



DEFAUS 18

**YOGA IN THE  
AUSTRALIAN  
DEFENCE FORCE**

PITCHER

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# ABSTRACT



I have served within the Army Infantry Corps for 8 years. Due to the nature of the physical impact I was motivated to find a lower impact but equally beneficial training method to allow me to continue to develop both physically and mentally. The result of implementing Yoga and Meditation within my section and unit, both at home and on deployment was extremely positive and inspired the desire to widen the practice.

## **Proposal**

To raise an organic combat focused health and wellbeing capability run by junior leaders within the ADF. Aiming to minimise combat fatigue and reduce the potential for PTSD symptoms. As well as developing coping mechanisms for operating combat environments and executing high function skills under pressure. A program like this would also help reduce stress levels and mental health issues whilst developing mindfulness and physical fitness resulting in higher work output and enhanced combat power in the ADF.

## **Implementation**

**Preliminary (Creating the Program)** - I have established a link with a local civilian accredited Yoga Organisation in Wagga Wagga IOT develop a tailored Instructor package deliverable to Defence personnel.

**Phase 1: Train the trainers** - Identify and train a cross section of key junior NCO's and Officers within the ADF to instruct in Yoga and Meditation practices.



# PROPOSAL AND OUTCOMES

The development of these instructors will allow the dissemination of information and expertise across Army. The initial plan would use Wagga Wagga as the training Hub, taking advantage of the unique all Corps nature of ARTC/1RTB, allowing the capability to spread across Army during a posting cycle.

**Phase 2: Trial implementation** - Implement Meditation and Yoga practice for Recruits and staff into the ARTC/1RTB training program and thus seeding some holistic health practices in the Military. (Studies have shown that the presence of programmed waking downtime during training can assist in retention and recall of information, Building Shooters)

**Phase 3: Conduct Defence wide courses** - Implement defence wide courses in Yoga and Meditation instruction to allow personnel to be qualified to deliver training to their home units. With the end goal being the ability to grow a Defence wide health and wellbeing capability.

**Sequel** - Identify a key group of passionate Yoga and Meditation instructors within defence to continue to upskill with the intent of developing a Health and Wellbeing Cell in every posting locality.