



# Wrestling for Fun, Adelaide

[wrestlingforfun.wordpress.com](http://wrestlingforfun.wordpress.com)

## Parkestone Foundation grant acquittal

September 2023

### Grant

\$791.29 for 2 x professional, portable wrestling mats

### Objectives

1. To provide a safer space for participants to wrestle
2. To provide a more consistent experience for participants
3. To obtain equipment that is portable and suitable for a variety of venues
4. To increase the legitimacy of the collective within the LGBTQI+ communities

### Challenges

As a collective, **Wrestling for Fun (W4F)** is led by its participants. In our 13-year history, we have never previously sought funding from any source.

Over the course of our history, we have consistently faced two primary challenges:

#### 1. A consistent experience for participants

All facilities and equipment are loaned by participants.

This has resulted in an inconsistent experience as we have relied on participants to bring their own mats or the collective using makeshift padded flooring.

We are fortunate to attract men who are flexible and focussed on the safety of themselves and their fellow participants, and to date, our loan arrangement of equipment has worked well.

That said, there has always been a need to provide a safer and more consistent experience for participants which in turn, would allow us to grow as a collective. Owning our own padded flooring will not only add to the safety of participants, regardless of who attends or which venue we use, but it should allow us to expand our space to accept more participants.

#### 2. Perception of the sport and our collective

While wrestling is an Olympic sport and is recognised as a legitimate physical activity in some countries, including the USA where it is taught in high school, the sport has never been big in Australia. It is seen either as 'fake' theatrics full of acrobatic showmanship, or as a sexual kink.

The simple fact is that, while kink can be a motivating factor for many men in the LGBTQI+ communities, there are also many men who simply enjoy the machismo of the physical challenge.

Wrestling provides a range of benefits, from new friendships to improved physical and mental health. The sport itself requires participants to exercise muscle, cardio, and brain power, while the physical

contact and social connection can also improve mental health and relieve social isolation. These benefits are rarely acknowledged however, with our collective often presumed to be a sex club within the community.

Our website and Facebook presence over recent years has helped to remove that stigma, as evidenced by the nature of most enquiries we now receive. Professional flooring now adds to that progression.

## **Benefit of the grant**

The Parkestone Foundation grant has allowed the collective to own vital equipment for the first time.

By purchasing two large, high-quality, mobile floor mats, events are no longer subject to the availability of participants to bring equipment. This is an important advance in the evolution of the collective to always provide safe, professional, and appropriate spaces for events, rather than the oft-makeshift flooring of the past.

It has always been a driving factor of the collective to provide a comfortable and welcoming experience for both new and existing members. This grant has made an enormous contribution towards our efforts to keep members free from injury. It also helps us to improve the legitimacy of the collective within the LGBTQI+ community through our ability to provide a more professional wrestling space.

We are immensely grateful to the Parkestone Foundation for their support of the W4F collective and, in turn, the maligned sport of wrestling.

## **History of W4F**

Wrestling for Fun was established in May 2010 as a collective of gay and bisexual men who enjoyed the fitness and camaraderie of the sport without the desire to participate in formal competition.

Originally operating as **SLAM** (Southern League of Amateur Matmen), we rebranded as **Wrestling for Fun (W4F)** in January 2021 to better reflect our ethos.

The W4F collective started as a small band of gay and bi men who met online through wrestling social network sites and discovered that they were equally frustrated with the number of guys who seemed to fantasise about the idea of wrestling but never actually met up for a grapple.

They decided to meet regularly for a grapple and to mentor any other guys who wanted to try the sport without fear of injury or judgement. More than 13 years later, the collective remains an active and inclusive outlet for men who enjoy or want to try grappling just for the fun of it.

## **Find out more**

Website: <https://wrestlingforfun.wordpress.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WrestlingForFun>