the establishment of the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service (VVCS) in 1982.

In 2018, the service changed its name to Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling. In part, to introduce a more recognisable brand to promote mental health and wellbeing services to existing and prospective clients, but also to highlight an expanded service offering accessible to any ADF member, with one day full-time service, and their family.

Symbolically, open arms are a very powerful image of support, safety and security. As Australia's leading provider of high quality mental health assessment and clinical counselling services for Australian veterans and their families, it was an obvious fit.

Importantly, it is also a meaningful symbol for our founders, the Vietnam veterans. Spending long periods in the jungle during the war, their lifeline was the Huey helicopter - which they would call in to take them to safety at the end of an operation, medical evacuation or to provide critical supplies. Often, to let the pilot know where to land, one soldier would stand in a field with raised open arms, completely vulnerable.

Our new name and logo is a symbol of the courage it sometime takes to seek help, while also representing the approach of welcoming those who need support with open arms.

ELIGIBILITY

Open Arms' counselling and support services are available to:

- current serving ADF personnel
- personnel transitioning to civilian life
- ex-serving members
- partners and children of serving and ex-serving personnel
- ex-partners who are co-parenting
- reservists with one day continuous full time service.

COUNSELLING CLIENTS

ADF	54%
Family Members	44%
Duty of Care	2%

WHAT WE OFFER

Open Arms focuses on meeting client needs through a combination of proven clinical practices and new and emerging evidence-based approaches.

Our services include:

- counselling for individuals, couples and families
- 24-hour telephone counselling
- mental health training programs
- peer support
- self-help resources
- crisis accommodation support
- relationship retreats
- group treatment programs, and
- suicide intervention workshops.

As an Open Arms counsellor, you will work in challenging clinical situations, helping Australia's current ADF members, veterans and their families work through:

- deployment
- discharge and transition-related issues
- difficulties with relationships
- anger control issues
- depression and anxiety
- substance and alcohol misuse
- past trauma and PTSD.

WORK WITH US

Since our creation in 1982, our purpose has been to provide world-class counselling and support to those men and women who serve in defence of our nation.

By employing qualified counsellors through APS employment, Labour hire contracts or Outreach providers, Open Arms has been able to provide innovative services to serving ADF members, veterans and their families for almost 40 years.

Our working environment is professional, well supported both clinically and administratively, and dedicated to providing collaborative and optimal health outcomes.

Your work will make a real difference to the lives of Australian service personnel, veterans and their families.



WORK WITH US

LOCATIONS

Open Arms provides counselling services across Australia, through our regional offices and Outreach Provider Network.

Open Arms currently has offices and satellites in the following locations, with services expanding across the country:

- Albury/Wodonga
- Aspley
- Bondi Junction
- Brisbane
- Broadbeach
- Cairns
- Darwin
- Devonport
- Eastwood - Adelaide
- Elizabeth - Adelaide
- Greensborough
- Gungahlin
- Hobart
- Ipswich
- Katherine
- Lismore
- Liverpool
- Maroochydore
- Melbourne
- Newcastle
- Parramatta
- Perth
- Phillip
- Rockingham
- Seymour
- Sydney
- Townsville



WHY YOU'LL LOVE THIS JOB

- Enjoy the flexibility of long term (1-3 years) Commonwealth government contract work without the risk of job insecurity or the requirement for an ABN.
- Be paid a competitive hourly rate plus superannuation
- Flexible working hours may be available by negotiation
- Generous professional development opportunities
- After twelve months service we will pay annual professional registration fees
- The client group is diverse and interesting
- An opportunity to make a real difference and see tangible clinical and wellbeing outcomes for clients with complex needs
- An interesting and variable range of duties with a strong focus on collaboration, strengths, recovery, and both individual and family support
- Excellent administrative and clinical support, including a 24/7 telephone support service and professional intake assessment team
- A supportive, inclusive, collegial and respectful professional environment
- An organisational focus on truly meeting client needs through a combination of proven clinical practices and new and emerging evidence-based technologies and methodologies; particularly in the area of PTSD
- An opportunity to be part of an inspirational, innovative and client-focused improvement to the mental health outcomes of veterans and their families.



"Four years ago I had a job interview for what has turned out to be the best job I've ever had. Today I'm interviewing other people for what I hope turns out to be the best job they have ever had. If you're a psychologist or social worker and you're

interested in supporting those who've served and their families, come and work for us.

#loveyourwork #counselling #psychology
#openarms #veterans #adf #militaryfamilies
#trauma #ptsd"

Heather Gow, Assistant Director, Clinical Coordination

LinkedIn



APPLY TO WORK WITH US

We are always looking for experienced health professionals in the fields of psychology, mental health social work, occupational therapy and nursing.

Opportunities are advertised via:

- apsjobs.gov.au
- job boards including Seek, Australian PsychXchange and Horizon
- Recruitment agencies

Alternatively, you can email us your resume and a cover sheet outlining why you'd like to work with Open Arms and we will get in contact if opportunities are available in your region, openarms.coord@dva.gov.au.



BE AN OUTREACH PROVIDER?

As an Outreach Provider you are considered an essential part of our workforce. If you're interested in joining us via this pathway there is a simple registration process to complete, starting with reading our Provider Notes at openarms.gov.au/professionals/work-open-arms.

Some specific benefits of being an Outreach Provider are:

- detailed referrals from Open Arms
- shared responsibility for managing clinical risk
- no limits on the number of sessions, as support is based on clinical need
- additional forms of support are available to support treatments programs including group programs, peer support and case management
- being paid for reports and longer sessions for trauma treatment
- administrative support
- robust clinical governance

FIND OUT MORE

If you're interested in working for Open Arms, we want to hear from you. Contact Open Arms on 1800 011 046 or for more information visit openarms.gov.au/professionals

CASE STUDY

John, a 37-year-old Infantry Sergeant in the Australian Regular Army, enlisted 17 years ago. He and his wife, Jenny have two children, Sally (15) and Jack (11).

Shortly after John and his family were posted to Townsville, John was deployed overseas for six months. Although he enjoyed putting his training into practice, he was exposed to a range of traumatic events and sustained a minor back injury. Despite this, communication between John and the family was kept relatively upbeat and focused on all that was going well, including the countdown until the family would be reunited. Neither John nor Jenny wanted to cause stress to the other as both prided themselves on their resilience and 'can do' attitude.

During the deployment, Jenny was initially managing well but after being retrenched from her job, she found she wasn't sleeping well, and was drinking more alcohol than usual. She'd also withdrawn from social activities and exercise. Sally's behaviour also changed. She was irritable, sometimes tearful, less talkative, and retreated to her bedroom. Jack, who had struggled to make friends at his new school, was consistently complaining about feeling unwell to avoid going to school. He also seemed unhappy or withdrawn when talking with John by phone.

When the family reunited, the previous supportive, fun and relaxed family dynamics appeared to have been replaced with tension and disconnection.

A close family friend suggested that John and Jenny contact Open Arms.

After an intake assessment was completed with each family member, they were assigned to a skilled counsellor. Following a comprehensive assessment of their individual issues, goals were set and treatment plans were put in place. Here's a summary of the support they received from Open Arms.

John attended the 'Recovery from Trauma' and 'Doing Anger Differently' group programs. He also worked with his medical officer to manage his back pain and found great benefit in the 'Managing your Pain' group program. He also found it helpful to connect with a peer support worker who shared strategies and insights about what helped them to manage similar mental health struggles.

Jenny worked with her counsellor on a range of focused psychological strategies, which included her attending the 'Sleeping Better' program and reducing her alcohol intake. She and John attended couples counselling and noticed an improvement in their communication and also their intimacy.

Jenny was able to share her learnings from the 'Engaging Adolescents' workshop with John and both parents noticed Sally's responses improving. Sally enjoyed working with her counsellor and completing the skills training activities she was assigned to improve her self-esteem and assertiveness. And, through counselling it was revealed that Jack was worried about his father being killed overseas and having to 'step up' to support the family. Using a systemic practice model, the family learned practical problem-solving skills and strategies to assist Jack to manage his fears.

Open Arms assisted John and his family to deal with issues related to his military service, and ultimately assisted the family to become a stronger, more resilient family system.

OUR STAFF



COUNSELLORS

Open Arms counsellors have an understanding of veteran and military culture that assists them to deliver specialised support and care to members of the veteran community. Every day presents a new opportunity to make a difference in the lives of this unique cohort on problems ranging from relationship issues to PTSD.

MELODY'S STORY

Melody has always had an interest in allied health and helping people. Having a number of family members who have served in

the defence forces and in war, she is grateful to have an opportunity to use her skills to support a community that do such a important job. Having observed, through her own family, a veteran with mental health issues, she became more aware of allied health roles, particularly those of psychologists—it is what steered her in this direction.

"If I look over my career, and think what are the parts I've enjoyed the most, it's really been the one-to-one client work that I've done, and seeing particular clients change. Coming in from very distressed, very unwell people, moving back to having a more meaningful, fulfilling life and to know you've played a part in helping that person in their journey, is, I think, one of the most rewarding feelings you can have."



COMMUNITY AND PEER ADVISOR

Community and Peer Advisors uniquely understand what it is like to need to reach out for support. They have served in the Australian Defence Force and have had the experience of accessing mental health services for their own wellbeing. Based on their personal experiences, they also understand what it takes to find one's way back from mental illness.

TIM'S STORY

Tim served in the Australian Defence Force from 2004 to 2014 as a Combat Engineer. He completed deployments to East Timor and

Afghanistan. During a deployment to Afghanistan in 2009, Tim was involved in an improvised explosive device blast and received multiple injuries which resulted in major life changing outcomes for him. Tim had to make many personal and occupational adjustments, none of which seemed easy at first. Tim has had to experience coming to terms with his medical rehabilitation and transitioning out of the ADF. Throughout his journey he also had to seek support to find ways to help him manage the psychological impacts associated with his experience. He is now back to being able to enjoy having an active lifestyle, close connection with others and having a new career.

Tim draws upon his personal experience to validate and support others who may be going through similarly challenging times. He is able to walk along-side others to help them make sense of their own experience and to connect to appropriate supports.

STAFF BENEFITS

Open Arms is well resourced, with sound opportunities for professional development—developing skills in a range of areas dependent on your clinical interests. You'll:

- Be part of a service that is leading innovation in the field of veterans mental health
- Provide treatment and support to clients through flexible and tailored approaches based on clinical need
- Receive regular internal and external supervision within a professionally supportive workplace
- Have opportunities to develop your skills under the supervision and support of senior clinical leaders as well as experts in the field
- Be working with a professionally rewarding client group
- Be part of a network of committed, highly skilled and dedicated mental health professionals
- Work in a team based environment where your contributions count
- Join a service that is changing and growing to better meet client needs

"Our clients are a fantastic client group... Once you understand the cultural nuances of military service, you recognise that it is in fact a privilege to provide healthcare to this population."

TESTIMONIALS

"I chose Open Arms because it is a highly regarded, established government organisation with a good reputation."

"Working for an organisation that isn't focused on profit, but on delivering the right service to the right people is inherently rewarding."

"As a clinician, you are supported with PD, supervision and your professional needs (and limitations) are respected."

"The diversity of the client population means that I am constantly having to draw from a variety of evidenced based therapeutic approaches and apply these to each individual situation. This means that I maintain my motivation to participate in PD..."





**If you're interested in working for
Open Arms - Veterans & Families counselling
we'd love to hear from you!**

**Please contact us via email,
openarms.coord@dva.gov.au**

1800 011 046