

Guidelines for approval as an accredited vocational rehabilitation provider (VRP)

Guide

Approved by the Work Health Authority

Section 50 of the *Return to Work Act* provides the Authority may, in writing, approve a person, Agency or body as an accredited vocational rehabilitation provider.

An accredited vocational rehabilitation provider must not contravene or fail to comply with a condition to which the approval is subject.

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Introduction

One of the objects of the *Return to Work Act 1986* (the Act) is to provide for the prompt and effective management of workplace injuries in a manner that promotes and assists the return to work of injured workers as soon as practicable.

In the Northern Territory a *Workplace rehabilitation Provider* (WRP) is referred to as *Vocational Rehabilitation Provider* (VRP) and within these guidelines and the *Principles workplace rehabilitation provider* has the same meaning as *vocational rehabilitation provider*.

Most people injured at work return to work within a few days, however those with more serious injuries may need help through workplace rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation is defined by the Act as:

rehabilitation, in relation to an injured worker, means a process designed to:

- (a) ensure the worker's return to work as soon as practicable; or
- (b) maximise the worker's ability to live independently.

Workplace rehabilitation utilises work as part of treatment and recovery. By providing timely intervention and conducting individualised assessments, suitable work can become a significant part of a workers recovery.

To make practical and effective use of workplace rehabilitation, the process requires a collective effort and coordination between the key parties involved. This includes the worker, the employer, the insurer, treating practitioner(s), and in more complex cases, a VRP.

The Act specifies that a person, Agency or body is not to provide a vocational rehabilitation service to an injured worker unless the service is provided by an accredited vocational rehabilitation provider approved by NT WorkSafe. A VRP is the organisation responsible for providing effective rehabilitation support for an injured worker. The organisation may be a corporation, partnership, sole-trader or some other type of business with an Australia Business Number (ABN).

A staff member is the individual(s) employed by a VRP to provide services based on the assessed needs of a worker and/or the workplace. The nature of the employment relationship between the VRP and staff (e.g. employee or contractor) is immaterial to the requirements of the approval criteria. The VRP must ensure its staff meet the minimum qualifications and experience.

The Work Health Authority has agreed to adopt the Head of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HWCA): *Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers* (Principles of Practice), subject to any amendments made by the Northern Territory *Guidelines for approval as an accredited vocational rehabilitation* (the Guidelines). For the purpose of approving VRP's pursuant to section 50 of the Act and the setting of standards in the Northern Territory the Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the Principles of Practice.

The Principles of Practice have been developed to support VRP in the delivery of services to workers with a compensable injury. Organisations should ensure they fully understand the Principles of Practice and the Guidelines prior to making an application to NT WorkSafe to become an approved VRP in the Northern Territory.

If the application is successful, an Instrument of Approval as a VRP will be issued for a three year period, until July 31 of the third year. A common expiry date applies to all approved VRPs.

These Guidelines outline NT WorkSafe's approval requirements, namely:

- Approval Criteria for vocational rehabilitation provider applications and renewals
- Staff details (Appendix 1)
- *Conditions of Approval* (Appendix 2)
- Application and renewal process
- Northern Territory Vocational Rehabilitation Providers Return to Work Rates (Appendix 3)
- Web information (Appendix 4)

Approval Criteria

Section 50 of the Act provides NT WorkSafe's powers to regulate, approve and revoke authority for VRPs to operate.

In considering applications for approval or renewal, NT WorkSafe assesses VRPs against *Approval Criteria* and *Conditions of Approval*. The criteria and conditions are derived from the HCWA *Principles of Practice* and NT WorkSafe's performance standards and requirements.

VRPs approved in other states are required to provide evidence of their approval

It is a requirement that VRPs must have a business premise that is physically located in the Northern Territory. However, this requirement will not apply if the applicant has entered into contractual arrangements that involve the exclusive use of Northern Territory based VRPs (who meet the relevant professions and eligibility requirements in Appendix A of the Principles). In these circumstances, evidence of the contractual arrangements will be required.

An applicant that is not physically located in the Northern Territory must have current accreditation in their home jurisdiction.

Organisations applying to deliver vocational rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory must have at least one worker who is a Northern Territory resident. One of the following would be sufficient to show evidence of a staff member's current NT residential address:

- contract of purchase, current lease or rental document, receipt from an accommodation house or caravan park showing your residential address
- formal NT Government correspondence identifying you and your residential address dated within the last 12 months
- formal Australian Government correspondence identifying you and your residential address dated within the last 12 months
- council rate notice identifying you and your residential address
- financial institution document identifying you and your residential address dated within the last three months
- gas, electricity, water, telephone, pay TV, Foxtel, internet account identifying you and your residential address dated within the last three months
- Australian Taxation Office assessment showing current residential address

To deliver vocational rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory, you must have a current business address in the Northern Territory. Evidence the business is operating in the Northern Territory (NT) will be required and may include:

- lease agreement
- contracts and invoices from suppliers / customers
- letter from accountant stating 12 months operation, net assets, profit / loss and turnover
- business capability statement / promotional material referencing NT operation

If delivering services in the Northern Territory, you must hold a current workers compensation insurance policy provided by an approved insurer in the Northern Territory.

VRPs must demonstrate the capacity to comply with the HCWA *Principles of Practice: Part 2 – Principles of Administration*, relating to the competence and qualifications of consultants and governance processes.

VRP's must have at least one person in its management structure with a relevant qualification and at least one person in its management structure with a relevant qualification and at least five years' demonstrated workplace rehabilitation experience (see principle six).

In meeting the requirements of principle seven, VRP's must meet relevant state and commonwealth legislative requirements for operating a business and have the appropriate level of insurance and financial administration.

Robust systems and processes must be in place to ensure all conflict of interest issues are considered, mitigated and notified to NT WorkSafe. VRP must ensure they maintain accurate record keeping that demonstrates sound decision making and judgments on all conflict of interest matters.

An organisation **must agree** to adhere to the *Conditions of Approval* to be approved as a VRP.

NT WorkSafe modifications of relevant professions and eligibility requirements

The following modifications of relevant professions and eligibility requirements are in addition to those relevant professions and eligibility requirements list in Appendix A of the Head of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HWCA): [Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers](#) .

- **Psychologist (provisional registration)**

The Psychology Board of Australia (the Board) grants provisional registration and provides that a person granted provisional registration is only able to practice in positions that are supervised and this would apply in delivering vocational rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory. The Board must approve the supervisor to meet the provisional registration requirements.

As a person who holds a provisional registration is not able to practice unsupervised, the Northern Territory will approve provisional psychologists to deliver vocational rehabilitation services under supervision. This would allow a person granted provisional registration to progress to general registration and would also build capacity to align with the experience required for workplace rehabilitation consultants outlined in the *Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers*, Principle Six.

- **Chiropractor (general registration)**

Must be registered with the Chiropractic Board of Australia (National Board) and also meet the minimum experience for workplace rehabilitation consultants as provided in Principle Six.

- **Rehabilitation counsellor**

Must be registered as an associate member with the *Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors*.

As a person who holds an associate member registration is not able to practice unsupervised, the Northern Territory will approve associate members undergoing the ASORC supervision program to deliver vocational rehabilitation services under supervision for a minimum period of 12 months. This would allow a person undergoing the program to progress to full membership and would also build capacity to align with the experience required for workplace rehabilitation consultants outlined in the *Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers*, Principle Six.

- **Osteopath (general registration)**

Must be registered with the Osteopathy Board of Australia (National Board) and also meet the minimum experience for workplace rehabilitation consultants as provided in Principle Six.

If you wish to make enquiries regarding additional professional groups, please contact NT WorkSafe.

NT WorkSafe fees

NT WorkSafe does not prescribe fees for new or renewed applications, however reserves the right to do so in the future.

Further, the Northern Territory does not set rates for vocational rehabilitation services or allied health services. Fees for service are arranged and determined by the individual approved insurer or self-insurer.

Minimum return to work rate and activity requirements

NT WorkSafe does not set a minimum return to work rate, however NT WorkSafe will require annual reporting on return to work rates in the format provided in Appendix 3.

An organisation must demonstrate management of 6 cases (excludes assessment only cases) of workplace rehabilitation for each 12 month period within the three year approval period (if 6 cases from the Northern Territory are not available, it can be made up from other jurisdictions where you are approved). Due consideration will be given to organisations servicing rural and remote areas).

Application and renewal process

NT WorkSafe is the administrative arm of the Work Health Authority and will accept and process all applications for an accredited VRP for consideration by the Work Health Authority.

To apply to be a new VRP or to renew your accreditation, you must submit a completed application to NT WorkSafe. Application forms can be found on [NT WorkSafe's website](#).

Please ensure your application contains sufficient information and supporting documentation to demonstrate the organisation's capacity to meet the *Conditions of Approval* (Appendix 2).

NT WorkSafe will approve an application where it is satisfied that the applicant will conform to the *Conditions of Approval*. NT WorkSafe will inform the applicant of its decision by issuing an *Instrument of Approval*.

An *Instrument of Approval* is issued for a maximum period of three years, until July 31 of the third year of the approval period. In order to continue to provide services beyond this date, a VRP will be required to make a renewal application by April 1 in the final year of the three year approval period.

A common expiry date of July 31 of the third year applies to all VRPs.

During the three year approval period, the VRP will be required to:

- provide annual return to work rates (see Appendix 3);
- participate in annual self-evaluations; and
- any independent evaluation as required by NT WorkSafe to determine conformance with the *Conditions of Approval*.

Should an application not conform to all the *Conditions of Approval*, the applicant will be given an opportunity to provide further information. Subsequent to this, if the applicant does not conform to all the *Conditions of Approval* then the application will be unsuccessful.

If an application is unsuccessful, the VRP will be advised of the reasons.

An organisation that has been unsuccessful in their application will not be eligible to apply for approval until they can demonstrate to NT WorkSafe that the reasons for non-approval no longer exist.

The provision of false or misleading information is a serious offence and will nullify the *Instrument of Approval* and any application.

NT WorkSafe reserves the right to request further information in writing from the VRP where required.

NT WorkSafe may also liaise with other workers compensation authorities, where the VRP delivers workplace rehabilitation services, to exchange information about the application.

Part A: Application Details

An applicant must include:

- organisational details
- evidence of Northern Territory business location
- association or connection with other organisations which supply workers' compensation services
- evidence of approval from other workers compensation authorities where approval has been granted
- referees (initial application only)
- statements relating to conflicts of interest

- professional or criminal proceedings against the organisation
- current professional indemnity insurance policy
- current public liability insurance policy
- current NT Workers Compensation insurance policy (where applicable)
- latest actuary/financial audit

Part B: Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval

In an initial application the VRP must demonstrate how it will conform to NT WorkSafe's *Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval*.

In a renewal application the VRP must state how it has conformed to the *Conditions of Approval*.

As relevant, a succinct statement for each *Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval* is required.

An application must include:

- Completed staff details sheet
- Evidence of a staff members current NT residential address

Part C: Statement of Commitment to the Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval

Applicants must sign a statement of commitment to the *Approval Criteria* and the *Conditions of Approval*. The statement outlines NT WorkSafe's expectations and includes the VRPs acceptance. NT WorkSafe may withdraw an approval where requirements are not met.

Part D: Statement of Commitment to the Principles of Practice for Vocational Rehabilitation Providers

Applicants must sign a statement of commitment to the *Principles of Practice for Vocational Rehabilitation Providers*. The statement includes the VRPs acceptance. NT WorkSafe may withdraw an approval where requirements are not met.

Part E: Consent to collect, disclose and release information

Applicants must sign a consent for NT WorkSafe to collect, disclose and release information with other jurisdictional workers compensation authorities.

Contact us

For further information please contact us on 1800 250 713, facsimile (08) 8999 5141, via email at datantworksafe@nt.gov.au or go to the NT WorkSafe website at www.worksafe.nt.gov.au

APPENDIX 1: STAFF DETAILS

- This form must be completed as part of your application for all vocational rehabilitation providers delivering prescribed workplace rehabilitation services for your organisation, in accordance with the Act
- Include information on which workplace rehabilitation services are being delivered by each staff member and the location at which the services are delivered
- For multi jurisdiction organisations, vocational rehabilitation providers who reside outside the Northern Territory, however visit the Territory to deliver workplace rehabilitation services under the Act, should also be included on this form
- Duplicate the table provided if necessary to list all staff members, services delivered and locations from which services are delivered

Please ensure the information below is completed for your organisation:

Organisation name:		ABN:	
Location address:		Postal address:	
Accreditation number:		Details as at date:	
Contact name:		Contact position title:	
Email address:		Telephone number:	
Mobile number:		Facsimile number:	

Organisations applying to deliver vocational rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory must have at least one worker who is a Northern Territory resident. One of the following would be sufficient to show evidence of a staff member's current NT residential address:

- contract of purchase, current lease or rental document, receipt from an accommodation house or caravan park showing your residential address
- formal NT Government correspondence identifying you and your residential address dated within the last 12 months
- formal Australian Government correspondence identifying you and your residential address dated within the last 12 months
- council rate notice identifying you and your residential address
- financial institution document identifying you and your residential address dated within the last three months
- gas, electricity, water, telephone, pay TV, Foxtel, internet account identifying you and your residential address dated within the last three months
- Australian Taxation Office assessment showing current residential address

Evidence of a staff member's current Northern Territory residential address attached	<input type="checkbox"/>
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STAFF DETAILS *continued*

Full name:	
Position:	
Email:	
Address:	
Location from which services delivered:	
Years of relevant vocation rehabilitation experience:	
Supervision arrangements (for staff with less than 12 months experience):	
Employment type (e.g. full-time, part-time, casual):	
Qualification, including institution and year attained:	
Years of relevant vocation rehabilitation experience:	
Professional membership or registration (type and member number):	
Type of evidence provided showing staff member's current NT residential address:	

PRESCRIBED WORKPLACE REHABILITATION SERVICES DELIVERED

<input type="checkbox"/>	Initial workplace rehabilitation assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rehabilitation counselling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessment of the functional capacity of a worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vocational assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Workplace assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice or assistance in relation to job seeking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Job analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice or assistance in arranging vocational re-education or retraining
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice concerning job modification	<input type="checkbox"/>	

*Duplicate this page and table as necessary to list all staff members

APPENDIX 2: APPROVAL CRITERIA AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

The Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval:

1. The vocational rehabilitation provider must comply with the *Conditions of Approval*, along with the contents of the Principles of Practice and the Guidelines generally, as ongoing requirements.
2. The vocational rehabilitation provider must have at least one worker who is a Northern Territory resident (Appendix 1).
3. The vocational rehabilitation provider must ensure that all services are delivered in accordance with the workplace rehabilitation model by persons who hold the minimum qualifications as defined in the *Principles of Practice* and the Guidelines.
4. The vocational rehabilitation provider's management structure must include at least one person who holds a rehabilitation consultant qualification outlined in the *Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers*, and who is able to demonstrate five years' relevant vocational rehabilitation experience.
5. The vocational rehabilitation provider must participate in annual self-evaluations and independent evaluations as required by NT WorkSafe, to demonstrate conformance with the *Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval*.
6. An organisation must demonstrate management of 3 cases (excludes assessment only cases) of workplace rehabilitation for each 12 month period within the three year approval period (if 3 cases from the Northern Territory are not available, it can be made up from other jurisdictions where you are approved). Due consideration will be given to organisations servicing rural and remote areas).
7. NT WorkSafe does not set a minimum return to work rate, however NT WorkSafe will require annual reporting on return to work rates in the format provided in Appendix 3.
8. The vocational rehabilitation provider must deliver services in compliance with the *Principles of Practice for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers* and the *Guidelines*.
9. The vocational rehabilitation provider's facilities at all locations where services are delivered must provide an accessible and appropriate environment for workers, staff and visitors and comply with local workplace health and safety legislation.
10. The vocational rehabilitation provider must remain financially solvent.
11. The vocational rehabilitation provider must notify NT WorkSafe in advance, in writing, or as soon as practical, if any of the following situations arise and accept that NT WorkSafe will review the status of approval and determine whether the proposed arrangements conform with the *Approval Criteria and Conditions of Approval*:
 - i. the business is sold or the controlling interest in the business is taken over by a new shareholder(s), owner(s) or director(s)
 - ii. the business changes its trading name or location of premises

- iii. the business supplies or has connections with other suppliers of services within the workers compensation industry
 - iv. a new chief executive officer or director or head of management is appointed
 - v. there is a major change in the service delivery model and/or staff which may impact on the delivery of the workplace rehabilitation services
 - vi. any change in NT staff delivering rehabilitation services (new staff will require endorsement from NT WorkSafe prior to delivering services)
 - vii. there is any other change that affects, or may affect, the provider's service quality and procedures
 - viii. the provider has entered into voluntary financial administration, becomes insolvent or is the subject of bankruptcy proceedings
 - ix. there is any professional misconduct proceedings being taken against the provider or any individuals employed or engaged by the provider.
12. The vocational rehabilitation provider must accept that NT WorkSafe may:
- i. initiate an evaluation at any time during the period of the approval, which may involve an evaluation of conformance to the *Approval Criteria* or *Conditions of Approval*.
 - ii. consult with the relevant professional or industry associations in determining what are reasonable expectations regarding performance
 - iii. impose additional requirements
 - iv. exchange information with other workers compensation authorities on provider performance
 - v. cancel approval status if the above conditions are not met

NT WorkSafe reserves the right to request evidence of supervision where required, of a person delivering services (refer to NEW application – Principle 6 “competent and qualified professionals”)

APPENDIX 3: NORTHERN TERRITORY VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROVIDERS RETURN TO WORK RATES

Whilst there is no minimum return to work rates for the Northern Territory, a summary of yearly performance results for Return to Work Rates are required by 31 July annually.

Please use the template provided by following these steps:

- Click on the Excel icon below, this will open the attachment navigation pane
- In the attachment navigation pane, right click on the file titled “TEMPLATE – Return to Work Rates.xlsx” and select “Save Attachment”



TEMPLATE - Return
to Work Rates.xlsx

Alternatively, you can contact NT WorkSafe to obtain a copy of the template.

If you have any questions regarding the information requested, please contact NT WorkSafe.

APPENDIX 4: NORTHERN TERRITORY VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROVIDERS INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED ON NT WORKSAFE WEBSITE

NT WorkSafe provides a list of accredited vocational rehabilitation providers on our website. Could you provide updated information for your organisation that you approve being placed on the website.

Organisation name:	
Contact name:	
Telephone number:	
Mobile number:	
Email address:	
Where in the Territory you provide services (eg Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek)	

Name of authorised signatory:	
Title of authorised signatory:	
Signature of authorised signatory:	
Date	