

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 3

Outcome: 2.4 Program: Veterans' Community Care and Support

Topic: Requirements placed on Invictus grants

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

Senator David Fawcett asked:

Senator FAWCETT: We have had concern raised in various submissions that, with large amounts of funding going to people like Invictus Australia, other groups feel as though they're not being funded, nor are they necessarily seeing funding flowing down from Invictus Australia. Whilst, clearly, we'll ask Invictus Australia about their interpretation, from your interpretation as the funder—if you know now, could you tell us, if not, can you take on notice—what requirements were placed on Invictus Australia in terms of geographical spread so that somebody in Western Australia or Darwin will have the same opportunities as somebody in Sydney to see benefit from that funding? And what was the funding specifically for? That's probably one of the most frequent concerns that's been expressed to the committee in the space.

Ms Pope: I understand. I would have to take the geographical distribution part of the question on notice because I'm not fully aware. But, in relation to what the funding is intended for, I have a number of points that I can just read out: to facilitate participation of the veteran cohort of the international military games, Invictus Games and Warrior Games, which I know you are aware of; to help promote the recognition of wounded, injured or ill veterans and their abilities to the wider Australian community; to promote physical fitness and wellbeing amongst the veteran community; to support wounded, injured or ill veterans on their recovery journey through participation in adaptive sports; to onboard veteran engagement specialists to facilitate the connection of veterans with local sporting and community organisations; and, lastly, to conduct research and evaluation of the programs they were delivering. They were the six requirements of the grant.

Answer

The Supporting Invictus Australia Grant program is a one-off ad hoc grant to fund Australian International Military Games (to be referred to as Invictus Australia hereafter) to enable veterans to participate in the Invictus Games, the Warrior Games, and the Adaptive Sports Program (in partnership with the Department of Defence). Invictus Australia received \$8.087 million in funding to be provided from 2022-23 to 2024-25. The first payment of \$1.000 million was made on 15 September 2022 and milestone payments are scheduled every six months after this. The funding will also support the employment of Veteran Engagement Specialists with participating local sporting and community clubs nationally, establish a research project and enable evaluation of the Invictus Australia's programs.

The funding guidelines inform Invictus Australia on what the funding could be used for and the geographical spread. Funding of \$3.600 million over three years, commencing September 2022, has been allocated for Veteran Engagement Specialists. Invictus Australia will employ a total of 7 - 8 Veteran Engagement Specialists to engage veterans and their families in community sport around Australia. Coverage of at least one Veteran Engagement Specialist is to be allocated per state and territory, as well as alignment with the Veterans' and Families' Hubs, as the priority.

Their role is to re-connect veterans through community engagements in each state and territory. They will assist in increasing the capacity of local sporting clubs and broaden recreation activities to support veterans. In addition, the Specialists will support 'at risk' veterans during their first and subsequent sporting involvement, as required.

As part of the funding over the three years, \$600,000 has been allocated to support the Invictus Australia teams to participate in the 2023 Invictus Games in Dusseldorf and the Warrior Games in 2022 and 2024 in Orlando until 2025. This is to continue to support wounded, injured or ill veterans on their recovery journey through participation in adaptive sports.