**-=APPENDIX D**

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| **Veterans’ Health Advisory Panel**  **Application form for veterans project inquiry proposal** | |
| *This form must be completed by the applicant, saved as a PDF, and sent to the email provided.*  *Before completing this form please read all the attached information.*  ***Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.*** | |
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| 1. **COVERSHEET** | |
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| **Who are the principal researchers involved? (add extra boxes if required)** | |
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| **Background of researchers (1 page max) cc** |
| Our research team have complementary research backgrounds for this project on Veterans wellbeing, with support from a cohort of advisors including Veteran organisations and experienced academic researchers.   * Dr Kirsten Spencer is a Senior Lecturer and lead for coaching and performance analysis research in the AUT Sport, Performance Research Institute New Zealand (SPRINZ). She has completed research assessing the benefits of Green Exercise to enhance mood states and reduce anxiety, which led to further research on the modification of coach behaviours. Recent consultancies have led the strategy and implementation of the NZ Junior Coaching Plan Netball using a mixed method approach. The project was co-designed with Netball NZ to have the maximum relevance and application of findings. Kirsten is involved in Serious Leisure through her activities as a player and official with elite Masters Hockey in Auckland. * Dr Richard Wright’s research activity is built around the sustainable production and consumption of Serious Leisure as a direct consequence of sport and recreation. As one of the founding members of the AUT Centre of Active Ageing, his research activities have focused on sport and recreation as a tool socio-economic development, in particular looking at active sports tourism through the lens of Serious Leisure. Dr Wright’s passion for Serious Leisure is also reflected in his roles as Chairman of a regional table tennis association and a university football club. He has also directed numerous Serious Leisure sports events, ranging from world championships to world record attempts. * Dr Carolyn Cairncross is a Lecturer in the School of Sport and Recreation and researcher in the AUT Centre for Active Ageing. As a Registered Nutritionist, she has a particular interest in the factors affecting dietary intake and relationships to wellbeing and health, particularly in the older generation. Her previous research validated questionnaires measuring dietary knowledge in active adolescents, and assessed factors affecting nutrient status of NZ preschool children. Carolyn plays competition tennis as her Serious Leisure outlet. * Kevin Sheehy is a Senior Lecturer researching rugby in the AUT Sport, Performance Research Institute New Zealand (SPRINZ). He served with the Royal New Zealand Air Force for 22 years as a Physical Fitness instructor and also on deployment overseas. Kevin’s Serious Leisure activities are through his activities as a player with Evergreen Softball for North Harbour and New Zealand Combined Services.   **Advisors**  David Moger: CEO, NZ RSA  Kerry Kay: President, East Coast Bays RSA  Kelvin Read: Wing Commander, RNZAF; Chairperson, RNZAF Sports  Tracy Rayner: Chief Medical Officer, Veterans Affairs  Helen Kilding: Research Scientist, Defence Technology Agency, NZDF  A/P Simeon Cairns: Ngati Whakaue; AUT Maori Research Facilitation Committee  A/P Stephen Neville: Co-director AUT Centre for Active Ageing  A/P Valerie Wright-St Clair: Co-director, AUT Centre for Active Ageing  A/P Andy Kilding: Director, AUT SPRINZ  Dr Arron Jarden: Wellbeing scientist, Psychology lecture, AUT Human Potential Centre  Dr Scott Duncan: Head of Postgraduate Research, AUT Human Potential Centre  Dr Priya Palmer: Biostatistican, AUT Health Sciences |
| 1. **MAIN PROJECT PROPOSAL (2 pages max)** |
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| 1. **What is your research project proposal?** |
| We propose Serious Leisure (SL) as an inexpensive strategy to improve Veterans mental health and wellbeing, and the SL provides an effective mechanism for Veterans integration into civilian life. This approach has been not been used previously for this population, yet has proved effective in civilian groups. Serious leisure is "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of a combination of it's special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins, 1992). The Serious Leisure Inventory and Measurement (SLIM) Framework offers the most comprehensive way of capturing and comparing the personal and social value attached to an individual’s leisure habits. It addresses the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that can influence how much time and money someone invests into consuming leisure activities. Regardless of the context of the participants, researchers who employ the SLIM framework identify a host of positive outcomes attached to keeping active and voluntarily investing in regular social activities, particularly those that require commitment and offer some form of rewards. This proposed research will capture the serious leisure habits of contemporary Veterans associated with wellbeing levels, to provide public health policy-makers and positive wellbeing practitioners with new knowledge needed to design and deliver bespoke Veteran programs to significantly improve the health and wellbeing (both mental and physical) of those who served in the New Zealand armed forces. We propose a project that creates an adapted, veteran codesigned SL and wellbeing questionnaire, validated by an expert panel (NZDF, RSA, VA, Maori NZDF, AUT Health & Wellness, AUT Sport &Recreation), co-designed and qualitatively critiqued by NZ Veterans before commencement of a pilot study utilizing the new questionnaire to collect data on the types of SL and associated levels of Veteran health and wellbeing. This will provide a new fundamental knowledge base for Leisure providers and the Veterans Fund to collaborate and effectively deliver/support appropriate SL avenues, taking full advance of the links between leisure activities and health and wellbeing, so increasing Veteran SL participation with the outcome of improved Veteran Health and Wellbeing. |
| 1. **Purpose/aims of the research** |
| The aim is to deliver new knowledge to inform policy and practice regarding improving Veterans, and our emerging veterans, Wellbeing through relevant participation in Serious Leisure using existing providers (leisure and e-learning wellbeing programmes). The purpose is to co-design and validate a tool to measure Serious Leisure activities and associate that with health and wellbeing of current veterans. This has never been conducted before with this NZ population. |
| 1. **Significance of the research to veterans’ health** |
| This research will be relevant to all NZ Veterans, as those of any age will be eligible to participate, consisting of those still serving in the armed forces, in civilian life and retirees. Through their military service, Veterans are known to have a specialised set of qualities, including dependability, integrity, initiative, perseverance, courage and a unique ethos. Many of these qualities have been reported as characteristics of those who undertake Serious Leisure. As a result, Veterans are likely to have a personal skill set suited to participation in Serious Leisure, and the potential for enhanced wellbeing and quality of life. However, there may be reasons or factors why veteran do not take full advantage of SL, and the benefits that accrue. Investing in knowledge and activities that enhance wellbeing has proved a successful health strategy in the workplace. Applying these workplace concepts of ‘investing in Wellbeing’ with the contemporary Veterans will lead to better understanding of how Serious Leisure contributes to improved happiness, social relationships and physical and mental health. Improved access and knowledge for civilian and retired Veterans to Serious Leisure opportunities and resources will likewise improve wellbeing. The value of the validated tool and this new knowledge will allow the impact of Serious Leisure to be measured in Veterans in a nationwide study. Positive changes in Serious Leisure could conceivably involve their partners and families, who are often an important support base. Thus, Serious Leisure has the potential to be an effective mechanism for change (activity) and have positive outcome (wellbeing) for all NZ Veterans and their families. |
| 1. **Addressing the *Guiding Principles* rw** |
| All Serious leisure studies adopt an holistic approach to health and wellbeing, acknowledging that being mentally, physically and socially active is an essential component of establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships, personal and social identity, self-esteem, self-worth, social capital and a sense of belonging/attachment to one’s local community. The outcomes of this co-designed research study will therefore offer multiple benefits to male and female veterans’ of all ages and ethnicities. Through the creation of an adapted Serious Leisure Inventory and measurement framework, specifically for New Zealand veterans’ and their whanau, policy makers and health programme designers will be provided with the evidence needed to make informed and cost-effective decisions. By capturing the extent to which the social consumption of serious leisure pursuits is personally valued by our participants, our partners will be able to accurately compare the similarites and differences between contemporary veterans and those of the older generation. We will make full use of our existing research collaborations, networks and partnerships with Veteran’s to ensure the data collection process acknowledges and addresses issues relevant to New Zealand. Once validated, our survey can be sent out in both electronic and hard-copy form to veterans who are registered members of the RSA, Veteran Affairs and the New Zealand Defence Force. As a consequence, organisations responsible for improving the health and wellbeing of New Zealand Veterans’ will have everything they need to design, develop and deliver attractive, accessibility and affordability leisure activities |
| 1. **Research design and principles** |
| The leisure activities of NZ Veterans are an integral part of their health and wellbeing yet have not been measured before. This project is designed to survey the link between veteran participation in Serious Leisure, and health and wellbeing to meet the aim of using existing providers (leisure and e-learning wellbeing programmes). We propose to adapt the validated SLIM and ‘work on wellbeing’ surveys into one appropriate, valid, and reliable tool. Using the principles of the Health service co-design approach, the design will proceed with start-up workshops (identifying key RSA, NZDF, Veterans, Maori veterans, SL, Wellness people); planning workshops; stakeholder needs table; protyping (veterans and expert panel); pilot study of tool (~50 veterans and qualitative focus groups). This will culminate in a service blueprint and integration in the Families and Households, and Benefits sections of the IDI at Statistics NZ |
| 1. **Main outcome measures** |
| The direct project outcome will be a validated tool for a Nationwide Veterans Serious Leisure and Wellbeing survey. The results of which can be integrated into the Government IDI statistics to increase the knowledge on veterans’ families and households, and benefits. The outcome for our Veterans who take part in the pilot study will be increased understanding and knowledge of how their participation in SL, will directly improve their sense of wellbeing. The policy and practice recommendations from this study will inform those involved with NZ Veterans how the positive benefits of Serious Leisure can be put into action through services and resources, to overall increase wellbeing of NZ Veterans through increased satisfaction, productivity, social relationships and positive mental health |
| 1. **Funding sought and duration** |
| The proposed project start date is 1st February 2017, outcomes to be reported 1st August 2018 (duration 18 months) and requiring funding of $75,000.  These funds will cover costs associated with establishing, and maintaining, meaningful relationships of the co-design period, validation of the tool, conducting the pilot study and focus groups, analysis of data, report writing and dissemination of results. |