

WELCOME TO UNISA WAVES PROGRAM, INCORPORATING THE INVICTUS PATHWAYS PROGRAM

What is the Wellbeing for Australian Veterans and Emergency Services (WAVES) program?

The WAVES Program, jointly founded by The Hospital Research Foundation and UniSA, focusses on the use of sport, exercise and participation in community adaptive sports to assist serving and veteran defence force personnel and first responders to improve their well-being.

The interdisciplinary, student-led nature of the WAVES Program supports physical, psychological and social wellbeing of returned service personnel and first responders. The program provides access to various community wellbeing activities and multiple allied health services, using the medium of sport and exercise to achieve life goals and inspire recovery and wellbeing.

WAVES is motivated by the spirit of the Invictus Games, and while some of our participants will strive to compete at national and international events, for the majority it is to harness the power of exercise and sport to inspire recovery and well-being. The program aims to assist participants with their physical, mental and psychosocial wellbeing goals and includes activities that also welcome family members. Personal and wellbeing goals vary greatly – be it, play with your kids more, participate in a 5km fun run, getting back to work or just to feel healthier – which the program aims to assist participants work towards achieving these goals.

The overarching goals of WAVES for all participants are to:

1. Promote post traumatic growth via positive psychological or personal growth in the aftermath of a traumatic event (e.g. injury, psychological trauma, stressful life event etc.)
2. Improve physical well-being
3. Improve psychological and emotional well-being
4. Promote community reintegration and participation

What does it involve?

WAVES has three current programs:

1. Invictus Pathways Program based on UniSA campus with UniSA students
2. Community Adaptive Sports Program facilitated in the community; and
3. Heart Health Program based on UniSA campus with UniSA students

1. Invictus Pathways Program (IPP)

This program involves you participating in exercise training sessions with a UniSA Exercise Science/Exercise Physiology student trainer at minimum 2 sessions/week at UniSA gyms. While working with you, the students will be completing their placement hours and will be supervised and supported by the broader IPP Staff.

Before starting your exercise training program, you will attend initial screening assessment at the UniSA Exercise Physiology student-delivered clinic to ensure any conditions and/or injuries are suitable to engage with the student trainers. IPP also has access to Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Podiatry, and Psychology and student-delivered clinics, and a brief summary of each clinical service is detailed below:

Exercise Physiology: this process assesses your medical history and health status and enables allocation to the student trainer with the correct level of knowledge and skill to best help you.

Physiotherapy: screening can identify areas for sport-specific improvement. Past or present injury assessment will provide direct advice to the student trainers about what you should and shouldn't be doing to ensure you are safe in the gym.

Occupational Therapy: OTs work with individuals, groups and communities to achieve optimal health and wellbeing through participation in the occupations of life. Assessment (and any ongoing engagement) can focus on removing barriers to achieving goals through working with individuals physical, emotional and mental strengths, whilst addressing limitations.

Podiatry: lower limb issues can potentially cause injury or impact performance if not identified and managed.

Psychology: assessment allows the psychology clinic to provide advice to the other allied health students about how to work with you and any emotional and psychological issues you might currently be experiencing.

Performance testing: to assess baseline levels of fitness and strength, and testing is repeated approximately every 3 months to monitor your progress over time. Testing can vary from functional movements and capacity through to high performance analysis.

You also have the option of ongoing care provided by these clinics at no cost to you – this is entirely optional. Information is shared between these clinics and with the staff and students directly involved in your IPP management. No information is shared with third parties without your prior consent or if required by law.

The Invictus Pathways Program also includes access other events which you may receive communication about via email or the *IPP Members Only* Facebook group.

2. Community Adaptive Sports Program

This program offers a suite of community adaptive sports opportunities in partnership with community organisations. Activities range from short courses (e.g. sailing) to ongoing opportunities such as access to the Next Generation gym facilities. An individual is not required to be part of the Exercise and Performance Program to access these activities. The activities are typically group-based and via strong links with the community sporting organisation, provide you and your family an opportunity to participate in positive, active community activities with other people from IPP and members of the general public. The available activities should be considered to try something new in a safe and supported environment, and act as a steppingstone towards community reintegration.

Current activities on offer include:

- Cycling
- Wheelchair sports
- Swimming
- Sailing
- Sitting volleyball
- Archery

The availability of these activities changes throughout the year, and new activities are often offered. Up to date information is available on the IPP website www.unisa.edu.au/invictus and Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/UniSAIPP>.

3. Heart Health Program

This program involves group exercise classes and education sessions with the aim to improve fitness in a supportive and social environment. Also run by UniSA students, these classes take place at our City West campus where we can utilise the full range of facilities including the exercise studio and pool. The program is 12 months in duration and is beneficial for participants who are waiting to get into the IPP, or who have transitioned out of IPP and are still looking for a connection with the students and university.

How long can I stay in the program for?

The duration of the Invictus Pathways Program (training with UniSA students) is set at maximum of 2 years with some flexibility on a case-by-case basis. As you near the end of the 2-year program, you will participate in a structured transition phase to build your independence and allow you to continue training independently and continue to reach your life goals.

The duration of involvement in the Community Adaptive Sports Program is unlimited. WAVES participants (regardless of IPP participation) and their families can access the activities for an unrestricted period of time. It should be recognised that the activities act as a pathway to independent community involvement, and it is an overarching goal that participants and their families will, when ready, seamlessly integrate into non-WAVES local community organisations and activities.

The duration of the Heart Health Program is 12 months. This program is managed by an external company and UniSA is the service provider, so we do not have control over extending this. However, you are welcome to apply again to once your 12 month participation has concluded.

Who can I contact if I have a question or problem?

Please feel free to send all enquires to the UniSA WAVES inbox – invictus@unisa.edu.au – as the first point of contact. Additional contact information of primary WAVES Staff is listed below.

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