



Sub branch support of Homeless Veterans.

Wellbeing Guideline

July 2023.



RSL
Queensland

Sub branches play a crucial role in the support of veterans and are often the first point of contact for those who are experiencing homelessness.

The following guideline and algorithm have been designed to assist sub branches in the immediate management of a homeless veteran who presents to a sub branch for homelessness support.

Contents:

- Actions during Business hours: p.2
- Actions after-hours: including weekends and public holidays: p.2
 - Contacting Open Arms: p.3
 - Reasons Open Arms in unable to provide support: p.3
 - Sub branch response p.4
- Claiming back accommodation expenses p.5
- After Hours Flowchart p.6

Actions during business hours (07:30-16:00hrs Monday – Friday)

1. Instruct the veteran to call the RSL Queensland Veteran Services Client Contact Team (CCT) on 134 775.
2. If the veteran does not have access to a phone, please offer them the use of sub branch facilities to call RSL Queensland and speak with a member of the CCT.
3. The CCT member will take a brief history of the veteran and their circumstances and assign a Lead to the Wellbeing Team.
4. CCT will advise the veteran to contact Open Arms to explore their eligibility for the Crisis Accommodation Support (CAS) Procedure.
5. If the veteran is not eligible for CAS, an RSL Queensland Wellbeing Advocate (WBA) will contact the veteran to discuss VHP entry.
6. If the sub branch wishes to remain part of the veteran's ongoing management, it should email Veteran Services on vs@rslqld.org and request that the WBA assigned to the case contact them once the veteran's intake into the VHP has been completed.

Actions after hours: including weekends and public holidays.

7. RSL Queensland does not currently have capacity to offer an afterhours service to manage referrals into its Veteran Homelessness Program (VHP).

Contacting Open Arms:

8. Open Arms manages a CAS procedure whereby eligible veterans may receive a period of three nights of crisis accommodation.
9. If CAS is granted, Open Arms will refer the veteran to RSL Queensland's VHP on the next working day.
10. It is important to advise the veteran to call back the sub branch and advise them of Open Arms' response to their request for CAS as, in some circumstances, Open Arms may decline a veteran's request for crisis accommodation as they do not meet eligibility criteria.

Reasons Open Arms may be unable to provide CAS support:

In some circumstances, a veteran may be ineligible for Open Arms CAS. These include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances:¹

11. **The individual can access the required accommodation themselves. For example, by staying with friends or family.**
12. **The individual has sufficient funds to pay for their own emergency accommodation.**
If a veteran is not experiencing financial hardship, Open Arms will decline support as the veteran has mean to fund their own emergency accommodation.
13. **An individual has refused to become an Open Arms client and/or engage with Open Arms care coordination while in CAS accommodation.**
14. **An individual's safety to self or to/from others may be compromised.**
Veterans must be able to self-care in hotel-style accommodation. Those who: require tertiary mental health support; are at risk of harm from others (such as in Family and Domestic Violence situations); or have medical conditions requiring treatment are not suitable for CAS.
15. **The individual will not provide an emergency contact person or service to Open Arms.**
16. **An individual's dog is not an accredited Assistance Dog.**
Open Arms is unable to fund Support and Companion dogs in CAS.
17. **The Veteran does not have a plan to address their homelessness after the period of CAS.**
The veteran should inform Open Arms that they have approached RSL Queensland for support in its VHP after CAS ends.

¹ Open Arms: 22: *Crisis Accommodation Support (CAS) Procedure*. Australian Government: Department of Veteran Affairs: Open Arms (2023), pp. 1-2.

18. The veteran has previously, or is considered likely to

- Damage CAS accommodation.
- Behave inappropriately whilst in CAS accommodation.
- Engage in criminal activity whilst in CAS accommodation.

19. The veteran is not yet homeless.

If an individual requests CAS before they are physically homeless, Open Arms will decline crisis accommodation. For example, a veteran who call Open Arms on Monday is facing eviction on a Friday: as the veteran is not yet homeless, Open Arms cannot provide CAS.

20. The Veteran has previously received CAS from Open Arms.

Sub branch response

21. If Open Arms is unable to provide CAS, the sub branch should arrange to place the veteran into motel/hotel/caravan park accommodation. If the veteran has a car, check that the accommodation has the provision to park a vehicle and it is included in the tariff.

22. Sub branches should inform veterans that only accommodation is being paid for: any charges in addition to the room tariff must be paid for by the veteran.

23. If the veteran is experiencing financial hardship, a food voucher may also be required.

24. While some sub branches have the financial means to provide this support, others may need to contact District to request payment of accommodation.

25. The next working day, the sub branch contacts RSL Queensland's Client Contact Team on **134 775** and advises them of the following details:

- Veteran's name, date of birth and service details.
- Veteran's contact details: phone number and email address. If a veteran does not have access to a phone or email, please advise them that RSL Queensland will contact them via the motel.
- Name and location of the accommodation that the veteran has been accommodated in.
- Any other information that the sub branch feels is relevant to the veteran's circumstances.

26. If the sub branch wishes to remain part of the veteran's ongoing management, it should email Veteran Services on vs@rslqld.org and request that the Wellbeing Advocate assigned to the case contact them once the veteran's intake into the VHP has been completed.

Claiming back accommodation expenses

If the sub branch had paid for a veteran's emergency accommodation, it can claim this expense back through the Charitable Objects Fund.

References:

Open Arms: Crisis Accommodation Support (CAS) Procedure. Open Arms, March 2023.

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Sub Branch flowchart for a Homeless Veteran

