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Media Release

Invictus returns to Australia

Invictus Australia launches to continue the legacy of the Invictus Games Sydney 2018

Australia has achieved a world first with the launch today of *Invictus Australia*.

Invictus Australia will be at the forefront of delivering sport recovery programs and services to improve the health and wellbeing of military veterans and their families, using sport as the primary vehicle.

Invictus Australia is the legacy of the highly acclaimed Invictus Games Sydney 2018. Today marks the third anniversary of the closing of those Games.

Invictus Australia – previously known as Veteran Sport Australia – has signed a world first agreement with the international Invictus Games Foundation to continue to use the Invictus brand in Australia, with the primary aim of extending support and the power of the Invictus movement beyond the Games.


Through collaboration with sport, community and veteran organisations, Invictus Australia will deliver more opportunities for veterans and their families to engage in sport from grassroots participation through to international competition.

The Invictus Games have demonstrated the power of sport to positively influence the recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration of current and former serving Defence veterans. This ideology will be used by Invictus Australia to a broader audience of veterans – there are an estimated 640,000 veterans in Australia.

The immediate priorities for Invictus Australia are to extend its reach to provide on the ground sport recovery services in all States and Territories across Australia, as well as support Team Australia in partnership with the Australian Defence Force to attend the next Invictus Games in The Hague in April 2022.

Quotes from Invictus Australia:

“This is an important day for our Defence community in Australia. We witnessed incredible courage, determination and comradery when the Invictus Games landed on our shores in 2018. It brought attention to the challenges faced by our veteran community and a platform for those of us who support our Defence community to unite. The benefit of those Games continues today”



“At a time when the veteran community has faced challenges to their identity and seen mental and physical health issues grow in prominence, to the detriment of many, the Invictus movement provides a beacon of positivity and encouragement”

- James Brown, Chairman of Invictus Australia

“We are incredibly proud and honoured to be re-establishing the Invictus brand here in Australia, for the benefit of our Defence community. It is due to the success of Invictus Games Sydney 2018 and the hard work since to implement an effective and ongoing legacy that the Invictus Games Foundation has chosen Australia to pioneer the next frontier of the Invictus movement.

Invictus means ‘unconquered’ and our motto is *Unconquered Together*. This is representative of the collaborative spirit sparked by Invictus and what can be achieved by working together. It is an exciting time and we are encouraging everyone to get involved”

- Michael Hartung, Chief Executive Officer of Invictus Australia

Quote from Invictus Games Foundation:

Chief Executive of the Invictus Games Foundation, Dominic Reid OBE, said he is proud to be taking this first step in expanding the Invictus model and hopes Invictus Australia will be the first of many international partnerships.

“In recent years, the Invictus Games Foundation has reflected on how best to continue to support its international community of wounded, injured and sick service men and women, in particular beyond the success of our global Invictus Games,” Mr Reid said.

“We were delighted to be approached by Veteran Sport Australia, set up following the Invictus Games Sydney 2018, with a proposition to expand the Invictus model to boost the international impact Down Under. With its unique position as a long standing participating nation, a former host nation, and with a newly formed legacy organisation, Invictus Australia was born and the Invictus Games Foundation is excited to see how, through the power of sport and adventurous challenge, the Invictus community will continue to be Unconquered Together.”

- Dominic Reid OBE, Chief Executive Officer of Invictus Games Foundation (UK)

For more information about Invictus Australia and to support the not-for-profit organisation, visit invictusaustralia.org

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Background on Invictus Australia

In a world first for the Invictus movement, the international Invictus Games Foundation is partnering with an individual nation for a purpose other than delivering a Games. Invictus Australia will enable all Australian veterans and their families to benefit from the power of sport and the ethos of those Games.

In the three years since the highly successful Sydney Games, we have been testing and refining our approach under the banner of **Veteran Sport Australia (VSA)**. It will be from this tried and tested methodology that we will launch Invictus Australia – focused on sport recovery and mass participation in sport by veterans and their families.

Invictus Australia will elevate the work started by VSA and scale this nationally to make available our services and opportunities to all veterans and their families. We see the benefits every day of our work in communities where we have a presence – for both veterans and the organisations who support them. Our goal now is to make sure all communities can equally benefit.

The Invictus brand will help us to unite the community. As one of the most recognised brands in the world, with 90 percent recognition in Australia alone, we have the opportunity to use this for the benefit of the broader veteran sector.

Through our work to date, we have been able to improve the services provided by ex-service organisations, support rehabilitation services and outcomes, deliver more social connection, create and strengthen service networks and increase participation in sport and recreation activities.

Our approach goes beyond competition as its sole purpose. We have created opportunities for volunteering, coaching, training and accreditation, administration roles, kid's programs, social participation and mentoring.

Supporting Australia's participation at the Invictus Games is another of our important roles, and we do this in partnership with the ADF. With the ADF supporting current serving members, we have responsibility for all former serving members. The Games play a key role in the rehabilitation and recovery of our wounded, injured and ill serving and former serving men and women. They are not simply champions of their own rehabilitation journey; they provide inspiration and encouragement to others.

We are supporting the 26 former-serving Defence members of the 32 Team Australia competitors as they head to the Invictus Games The Hague 2022. Games have also been announced for Düsseldorf (Sept 2023) and the Warrior Games (held in the USA in late 2022). The Adaptive Sport Program is an extensive program of 10-15 camps and activities each year which underpins these events.



Data

The Invictus Games Sydney 2018

Veteran community

- A 2015 study estimated that 3 in 4 recently transitioned veterans have experienced a mental health condition at some stage in their lifetime
- About 18% of those who leave the ADF do so for medical reasons
- The impact of military service on family life was one of the most common reasons for leaving the military in 2015, cited by 10% of recently transitioned ADF personnel
- Between 2015 and 2017, the suicide rate for former serving men was 1.18 times higher than Australian men. Over the same period, the suicide rate of former serving females was 2.15 times higher than Australian females. Male former serving personnel under 30 years old are twice as likely to die by suicide compared to men of the same age

General population

- 4.3 million Australians received a mental health related prescription in 2018-2019
- 1 in 2 adults do not meet the Australian physical activity guidelines
- In 2011, 2.6% of the total disease burden in Australia was due to physical inactivity

The opportunity

- There are 70,000 sport clubs and 97 recognised sports in Australia
- Sport and recreation groups are the most popular types of social participation that Australian adults take part in (35%)
- Regular community-based sport participation in Australia generates an estimated \$18.7B value p.a. in social capital

The Invictus Games Sydney 2018

- Held from 20 – 28 October 2018;
- 100,000 spectators attended the Games;
- 4 million Australians watched the coverage on ABC, with the Closing Ceremony being the number 1 ranking program in its timeslot;

- Research conducted by Omnipoll found 9 out of 10 Australians agree the Invictus Games can make a significant difference in the lives of veterans with physical and mental health challenges.

Invictus Games Research

- Invictus Games Foundation's (IGF) commissioned research found: *Competitors in the Invictus Games demonstrated significantly better psychosocial and physical health both in the short- and long-term*
- For competitors, the IGF Impact Report states that by taking part in an Invictus Games:
 - 87% have increased their confidence levels;
 - 73% have developed social connections;
 - 82% have engaged with the wider community; and
 - 85% have gained a sense of belonging.