

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL VETERANS ARTS MUSEUM



Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Australian Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

4 April 2023

Dear Senators

The Australian National Veterans Arts Museum (ANVAM) is a veteran led charity, arts and cultural institution and Public Benevolent Institution whose primary purpose is to support the wellbeing of the veteran community through facilitated arts engagement.

ANVAM appreciates the Senate's interest in learning more about programs to support the wellbeing of veterans, including adaptive sports as the focus of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee's current inquiry. We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to this enquiry offering a broader perspective on areas of potential support to the veteran community related to this current inquiry.

The submission is attached. ANVAM stands ready to respond to questions the Committee may have with respect to the submission.

Yours sincerely,

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HER EXCELLENCY MRS LINDA HURLEY

**ANVAM Submission to the
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (FADT) Committee
Inquiry into Adaptive Sport Programs for Australian Defence Force Veterans**

In practical terms 'sport' is defined by its social interpretation as well as its strong association with physical exertion and performance measures. What we perceive as 'sport' in one instance may not be in another; sport takes on many forms and is constantly changing based upon societal norms, trends, and new directions.

Evidence Base for Sport, What is Sport? Australian Government¹

Background

The *Australian National Veterans Arts Museum* (ANVAM) was established in 2013, and incorporated on the 25th April 2015, as Australia's national arts and cultural institution for veterans. ANVAM is a charitable organisation and Public Benevolent Institution whose primary purpose is to support and enhance the wellbeing of the veteran community through facilitated arts engagement programs. ANVAM delivers on this purpose with a focus on people, partnerships, programs and place.

People refers to the veterans community; current and ex-serving and families. Partnerships are the growing number of inter-organisational relationships established to better deliver on respective goals. Programs range from exhibitions, projects, festivals, mentoring, arts engagement including art therapy, social connection, consulting, policy development and cross-portfolio engagement. Place refers to the vision for a permanent home of veterans arts in Australia.

ANVAM operates a hub and spoke model supporting the veteran community across Australia from its headquarters in Melbourne. It also leverages a systems approach to supporting veterans and families, that is inclusive, respectful, non-judgmental, promotes diversity and a people-centered approach.

In the ten years since it was established, ANVAM has facilitated a range of innovative local and national arts based engagements, programs and projects towards its purpose of supporting physical, social and mental health and wellbeing. These include:

1. Exhibitions;
 - a. Annual **March to Art** series, now in its sixth year. Each follows a theme - *Identity* (2017), *Community* (2018), *Narratives* (2019), *Place* (2021), *Voice* (2022) and *Create* (2023).

¹ <https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/kb/what-is-sport>

- b. *From War* 2018, the first exhibition of veterans arts at the Australian Parliament House.
 - c. Inaugural *International Veterans Art Exhibition (IVAE18)* in 2018 involving veterans from seven nations (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Poland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States).
2. Festivals; the national veterans arts festival of 2022 and 2023².
 3. Program Partnerships;
 4. Service Provision;
 5. Commemorative projects;
 - a. Oxford Brooks University – *On Commemoration*
 - b. *Persona* – Contemporary Veteran Artists³
 6. Mentoring programs.

Preliminary

This submission to the inquiry into the ‘*role of adaptive sports programs for veterans*’, begins by exploring a more expansive approach to achieving the same or similar outcomes intended in the adaptive sports programs.

A more expansive approach should first consider the ‘role’ or purpose of adaptive sports. In the absence of a defined purpose, it is assumed the purpose of adaptive sport includes to support the health and wellbeing of veterans through the benefits of physical activity, community engagement, and for the validation of veterans service and sacrifice.

A useful point of reference as to the role of adaptive sport is the Explanatory Statement⁴ to the Commonwealth’s funding in 2017 of the *Australian International Military Games (AIMG)* not-for-profit, to support the hosting of the Invictus Games Sydney 2018. In the Explanatory Statement the purpose of the games is described as:

The legacy of hosting the Invictus Games in Australia will be:

1. *a rehabilitation through sport by demonstrating the healing power of sport which will be of direct benefit to competitors;*
2. *an increased veteran involvement in sport by raising awareness of the benefits of sport and driving increased levels of veteran participation in sport which brings social, physical and mental health benefits;*

² <https://www.anvam.org.au/m2a23>

³ www.persona.org.au

⁴ Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997, Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Amendment (Defence Measures No. 2) Regulations 2017

3. *a more coherent community of ex-service organisations which are currently in the process of change to adapt to the challenge of caring for contemporary veterans.*
4. *an increased public support for, and understanding of, veterans by engaging communities and raising awareness of veterans within communities. The emphasis will be on promoting veterans and their knowledge, skills and attributes to inform the society about inspirational qualities of veterans.*

This submission links the arts to the subject of the inquiry noting the arts has the same attributes as adaptive sports, and at least the same ability to deliver on each of the outcomes identified in the funding Explanatory Statement for the Invictus Games.

By their nature the arts are inherently adaptive to the needs of the individual. The arts are physical requiring movement of the body and focus of the mind. The arts are community based creating connections, friendships, collaborations and interpersonal networks.

To make the connection between adaptive sports and the arts, it is appropriate to define a number of key terms:

1. **Sport.** *'A human activity involving physical exertion and skill as the primary focus of the activity, with elements of competition or social participation.'⁵*

Definitions of sport may be accompanied by definitions for one or more similar, closely related, activities, which includes physical activity and active recreation.

2. **Physical activity.** *'people moving, acting and performing within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships.'* Piggin (2020)⁶.

Figure 1 is the model presented by Piggin's that provides a more holistic view of physical activity that includes arts and culture.

3. **Active recreation.** *'Activities engaged in for the purpose of relaxation, health and wellbeing or enjoyment with the primary activity requiring physical exertion, and the primary focus on human activity.'*⁷

⁵ <https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/kb/what-is-sport>

⁶ <https://blogs.bmj.com/bjbm/2021/01/02/physical-activity-in-a-pandemic-time-for-a-new-definition-infographic/>

⁷ <https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/kb/what-is-sport>

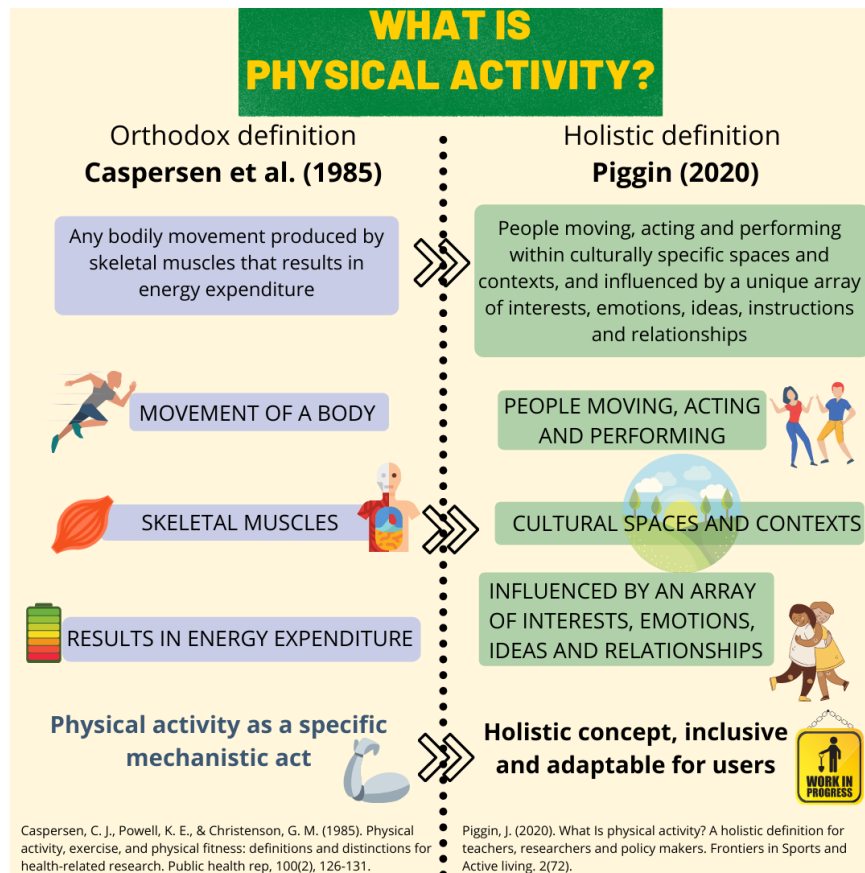


Figure 1: Piggin's Physical Activity Model

For the purpose of this inquiry, ANVAM invites the Senate FADT Committee to look beyond traditional notions of sport, and focus on the central elements being the physical exertion, skill and social participation aspects of the 'physical activity'. Once you look to these elements other physical activities become equally applicable as traditional sports. Physical activities that fit Piggin's definition include, but are not limited to:

- Dance and movement
- Musical and parade events. e.g. Military Tattoo
- 'Theatre sports' and performance
- Street arts
- Arts trails and walks
- Photography and film
- Mural painting
- Choir and singing
- Curation where hanging an exhibition is physical, requires skill and has a special social context toward telling and sharing stories

- Visiting galleries and museums
 - Metal and woodwork.
4. **Adaptive.** Introducing the term adaptive to sport implies that the activity needs to be altered in some way to accommodate the needs of participants. The arts are, by their nature, adaptive where arts participants are presented with challenges while seeking to achieve their desired outcome. The arts do not need to explain that the activity has been adapted to suit the needs of the participant. The arts can also support rehabilitation, per the first objective of the Invictus Games.
5. **Veterans.** For ANVAM the term ‘veteran’ applies to current and ex-serving members of the ADF. ANVAM also includes family members of veterans in its focus recognising that the wellbeing of the veteran is as much a factor of their relationship with their family as any other factor, and that family members are as deserving of support as the veteran is themselves.

Responses to the Terms of Reference are provided below:

(a) current evidence on the benefits adaptive sport can provide to those with physical and/or mental health impairments, particularly those who have also served or trained in national defence;

Drawing the connection between sport, and specifically adaptive sports, and the arts as both physical activities. The arts are inherently adaptive to the needs of veterans with physical and / or mental health impairments. Important ways the arts provide benefits is to all but remove the perception of an impairment, and by providing an infinite range of entry points to engaging in the arts adapted to the needs of the individual. The model presented in Figure 1

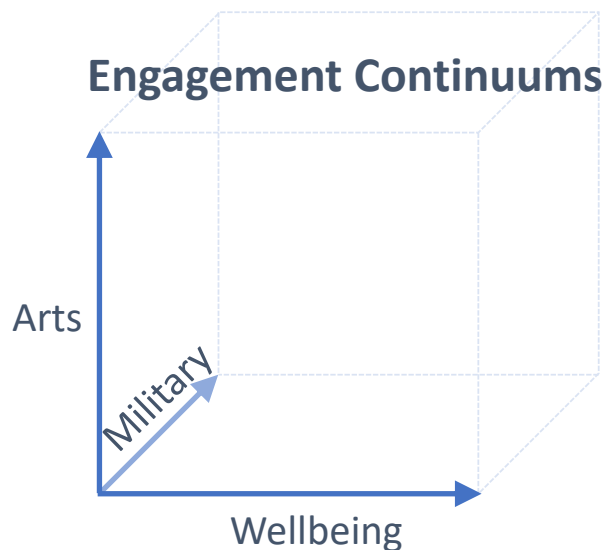


Figure 2: Veterans Arts, Wellbeing and Age Continuums

represents three intersecting continuums that reflect the spectrum of wellbeing, life-stage (military) and creative confidence and ability (arts)⁸. Each and every veteran can be placed in their own unique place relative to the three continuums, and consequently presents with their own unique needs to be addressed, and aspirations to be fulfilled.

A key benefit of the arts is their universal application and adaptability to the needs of any person, regardless of age, artistic ability or level of wellbeing.

The *World Health Organisation (WHO)* has undertaken studies into the role of Arts and Health and concluded there is substantial evidence of the strong connection between arts engagement and health outcomes⁹.

The *Australia Council* has similarly developed a policy document to support the role of Arts and Creativity for Mental Health¹⁰.

In the United States the Department of Veterans Affairs goes so far as to link Sports and Arts under the same program¹¹.

The ADF conducts a twice yearly month long arts based program, Arts for Recovery, Resilience, Teamwork and Skills (ADF ARRTS).

(b) the role of sport in supporting individuals' transition from the Australian Defence Force into civilian life, especially how sport may assist veterans who meet criteria identifying them as being most at risk of suicide;

ANVAM has worked with a number of veterans, and their families, in the transition from the ADF to civilian life. This period can be especially disruptive for individuals and families. ANVAM's approach is supportive of the psycho-social needs of the veteran in particular, including confidence building and identify formation in their transition to civilian employment, maintaining (family) relationships during times of transition, and mentoring veterans who may seek to explore opportunities in creative industries.

With respect to vulnerable veterans undertaking their transition, what ANVAM offers through its arts programs is:

- A low stigma environment to engage with trained professionals with experience working in the veteran community.
- Validation of their service and sacrifice through the programs, and support for their specific needs that come from their service.

⁸ https://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/238210/subdr296-veterans.pdf

⁹ <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/329834>

¹⁰ <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/advocacy-and-research/arts-creativity-and-mental-wellbeing-policy-development-program/>

¹¹ <https://department.va.gov/veteran-sports/>

- Support to pursue and establish an identity out of uniform, and a purpose that may have a creative aspect to it including in creative industries, or at least in a regular arts engagement to pursue that they have an interest in.
- Within a growing supportive community that is Australia wide, non-judgmental, inclusive and available throughout their lives.

(c) the Australian Defence Force's use of adaptive sport;

The ADF offers the arts in a variety of forms. Previously mentioned was the ADF ARRTS Program, which is often the first program people think of when they relate the ADF to the arts. Other programs include:

- the service bands and the Defence Force School of Music,
- ADF Creative Arts Association¹², which is an association supervised by the ADF Sports Council,
- The ADF War Gaming Association¹³,
- Image specialists,
- Australian Army Drone Racing Team as film makers.

There is no doubt, however, that the ADF could include the arts within its people capabilities and strategies for a range of positive outcomes, including prevention plus improved wellbeing of current service members.

(d) whether there are any gaps in services and demand for adaptive sport by the veteran community, and, if so, how these gaps can be addressed;

A key gap in services is the absence of broad recognition and support for the arts and the benefits that it provides for the veteran community.

Within the arts there are a number of gaps in the arts based services for the veteran community that warrants a more thorough review than is available in this submission. These gaps are considerable and, at the most extreme, extend to the very capability of the ADF including its ability to successfully recruit and retain uniformed members at the numbers and readiness levels expected by Government.

In ANVAM's experience the demand for facilitated arts engagement continues to grow as we look for and provide more ways to be accessible to veterans, and for veterans to feel empowered to access the arts. Like adaptive sports, a

¹² <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2021-10-08/encouraging-creativity-improve-capability>

¹³ <https://www.adfwga.com/about>

resourced and facilitated approach enabling the range of entry points to the arts is important to support this demand. Many veterans are inherently interested in arts engagement, and often readily engage when the opportunity is made available and facilitated for them.

The demand also relates to the broader communities interest in seeing the stories told by veterans through their artworks and performances. Cultural institutions that are accessible to the broader community in locations and at times to meet the communities demand is most likely to be successful in conveying the stories of the veteran community.

It is important to remember that not all veterans are able to participate in sports at all times. Injuries, and eventually age, will prevent many from participating, while others may prefer non-sport programs like arts engagement.

(e) the equitability of current funding for adaptive sport, and how the accessibility of adaptive sport can be improved for veterans who are not a part of Invictus programs;

Commonwealth funding for adaptive sports includes:

- \$7 million to the AIMG in 2017, and
- \$9 million¹⁴ in the 2022-23 budget.

ANVAM is not aware of any Commonwealth funding that has been made available for veterans arts, or to support or promote the engagement in the arts by the veteran community.

Accessibility and impact of the arts could be greatly enhance if appropriately resourced, noting the return on this investment for the Commonwealth will be in a range of areas, and directly related to a number of the outcomes of several government departments, including the Veterans Affairs enhancing veterans wellbeing and health outcomes.

(f) the potential for a centralised authority to play a role in coordination or resourcing to provide access and where appropriate, enable consistency, in the use of adaptive sport to support rehabilitation, transition or reintegration for serving members and veterans around the nation and across support services and organisations;

In the context of veterans arts and culture, ANVAM was established in 2013 because of the gap in services supporting veterans wellbeing through arts engagement. ANVAM has since become a de facto body supporting and

¹⁴ <https://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/budget22-23-information-sheet-supporting-invictus-australia.pdf>

facilitating a broad range of arts based programs for the veteran community across Australia. ANVAM plays a leading role by:

- promoting all arts based activities and programs it becomes aware of via its web site and social media channels,
- auspicing grants and supporting programs and projects initiated by others where possible,
- advocating for policy change¹⁵ across departments Defence, Veterans Affairs, Arts, Health, Education, Employment, Finance, Treasury,
- promoting research into arts for wellbeing and health within the veteran community.

(g) whether eligibility for the Australian Sports Medal, or similar recognition, should be extended to teams that participated in the Invictus Games prior to 2018 and other veterans' teams representing Australia in international events; and

(h) any other related matters.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) created a 'wellbeing model'¹⁶ following the Productivity Commissions review in 2019. The model reflects seven priority areas for DVA, with both the veteran and family at the centre of the model.



Figure 3: DVA Wellbeing Model

¹⁵ This submission is an example of ANVAM playing a leading role in advocating for policy change. It is noteworthy that no other organization has come forward to the Senate FADT Committee under this inquiry advocating for the arts within the ADF veteran community.

¹⁶ <https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/vetaffairs/vetaffairs-vol-37-no2-july-2021/news-department>

Facilitated arts are able to support the veteran community, i.e. current and ex-serving and families, in most of these areas, but requires further support to more fully realise the potential.

1. **Health.** Facilitated arts based programs designed and guided by arts and health professionals can be tailored to deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes, often at a reduced cost.
2. **Education and skills.** Education and skills development in the arts is a growing area of interest for the veteran community and therefore warrants specialist support to help advise and support veterans in their entry into this, and pursuit of careers.
3. **Social support and connection.** The arts by their nature are inherently social. With the right facilitation and support strong social connections and networks can be made leading to important projects that in turn strengthen the veteran community.
4. **Employment.** Employment in creative industry is an area veterans have long been attracted to, but requires further support to facilitate networks and opportunities.
5. **Income and finance.** The Government's announcement launching the new Australian Cultural Policy, Revive, highlighted that the arts are a real career. Veterans are now making good incomes through the arts, which can be further enhanced through policy development, peer support and mentorship.
6. **Recognition and respect.** Inherent in the arts is the recognition. The recent project, Persona – Contemporary Veteran Artists, provides an example with the online component available at www.persona.org.au

ANVAM invites members of the Senate FADT Committee to visit ANVAM, particularly during its current 6th annual exhibition, March to Art: Create, which ends on 30 April 2023. During your visit you will have an opportunity to experience a small facet of veterans arts, being ANVAM's current exhibition, and meet veterans who participate in the arts to hear directly why the arts is important to them.