

TERMS OF REFERENCE

VESPIIA Cadre of Padres

Purpose

The Cadre of Padres Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) is established under Clause 10.2 of the VESPIIA Constitution and operates under VESPIIA's By-Laws to support the recognition, coordination, and development of chaplaincy services across Australia's defence, emergency services, first responder, and veteran support sectors.

The Subcommittee exists to provide expert, practice-informed advice to VESPIIA; guide national conversations on chaplaincy; and promote ethical, inclusive, and sector-appropriate practice. It is grounded in a commitment to collaboration and does not seek to replace or override existing denominational, institutional, or organisational structures.

Objectives

The Subcommittee will:

- Provide advice on emerging issues, risks, and opportunities facing chaplains and spiritual care workers
- Identify sector gaps and support the development of ethical and inclusive practice standards
- Lead, or contribute to co-design initiatives in professional development, peer supervision, and wellbeing initiatives
- Guide the development of resources, events, and publications that raise the visibility and understanding of chaplaincy
- Establish and maintain a sector-informed Cadre of Padres Code of Conduct (as an appendix to the main VESPIIA Code)
- Promote interfaith, cross-sector, and community-informed collaboration and support
- Amplify existing training and support efforts, identifying and filling gaps only where appropriate
- Contribute to policy submissions or public discourse with VESPIIA's support and approval relating to chaplaincy and the chaplaincy workforce

Scope

The Subcommittee is advisory in nature and does not hold executive or governance powers. Its scope includes:

- Making recommendations to the VESPIIA CEO and/or Board
- Leading or supporting project-based work aligned to sector needs
- Proposing sector-wide efforts in training, supervision, and support
- Reviewing research partnerships or advocacy opportunities relevant to chaplaincy

Any public-facing activities, media commentary, or advocacy must be approved by VESPIIA.

Membership

The Subcommittee will consist of a minimum of 4 members and a maximum of 12 members, including:

- Chaplains in defence, emergency services, policing, corrections, community, and health
- A mix of denominational, interfaith, and non-denominational backgrounds
- Urban, regional, and remote settings
- Individuals with lived, volunteer, or professional experience in chaplaincy
- Those with expertise in training, supervision, or policy

Working group contributors may be invited to support specific tasks or priorities, without formal Subcommittee membership.

All Subcommittee members must hold an active membership with VESPIIA (Organisational or Professional Grade). However, individuals serving on the Cadre of Padres Subcommittee will have their membership fee waived for the duration of their term, in recognition of their voluntary contribution to the work of the Institute.

Appointment and Tenure

- Members will be appointed through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process coordinated by VESPIIA
- Terms are for two (2) years
- All positions are voluntary; members may be reimbursed for approved expenses
- Members may resign at any time by notifying the Chair or VESPIIA in writing

Roles and Responsibilities

All members are expected to:

- Attend and contribute to scheduled meetings
- Participate in relevant working groups
- Represent their role and sector in good faith, not their organisation unless approved
- Comply with the VESPIIA Code of Professional Conduct and Cadre of Padres Code of Conduct
- Maintain confidentiality and disclose any conflicts of interest

The Chair is responsible for:

- Coordinating with VESPIIA to set meeting agendas
- Facilitating Subcommittee discussions
- Representing the Subcommittee within VESPIIA and externally, as appropriate
- Reporting outcomes and recommendations to the VESPIIA CEO and/or Board

Meetings

- The Subcommittee will meet quarterly; additional meetings may be scheduled
- Meetings may be held virtually or in person
- A quorum requires 50% of members, including the Chair (or delegate)
- VESPIIA may nominate up to three representatives (e.g. Chair, CEO, or Secretariat) to attend Subcommittee meetings in support of a safe, respectful, and professionally governed environment for all members.¹
- VESPIIA will provide secretariat support, including agendas, logistics, minute taking and record keeping

Project Areas and Working Groups

Members may lead or support working streams aligned to sector priorities, including:

- Training and professional development
- Peer supervision and wellbeing
- Practice frameworks and ethics
- Communications and publications
- Research partnerships and impact measurement
- Events and engagement

Working groups will be convened only where needed and scoped to be practical, lightweight, and non-burdensome. Collaboration with existing bodies and institutions will be prioritised before any new work is undertaken.

Reporting and Accountability

- The Subcommittee reports to the VESPIIA CEO and/or Board
- Outcomes, recommendations, or public statements must be approved by VESPIIA prior to release
- A summary of Subcommittee activities may be included in VESPIIA's Annual Report
- The Cadre may be consulted as part of VESPIIA's broader advocacy and sector engagement

Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Subcommittee and VESPIIA Executive to ensure ongoing relevance and alignment with the Institute's strategic priorities as required.

¹ This is a standard practice being introduced across all VESPIIA committees and working groups to ensure consistency in governance, provide appropriate support to committee chairs, and maintain an environment of mutual respect and accountability.

