



The legacy of the 2018 Sydney Invictus Games: a national program supporting veterans through sport and wellbeing

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Veteran Sport Australia is a national program that will pick up the mantle from the Sydney 2018 Invictus Games and continue to support Australia's veterans and their families through the power of sport. Led and enabled by the RSL, Australia's longest-established national veterans' charity, and initially based in Sydney – Veteran Sport Australia is inclusive of all ex-service and veterans organisations. Initial coordinating partners include the Australian Defence Force, Department of Veterans Affairs, state RSL branches and RSL National, Legacy Australia, Soldier On, The Road Home, and Mates for Mates. Funding and support for the initiative is being provided by RSL NSW, Clubs NSW, and legacy provisions from the Sydney 2018 Invictus Games.

Connected to grassroots volunteers in the ex-service community, as well as major Australian sporting organisations, Veteran Sport Australia will be run by a professional team based in ANZAC House Sydney. It will closely coordinate with adaptive sporting programs delivered by the Australian Defence Force and will have responsibility for sponsoring ex-service competitors for Team Australia at the 2020 Invictus Games. The initial program focus for Veteran Sport Australia will be on Invictus and Warrior Games' sport and include:

1. Scoping the establishment of **national veterans sporting competitions**.
2. Supporting veteran access to **local sport and activities** – through new strategic partnerships with established sporting venues and association as well as a digital hub **connecting and coordinating veterans** with existing veteran sport programs.
3. Facilitating veteran **access to training and development camps**, especially those catering for adaptive sport.
4. Identifying and support veterans wanting to **pursue ongoing training and development opportunities in sport coaching**.

5. Providing **pathways for veteran athletes to attend established Games** (Warrior, Invictus, Paralympics).

Longer term plans for Veteran Sport Australia include:

1. Working with sporting bodies as well as Commonwealth and State Sport Ministers to **ensure wounded, injured and ill veterans have opportunities to access** a wider range of sport options.
2. A variety of wellbeing activities for **veterans of all ages** – including activities such as yoga and art.
3. Facilitation of **opportunities** for veterans to **move to more elite levels of sport** including the Paralympics.
4. Connection with a **wider range of sporting activities** throughout Australia and internationally.
5. Working with the Australian Defence Force to support Australian involvement in the Invictus Games beyond 2020.

Veteran Sport Australia governance and program support will be embedded in the RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution, a tax-deductible charity and public benevolent institution based in Sydney. The program will be launched on Friday 26 October, as part of the Sydney Invictus Games 2018.





Program Goals

2018-19 Priorities

1. **Supporting 2018 Invictus participants and training squad members** by facilitating access to local sport, checking welfare regularly in the post-games period and providing pathways to future competitions and camps.
2. Supporting the **families** of 2018 Invictus participants and training squad members.
3. **Connecting veterans** with sport associations and activities catering for wounded, injured and ill veterans and their families through a digital hub.
4. Providing 2018 Invictus participants and training squad members with opportunities after the Games to **tell their stories and inspire others**.
5. **Generating awareness** among the veteran community of the benefits of sport and activities to physical and mental health and wellbeing.
6. Providing opportunities for younger veterans and their families to **connect through shared activities**.
7. Exploring **coaching and mentoring opportunities** for veterans who are experienced in various sport, opening an alternate pathway for experienced competitors.

2018-2020 Veteran Sport Australia Program

Veteran Sport Australia will offer ongoing participation, one-off camps, opportunities to join competitive events and pathways to selection for games.

Ongoing – participants (example program focused in NSW)

Wheelchair Rugby Union	Year round	Sydney Olympic Park	Development training open to all participants.
Wheelchair Rugby League	May July October	Western Sydney, NSW – other locations possible.	Open to all veterans.
Archery	Year round	Rutherford, Lismore, Illawarra, Monteray, Erina, Dee Why West	Beginners courses and regular shooting.
Wheelchair Tennis	Year round	Alexandria, Sydney	Weekly coaching with experienced coaches.
Wheelchair Basketball	Year round	Albury/Wodonga, Illawarra, Sydney, Newcastle	Facilitate access and coaching.
Powerlifting	Year round	Local gyms	Facilitate access and coaching.
Indoor rowing	Year round	Local gyms	Facilitate access and coaching.

A digital hub will provide information about local opportunities to participate in athletics, road cycling, sailing, sitting volleyball and swimming.

Ongoing – coaching and mentoring

Veteran Sport Australia will support veterans who want to lead activities in their local area. Providing guidance on applying to sporting organisations for equipment, administration of grants, organising events and activities. As well as training of veterans who are wanting to lead including coaching qualifications and supporting those interested in providing peer to peer or mentoring support for other veterans. Veteran Sport Australia would commit to subsidising coaching qualifications for 5 veterans in 2019-20.

Camps – one-off, non-competitive

- **Allied Winter Sports Camp, Whistler, Canada**

RSL NSW has been sending veterans to this camp in February and March for a number of years. The camp focuses on snow sport and winter recreation activities and reviews by participants are outstanding.

Participation is in conjunction with Soldier On Sans Limites, Canada and the Australian Defence Force.

Veteran Sport Australia will sponsor attendance for up to 10 veterans in each of 2019 and 2020.

Local Competitive Events – annual or one-off

Veteran Sport Australia will facilitate attendance for teams or individuals meeting the entry requirements and subject to available resources to the following events in 2019-20.

- Wheelchair Aussie Rules Championships Victoria, AUS – March each year
- Wheelchair Rugby Tournament, Canberra ACT – March each year
- Wheelchair Basketball competition, Narrabeen, Sydney – August each year

Games – multi-day, multi-sport, selection trials, competitive

Marine Corps Trials	Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune North Carolina, USA	March each year	Rowing, powerlifting, athletics, shooting, archery, swimming, cycling, wheelchair basketball and sitting volleyball.	Veteran Sport Australia will sponsor up to six participants each year.
Warrior Games	Tampa, Florida	June each year	Archery, cycling, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, athletics, wheelchair basketball, indoor rowing, powerlifting, and time trial cycling.	Veteran Sport Australia will sponsor up to six participants each year.
Invictus Games	The Hague	2020	Archery, athletics, indoor rowing, powerlifting, road cycling, sailing, sitting volleyball, swimming, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby	Veteran Sport Australia will sponsor ex-serving participants.