



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

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 @VeteranSportAustralia

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.

