

## **Austcare's Rapid Response Register Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Austcare's *Protect Now* Program?**

Austcare's *Protect Now* program was established in August 2005, under the guidance of the Hon. John Dowd AO, QC as Austcare's Ambassador for Protection.<sup>1</sup> The program has grown significantly since its inception and has been supported by the Australian Government.<sup>2</sup> The goal of Austcare's *Protect Now* program is to improve the safety, dignity and integrity of civilians facing severe threats to their security and freedom.

The program encompasses four integrated elements:

#### **1. *Protection mainstreaming***

Protection is being incorporated as a core element of Austcare's work. A protection lens is being integrated into our preparedness, emergency and early recovery programs.

#### **2. *Rapid Response Register***

Austcare's Rapid Response Register is a roster of professional protection practitioners available for deployment to United Nations (and other approved) agencies for periods of 3-12 months. This register is the only mechanism in Australia focused solely on protection deployments.

#### **3. *Research and Policy***

Austcare recognises the importance of linking research and practice. Action research encourages critical reflection by our programming team and contribution of their expertise into the research. Such research informs Austcare's work with people and communities to develop strategies targeting protection concerns, human security, and sustainable poverty reduction.

#### **4. *Advocacy and campaigning***

Austcare raises awareness in Australia and abroad highlighting vulnerable people's concerns, gathering support for new initiatives (such as the *Responsibility to Protect*), and advocating with humanitarian agencies to develop a common protection framework.

#### **5. *Austcare Protection Chapter***

Austcare also raises awareness of protection issues within the corporate sector through the Austcare Protection Chapter (APC). The APC was established on International Human Rights Day (10 December) in 2005. The APC is a group of four leading corporate legal firms in Australia, namely DLA Phillips Fox, Sparke Helmore, Minter Ellison and Workplace Law. The APC provides financial, professional and pro bono contributions to Austcare for the *Protect Now* program and provides opportunities for Australian lawyers to enhance their skills and expertise in international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law.

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<sup>1</sup> The biography of the Hon. John Dowd AO QC can be found at <http://www.austcare.org.au/media/19586/ourpeoplejohndowd.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> AusAID has provided Austcare AUD1.9million to deploy 23 Protection Officers to UN agencies in emergencies. Two additional proposals are currently under consideration for funding for Protection Officer deployments by the AusAID Africa and South Asia Desks.

### **What is the Rapid Response Register?**

Austcare's Rapid Response Register is a roster of professional protection practitioners available for deployment to United Nations agencies for periods of 3-12 months. The register:

- *enhances the protection capacity of UN agencies* in emergencies and ongoing humanitarian crises through the quick deployment of professional protection practitioners; and
- *increases Australian expertise on protection issues* by developing a pool of specialists who can be called upon to assist in emerging and ongoing crises.

Members of the Rapid Response Register also have the opportunity to work with Austcare in protection positions in our country programs. They will be advised of and can apply for protection opportunities with Austcare and our partner organisations as part of our protection mainstreaming work.

### **What sort of duties do the protection officers do?**

The role of each protection officer is different, since we send people to different UN agencies, in different countries. The role largely depends on the mandate of the agency, for example, protection officers may be involved in advocating on child rights, developing gender-based violence programs or have more of a coordinator role, facilitating local protection working groups, gathering reports of human rights abuses, analysing the information and advocating with local authorities on key protection issues. A practical understanding of protection field strategies and the international human rights legal framework is essential.

Protection positions with Austcare and partner agencies may involve similar activities; more specialised skills, such as capacity building, training and policy development; and/or be in select sectors, such as disaster risk reduction, livelihoods or mine action.

### **How long are the positions?**

The positions range from 3 -12 months, with most positions being 6 months. For shorter assignments, there is potential for extension, provided that the UN agency, the Protection Officer and Austcare are in agreement.

### **How does the recruitment process work?**

The recruitment process for admission to the register does have a number of steps. It involves interviews, a written assessment, referee checks, police check and training. Once you are accepted onto the register, we can recommend your application to UN agencies if your profile suits their needs. The final decision is then made by that UN agency.

### **The job description says "immediate deployment". What exactly does this mean?**

Austcare receives requests from UN agencies in the field that we are tasked with filling. When a UN agency accepts you as the candidate for the position, the deployment time can be very quick (72 hours in emergencies), however most deployments take 2-4 weeks. The timeframe varies according to each situation. However, you can advise us of your availability for assignments. If you were accepted onto our register, we would always consult with you to confirm your availability and interest in the location and position before suggesting you to the agency. You must be available for a deployment within 12 months in order to join the register.

**If I am successful in getting on the register, how long will it be before I am deployed?**

The timeframe can vary. The recruitment process normally takes 2-3 weeks, with training scheduled every few months. Once you are on the register, we need to match your skills with UN requirements and then await their decisions. Some people are deployed very quickly, however it may take longer for others to be matched with a position. Candidates are able to join the register if they are not currently available to be deployed, so long as they update Austcare when their availability changes.

**Which training is required to qualify for registration on RRR?**

In order to be active on the RRR, Protection Officers must complete security training, such as the *Personal Security and Communications* training provided by RedR (<http://www.redr.org/australia/index.htm>).

Prior to deployment, Protection Officers must have attended an Austcare Protection Workshop. The workshops are held quarterly and cover:

- Introduction to protection concepts (safety, security, integrity, dignity)
- Introduction to the legal framework
- Introduction to basic principles of protection work (confidentiality, rights-based, participation)
- Step-by-step workshopping of the stages of protection laid out in the manual

They also need to attend an induction session once accepted for a protection position. This induction includes background on Austcare and the UN agencies, staff welfare and care, reporting requirements, fundraising and communications background, additional security training, and contractual and administrative arrangements. Particular UN agencies also require some specific training prior to departure.

For all staff deployed through UN agencies, it is compulsory to complete both the **Basic Security in the Field** DVD and the **Advanced** before arriving in the field in an area of high security risk. These have been provided by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) for us to send out.

Protection Officers on our register can also be nominated for United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) *ProCap training*. This training is a 5 day residential program that seeks to build protection knowledge and skills and aims to strengthen common understandings and approaches to protection in the field.

**What countries do you send people to?**

We respond to the needs of the UN agencies in the field, and so this will vary depending on UN requests. Austcare has deployed Protection Officers in Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Kenya, Sudan and Sri Lanka. Given the success of the program, additional countries are likely to be included.

Protection opportunities with Austcare programs will also be for a variety of countries.

**What sort of qualifications and experience do I need?**

Austcare is looking for people with several years experience working with refugees, internally displaced people, indigenous communities or other vulnerable groups. They will have worked in the areas of law, human rights, social welfare, child protection, international or community development, migrant and resettlement services or other related fields. We are seeking people who also have advanced tertiary qualifications in their area of expertise.

**Is this a volunteer program?**

The positions that we are currently seeking to fill with UN agencies and Austcare programs are not volunteer positions. They are paid positions, requiring extensive field experience and advanced tertiary qualifications.

**Do I work for Austcare or for the UN agency?**

For deployments to UN agencies, Austcare organises all administrative details of the deployments and covers the salaries and allowances of Protection Officers. The Protection Officers work within the UN agency as an 'expert on mission'. So, Protection Officers report to, and have duties assigned by the UN agency.

With Austcare positions, Protection Officers will be employed by Austcare in line with Austcare terms and conditions.

**What is the salary and what else does Austcare cover?**

Particular details of the salary are discussed with the candidate during the recruitment phase. The salary scale is at a professional NGO level, and is packaged with DSA (Daily Subsistence Allowance) and where relevant hazard pay. The DSA is a living allowance that Austcare pays at the same rate as the UN agencies (capped at a certain level) and hazard pay is an allowance for deployments to insecure and hazardous locations

Austcare covers the cost of travel to and from assignment, visas, vaccinations and insurance.

**Can I be on more than one register?**

Yes. Our register is not exclusive and we would encourage you to apply for different registers as this will enhance your chances of securing a position to work overseas and may assist you in getting the relevant experience for a protection mission.

**How do I get more field experience if I am not experienced enough for Austcare's register?**

Austcare's register is focused on Protection experts. Perhaps one way for you to get more experience in the field is to volunteer. You may wish to consider United Nations Volunteers ([www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)); Australian Volunteers International ([www.australianvolunteers.com](http://www.australianvolunteers.com)); Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development ([www.ausaid.gov.au/youtham](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/youtham)) or Vida ([www.vidavolunteers.org.au](http://www.vidavolunteers.org.au)). Austcare often engages volunteers through these programs to support our projects overseas and the positions can be very interesting and challenging.

**Who do I contact?**

The Protection Team at Austcare is located in the Sydney head office: 69 - 71 Parramatta Road, Camperdown 2050 NSW, Australia /Locked Bag 5515, Camperdown 1450 NSW Australia, Tel: + 61 2 9565 9137. Enquires and applications for the register can be directed to the Protection Program Officer, Mary Fogarty (email: [mfogarty@ austcare.org.au](mailto:mfogarty@ austcare.org.au)). Please also consult the Austcare website for information on the program [www.austcare.org.au](http://www.austcare.org.au)