

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
Adaptive sport programs for Australian Defence Force veterans – 31 March 2023
Answers to questions on notice from the Veterans' Affairs portfolio

Question 2

Outcome: 2.4 Program: Veterans' Community Care and Support

Topic: Grant funding for Invictus

(Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Hansard Proof 31 March 2023, p 35)

Senator David Fawcett asked:

Senator FAWCETT: Thank you. On the funding from DVA, I noticed the comment about the funding to Invictus Australia, and part of that included funding for research. We'll obviously be having Invictus Australia appearing before the committee on Monday, but, from DVA's perspective, what guidelines or outcomes were linked to that funding in terms of research?

Ms Pope: I'd have to provide on notice the elements from the grant agreement, but it was to conduct research and evaluation of the Invictus Australia program and demonstrate the value and impact of their programs. It was about what they're delivering and to demonstrate the value that that has been delivering for the participants in their programs.

Senator FAWCETT: That would obviously, if we're talking about value for participants, involve sociopsychological factors et cetera, which nearly always go to ethics approval for research. Is this something that DVA and your approvals process around ethics for research is going to be involved with, or is it something where Invictus Australia will be able to design their own experiment, if you like, and research and come back to you with a report?

Ms Pope: It will depend on the methodology that they adopt for that. My colleague Ms Hancock is much more of an expert on our ethics arrangements, but it would depend on the way they design the evaluation as to whether it gets into health related aspects and therefore engages some of the ethics requirements.

Ms Hancock: I don't think I can add to that, I'm sorry, but we'd be happy to take on notice the specific requirements in the grant agreement relating to the evaluation of the program.

Senator FAWCETT: If you could that would be good. I'm conscious that you had an agreement with the RSL in the past and that is now particularly, on the Defence side, around Invictus Games et cetera, and bringing veterans in. But, as we now look to change that model, Invictus Australia has become the partner the Commonwealth has funded, and I think it was a \$0.9 million that was part of its funding.

Answer

Invictus Australia will initiate new research into the benefits of meaningful physical activity. This research is in relation to Invictus Australia programs and initiatives, undertaken in collaboration with the sports and other ex-service organisations involved.

Invictus Australia has established a *Research Advisory Committee* – comprising multidisciplinary representatives from the University of Sydney, University of NSW, University of South Australia, Phoenix Australia, Military and Emergency Services Health Australia, Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling and the Australian Defence Force – to assist in providing guidance.

Invictus Australia will receive \$8.087 million grant funding from 2022-23 to 2024-25. The first milestone payment was made on 15 September 2022. As part of this grant funding, payments will be made subject to milestone reporting and deliverables. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) assesses the reports and the Department of Social Services – Community Grants Hub administers the payments. In relation to the research component of the grant funding, Invictus Australia is required to validate its outcomes through evaluation and reporting requirements. The targets include:

Deliverable timeframes:

- Develop a Social Impact Framework 2022-23;
- Data systems established 2022-23; and
- Evaluation and reporting 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Measures of success:

- Development of an Impact Framework to understand the broad impact of Invictus Australia programs;
- Establishment of systematic data collection to support reporting requirements; and
- Evaluation of the value and impact of the Invictus Australia service offerings, to be provided in a final report and submitted to DVA for review.