



MEDIA RELEASE: RSL Active – waging war on those civilian life blues

RSL Active – a new arm of the RSL offering life enrichment strategies for veterans and their families – will be launched in Adelaide this Sunday morning (June 26). Specially designed to ease the transition to civilian life, it includes a wide range of sporting and social programs, employment and education guidance, and social reintegration.

“Our military veterans go from having a structured regime in the military to a completely new world when they discharge” says Mark Reidy, the RSL-SA veterans and families activities co-ordinator.

“Some have experienced trauma through their service and suffer physical and psychological injuries such as PTSD. They and their families need support and the pathways to recovery.

He ought to know. Mark, 45, from Clearview, served in the Australian Army for 16 years: two deployments to Iraq, one to Afghanistan, and multiple peacekeeping missions at trouble-spots as a cargo specialist, often with the SAS. He came out of all that with knee and back injuries, along with a lingering post-traumatic stress condition (PTSD) through the bombs and bullets encountered in the Middle East. “I was in a dark place for a while when I left the army,” he says. “But, with exercise and peer support, I’m coming out of it now.”

Six months in the making, RSL Active includes cycling, walking and kayaking. Olympic cycling gold medallist Stuart O’Grady (Athens 2004) has enlisted as an ambassador. But there’s more to it than sport alone. Cultural development will be nurtured through a wide-ranging art exhibition scheduled for Veterans Health Week (October 21 – 30), with workshops for emerging artists. “Camping trips, social outings and school holiday programs are part of our future plans,” says Mark.

Endorsing these ambitions, RSL-SA President Tim Hanna says: “RSL Active will target working-age veterans and assist them in their new way of life – and in some cases help them back into the workforce after injury or illness. We will support them to be active in their community. Both sport and art can assist with this as can activities for the whole military family.”

- WHAT:** Launch of RSL Active
WHEN: 10.30am Sunday, June 26
WHERE: Parking at Torrens Parade Ground, Victoria Drive, Adelaide
Launch at Elder Park Rotunda (or Drill Hall if wet)
- WHO:** RSL-SA President Tim Hanna
RSL Active Ambassador Stuart O’Grady
RSL-SA Veterans and Families Activities Co-ordinator Mark Reidy
Cycling and kayaking photos available with Veterans and families

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